

## Two Parables Of Jesus Applied To Life.

Text: Luke 6:43-49

1) The parable of the Good Tree

Suggested Hymns:

2) The parable of the house built upon the Rock

507, 179, 331, 259, 511

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Luke 6:43-49, <sup>43</sup> *“For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. <sup>44</sup> “For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. <sup>45</sup> “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.*

<sup>46</sup> *“But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the things which I say? <sup>47</sup> “Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: <sup>48</sup> “He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock.*

<sup>49</sup> *“But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.” (NKJV)*

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Our Saviour, in the fulfilment of His prophetic office, related many parables from daily life and nature. He instilled heavenly truths through the means of comparisons and stories. Jesus often used the parable style for teaching.

At least forty longer parables may be listed. Besides these Jesus told His audiences truths in many short similes or comparisons. Several of Christ’s

parables are recorded by three evangelists, others by two only, and again others by only one writer.

In using and considering the parables of Christ, one must remember that there is in each one some point of comparison, and this must be observed. A parable wants to teach one certain thing, not everything. Not all details of the parable dare be stressed or amplified in the comparison; for if this is done, the most non-sensical and misleading lessons might be drawn from the words wherein no lesson was at all intended.

In our text, taken from the Gospel of St. Luke, we have two short parables of Christ, spoken at the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount. Let us study these *Two Parables of Jesus Applied to our own Lives*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

### 1. The Parable Of The Good Tree.

<sup>43</sup> *“For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. <sup>44</sup>“For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. <sup>45</sup>“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.*

John the Baptist had warned that *“every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”*<sup>1</sup> Jesus also uses the tree and its fruit as an illustration of a person’s life. He draws two lessons: the quality of the fruit demonstrates the worth of the tree; the kind of fruit borne identifies the tree. You can judge a tree by its fruits.

This lesson is illustrated by two additional examples. People do not pick figs from thornbushes or grapes from briars. Again Jesus makes His two points: good (figs, grapes) do not come from bad (thornbushes, briars). A plant is identified by the kind of fruit it bears.

These lessons from nature are now applied to people. The good person brings good things out of the good stored in the heart. But the evil person brings evil things out of the evil stored in the heart. You cannot expect anything else, as

nature also testifies. The kind of fruit a person bears identifies the quality of the person.

All actions, including the words you speak, originate in the heart. For a disciple to bring forth the fruits of faith, a life characterised by love and generosity, the heart must first of all be good. A good heart is one that in all humility confesses sin and clings to Christ for pardon and peace. Such a heart will bring forth good fruit.

Our text shows the Lord comparing the heart of a Christian to a good tree that brings forth good fruit at the proper season. He refers to nature and its laws, namely, that it is natural for a good tree to bring forth good fruit.

One would not expect anything else in nature. Neither would one expect anything else than good works from the Christian. The fruits are natural and spontaneous. They are the product of the inherent life of the good tree.

So also the good works of the Christian are the result of the faith dwelling in his heart, the new life that the Holy Spirit has wrought therein. Here the fruits come spontaneously, too. Listen to Psalm 1:3, <sup>3</sup> *He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.*

Christ teaches also by way of contrast. He pictures the evil, or corrupt tree to us, *nor does a bad tree bear good fruit*, and refers this to the heart of an evil man, *and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil.*

We read in Jude 12-13, <sup>12</sup> *These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; <sup>13</sup> raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.*

The thorns and brambles that grow out of an evil heart we find described in Matthew 15:19, <sup>19</sup> *“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.*

We think of evil words against the Second Commandment. Of evil thoughts, pictures, writing, jokes, etc. We think of evil words and deeds against the Sixth

Commandment. The heart, by nature, is such an evil tree and treasure-chest and constantly sends forth corrupt things.

However, such trees meet a disastrous fate. We read in Matthew 3:10, <sup>10</sup> ***“And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.***

And Matthew 12:34-36, ***For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.*** <sup>35</sup> ***“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.*** <sup>36</sup> ***“But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.”***<sup>2</sup>

And Galatians 6:8, <sup>8</sup> ***For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.***

What alone can make a tree good, the heart of man holy, and a treasure-chest full of profitable things? The answer to this we see in the Explanation of Third Article of our Creed. *I believe that I cannot by my own understanding or effort believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, and sanctified and kept me in the true faith.*

We read in 1 Corinthians 12:3-4, <sup>3</sup> ***Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.*** <sup>4</sup> ***There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.***

And in John 15:5, <sup>5</sup> ***“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”***<sup>3</sup>

This means that every one, man, woman, or child, is either a good or an evil tree. Our text says, ***For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.*** This shows that your heart, too, is flowing over and producing.

Now, what kind of heart have you? What kind of tree are you? What are your fruits, good or evil? Let each person examine himself, and let no one deceive himself. This is a serious matter. We read in Proverbs 11:3, <sup>3</sup> ***The integrity of the upright will guide them, But the perversity of the unfaithful will destroy them.***<sup>4</sup>

This first parable is really an earnest call for a close examination and a call to repentance in all of us. The other parable of our text is more bracing and comforting, although it too leads us to examine ourselves.

## 2. The Parable Of The House Built On The Rock.

*<sup>46</sup> “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the things which I say? <sup>47</sup> “Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: <sup>48</sup> “He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock.*

*<sup>49</sup> “But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.”*

In this fourth parable, which concludes His section of teachings, Jesus talks about two men who build houses. The one laid the foundation on rock; the other simply built his house on the ground. The first house withstood the torrent of water that struck when a flood came; the other collapsed in total ruin.

These two builders are like two kinds of listeners: the one hears the words of Jesus and puts them into practice; the other hears without putting the words into practice. We are reminded of a beatitude that Jesus speaks later in this Gospel, in Luke 11:28, ***“Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”*** Jesus does not only want to be called ***“Lord,”*** He wants His disciples to do what He says. To do so is to build a house that withstands the floods of life.

When we Christians examine our lives, we will find ourselves falling short of doing what Jesus says. His teaching in this part of Luke is mainly law. One of the purposes of the law of God is to reveal our sinfulness and drive us into the arms of the Saviour. When we consider the teachings of Jesus concerning love and generosity, we will become conscious of our own shortcomings; we will confess our sins and ask for forgiveness.

The law also serves as a guide for the Christian, giving us direction for our lives. There is much we can learn from frequent review of these teachings of Jesus: the blessings and woes, the command to love, and the warnings against

judging others. A good life starts in the heart; here faith must rest on the solid foundation of Christ and His love. The builder of such a house will withstand whatever floods may come.

This sermon of Jesus was spoken on a level place in the presence of a large crowd of disciples and a great number of people from various places.<sup>5</sup> At the conclusion Luke says nothing about any crowd response. Often when Jesus had performed some miracle, Luke notes the amazement and praises of the people. It is almost as if these teachings of Jesus leave the disciples and the people in stunned silence. That may well be our response when we give serious thought to what Jesus teaches us here about our lives as disciples.

In Palestine the heavier buildings were built on rock, and lighter structures were built on less substantial bases. Jesus uses this picture in order to teach a lesson regarding our living Christian faith, which rests on a rock foundation.

Christ is striking at hypocrisy, at hearing without doing, <sup>46</sup> ***“But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the things which I say?”*** This is how He introduces this parable. The mere hearing of the Word, without acting according to it, never benefited any one, as Jesus often brought out in His sermons.

Jesus admonished His hearers, and He admonishes us to do His Word. Jesus says ***“Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”***<sup>6</sup>

And of this same message we read in James 1:23-25, <sup>23</sup> ***“For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; <sup>24</sup>for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. <sup>25</sup>But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.***

The person who hears, but does not do the Word is like the man who builds his house on sand. He has no good foundation, and his house cannot stand against opposition. The sand may be explained as human opinion and understanding, in which some people trust. The winds and the streams are temptations and trials, which come to all in this world.

At such times the building needs a firm foundation. The superstructure may be ever so beautiful, but if the foundation is poor, the house is doomed. The fall of such a house will be great. We think of the example of Saul, and also Balaam.

But the person who shapes his life according to the Word of God is far different. He is like the man who has built his house on a rock, after having dug deep into the ground. No storm, no rain, no stream, no wind, can destroy this structure. It is anchored firmly and safely.

Christ and His Word are the Rock. We sing of the *Rock of Ages*, meaning Christ. In the Scriptures Jesus is called the chief cornerstone as we read in Ephesians 2:19-21, <sup>19</sup> *Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup> having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, <sup>21</sup> in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, <sup>22</sup> in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.*

Jesus is the foundation as we read in 1 Corinthians 3:10-13, <sup>10</sup> *According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. <sup>11</sup> For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

<sup>12</sup> *Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, <sup>13</sup> each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.*<sup>7</sup>

The Psalmist writes in Psalm 118:8-9, <sup>8</sup> *It is better to trust in the LORD Than to put confidence in man. <sup>9</sup> It is better to trust in the LORD Than to put confidence in princes.*

Nothing can harm us if we build on that Rock, Jesus Christ. We read in Romans 8:31, 38-39, <sup>31</sup> *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ... <sup>38</sup> For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, <sup>39</sup>*

*nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

What is the foundation on which you have built? Have you acted wisely or foolishly?

So today we have studied two parables. The first may be summarised in 1 John 3:18, <sup>18</sup> *My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth*, and the second in the words of the hymnist<sup>8</sup>

*On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand. Amen*

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 3:9

<sup>2</sup> See also Jude 15, Gal. 5:21

<sup>3</sup> See also 2 Cor. 4:6; Jer. 31:18; Phil. 1:6; Eph. 2:10

<sup>4</sup> See also Heb. 9:27.

<sup>5</sup> Luke 6:17

<sup>6</sup> See also 1 Cor. 9:27

<sup>7</sup> See also Col. 2:7

<sup>8</sup> Hymn 331