



Revelations & Reflections Newsletter
(October 28, 2006)

THE HOUSE THAT FAITH BUILT

We've all heard the story about the three little pigs and the houses they built. One was made of straw; one was made of wood, and the other was made of brick – only the brick house stood up to the big bad wolf. Well, Satan and his demons are our big bad wolves, so what kind of house are we going to build to stand up to him? Let's examine the parable in Mark about the sower, how it relates to the types of houses we build, and how that relates to our faith.

Mark 4:3-8 (KJV): “³Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow: ⁴And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. ⁵And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: ⁶But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. ⁷And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. ⁸And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.”

HOMELESS

Mark 4:15 (KJV): “And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.”

Most people know the seed is the Word of God, and the ground is our heart. In verse 4, the seed didn't have anywhere particular to land; it didn't have a home. It just fell along the path. As Jesus described it in **verse 15**, it fell “by the way side” and was gobbled up by the birds. That's how we are sometimes: homeless to the Word of God. We don't provide it shelter. We don't even allow it to enter our hearts. It gets to the front porch (our minds), but it doesn't take up residence (in our hearts). It's just like going out to get your morning paper – someone else beat you to it.

So why does this happen? Probably the biggest cause is a lack of understanding. **Proverbs 4:7** teaches us, “and with all thy getting get understanding.” If you don't understand the Word, you can't sow it in your heart. You can quote the scriptures from cover to cover, but with no understanding, there is no power. As Jesus puts it in **Mark 4:11-12**, “He told them, ‘The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables so that, ‘they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding: otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!’” (NIV).

STRAW HOUSE

Mark 4:16 (KJV): “¹⁶And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; ¹⁷And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.”

And, then there are times we hear the Word, and even have understanding, but we can't withstand the troubles or persecutions that come our way. We've provided the Word shelter in our straw house, but it can't withstand the simplest test of time. So, what do the scriptures teach on this?

Romans 5:1-5 (KJV): ¹Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: ²By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; ⁴And patience, experience; and experience, hope: ⁵And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

If we never have trials and tribulations, why would we need faith? We would be able to control everything and would always be blissfully happy. What glory can God receive in that kind of situation? But, as the scriptures above from Romans teach us, tribulations teach us how to have patience, which teaches us to gain experience. And, last but not least, that experience is what gives us reason to hope! And, what is faith? “The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (**Hebrews 11:1 KJV**). Until God has delivered you from something, how will you ever know He can? And, let's not forget **1 Corinthians 10:13** teaches us God will not allow us to be tempted above what we are able, and in that temptation, He always provides a means of escape, so we can bear it.

WOOD HOUSE

Mark 4:18-19 (KJV) “¹⁸And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, ¹⁹And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.”

Well, we've given the Word shelter, but the shelter couldn't protect the Word very long. So, now, we're up to our wood house. It's a little sturdier, so it lasts longer. But, once again, it doesn't adequately shelter the Word. We get caught up in the “stuff” of life. So many preachers use that word these days, that it's hard not to, because it adequately wraps it all up into a neat little package. What's my stuff? My children, my job, my

husband, keeping my house clean, etc., etc., etc! But, what does stuff do for me in comparison to the blessings of God. Absolutely nothing! “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (**Matthew 6:33 KJV**). Remember that one? Oh, how soon I forget. So, my house stands a little longer than it used to, but I haven’t built my house of brick yet.

BRICK HOUSE

Mark 4:20 (KJV) And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

Now, that’s what I’m talking about. This is when we bring the Word into a strong house: a house that can withstand the wiles of the devil. We’ve planted our seed (Word) into good ground (our heart), and we bring forth fruit. There is the fruit of the Spirit: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (**Galatians 5:22 NKJV**). And, lately, a lot of ministries have been preaching on the fruits of prosperity. But, I haven’t graduated to that yet, so I’ll stick with the fruit of the Spirit, because without those, you don’t really know the Holy Spirit has taken up full-time residence in His brick house. For, is not a tree known by its fruit?

Matthew 7:20 (KJV): “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”

But! We can’t forget the todayness of it all. We can’t be deceived that once we’ve built the house of brick, we can stop. We have to remember to keep it up through prayer, study, and fellowship with God.

So, I ask myself, how do I build my brick house? Let’s go back to the title: “The House That Faith Built.” Now, when I search my bible software for faith it comes up 270 times in 246 verses in the NIV version; King James Version equals 247 times in 231 verses. That’s a lot of times, no matter how you slice the cake. But, the one verse, for me, that is truly beginning to make sense is **Hebrews 11:1 (NKJV)** – “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Why do I keep going back to that? Because, it’s so easy to overlook some key things in this verse.

First, I’ve had to realize the importance of the “evidence of things not seen.” Just because you don’t see something materializing the way YOU think it should, does not mean God is not at work.

Philippians 2:13 (KJV): “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

We may can’t see what His master plan is, but there is always one. The things we go through may be painful to us, but He has to refine us.

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1 Peter 1:6-7 (NIV): “⁶In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”

So, the only way to truly know you have faith is to be able to do like James 1:2-4 tells us, and that's to count it all joy, because patience is on the other side of that faith situation. And, nothing can help you change the complexion of a situation faster than praising God.

In those times I can do that, I can lift up praise and worship to God even when I don't feel like it, even when all I want to do is have myself one big luxurious pity party, I've found those are the times things break the quickest. So, as this one song says, “when times get hard, start praising God!” Sure wish I knew who sings it and the rest of the song!

Now, how will you sow your next seeds? To be homeless. To live in a straw or wooden house. Or, will you sow your next seeds to build a house of brick that will stand?! For...”Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (**Romans 10:17 KJV**). Plant a seed today and start laying your foundation!

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