“The Wise and Foolish Builders”
(Matthew 7:24-27 / Parallel - Luke 6:47-49)

Matthew 7:24-27 (NIV):
24 “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

47 “I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. 48 He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. 49 But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.”

Setting:

The parable of The Wise and Foolish Builders (Matthew 7:24-27) is the last parable that Jesus speaks of in His Sermon on the Mount. This is near the beginning of His ministry, and Jesus is speaking to the crowds and to His disciples (Matthew 5:1). Prior to the actual parable, Jesus speaks of those who will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, and those that will not. “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’” (Matthew 7:21-23, NIV). This leads up to the parable of The Wise and Foolish Builders, and prepares the setting for the parable.
Exegetical Analysis:

The World Bible Commentary states, “‘Everyone…whoever,’ gives the beginning of this parable of warning an echo of invitation. The reader is in effect invited to be like the wise man, to do and not simply to hear” (Hagner 190). The adjective “wise” is a very important term in comparison to “foolish” in this parable. Alrand J. Hultgren states, “The person envisioned as wise is the one who has heard ‘these words of mine’ that is, the instructions given throughout the Sermon on the Mount” (Hultgren 133). The “wise” are also those that have heard the words of Jesus and put them into practice and continue to put them into practice throughout their lifetime. Matthew 7:24 states, “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock” (NIV) explaining that those that have listened to His words and put them to practice, are considered “wise”. Even though the “rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall because it had its foundation on the rock” (Matthew 7:25), the consequences of not listening and doing, do not become an issue with those that have put into practice the words of Jesus; in comparison to those who were and had chosen to be “foolish,” as it says in Matthew 7:26. They in result, suffer the consequences of Matthew 7:27.

The terms “rock” and “sand” are the “foundations” that a listener of Jesus’ parables can choose to construct their lives upon. Jesus represents the “rock” and a foolish path is represented by the “sand” that cannot withstand even in comparison, that the rock can. The rock “…is also a metaphor for a solid, stable foundation, (Ps. 40:2; Sir 40:15) and frequent God is pictured as the rock on whom one can be secure (2 Sam 2:2; Ps 18:2 …)” (Hultgren 133). Secure through anything, even through the second
coming of Christ. The storm in Matthew 7:25 can represent any test and not fail, and the storm of Matthew 7:29 represents the foolish builder’s choice and results in death. “The storm could represent any test, but surely represents especially the final test, the day of judgment” (Keener 167).

**Message:**

The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builder, is typically one of the easier parables to comprehend. The parable is somewhat explained by Jesus just before he presents the parable, in Matthew 7:21-23: “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’” (NIV). The “rhetorical effect of the parable at the end of the Sermon on the Mount is both warning and exhortation” (Hultgren 134), telling the listeners to not merely listen to what He says, but to do them, because not doing His teachings will lead to death. Jesus assures us however, if we do listen to His teachings and do them, we will be able to make it through hard times, and “overcome in times of calamity” (Hultgren 135).

**Application:**

One who puts into practice the teachings of Christ has to consistently and diligently submit their wills to Christ and ask Him to guide their hearts. This is the first step in the removing of the “self” and becoming “wise” or as it says in the parable. Readers and listeners can apply this parable when they do just that. Understanding that Jesus is our redeemer and the only one that can save us from our sinful human nature,
will encourage us and get us excited about building our lives around Christ and building our homes on the rock, Jesus Christ.

WORKS CITED:


Quite adequate treatment

Grade: B+