



**Carstairs-Bancroft United Church**  
January 12, 2022  
**DAILY ENCOURAGEMENT**  
**DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**  
**By Rev. Maria Szabone Berces**



Photo: Our Daily Bread

Beloved Carstairs Bancroft United Church Members,

**Today's Inspiration in one sentence**

**“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.”**

(Matthew 7:24)

**Did You Know?**

The “*Scripture Insight*” below talks about our specific verses. Let’s recall what we have learned before about the Gospel of Matthew in general:

- “The gospels of **Matthew**, Mark, and Luke are referred to as the **synoptic Gospels** because they include many of the same stories, often in a similar sequence and in similar or sometimes identical wording.” (Wikipedia)

- The date of this Gospel is argued among scholars. Some dates it between the 50s and 70s AD. Some says its date is 80-90 AD, because the author makes a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. (The Chalice Introduction to the New Testament; pg. 152; The NIV Study Bible)

- The theologians agree that the writer is *not* one of the Apostles. There is one thing that is not argued, and it is his Jewish heritage. This is indicated by his familiarity with the Torah, the Jewish Law, as well as Jewish practices. (Knowing Christianity by A.R.C. Leaney; pg. 38; The Chalice Introduction to the New Testament; pg. 153)

- Matthew’s main purpose is to confirm for his Jewish-Christian readers that Jesus is their Messiah. He does this primarily by showing how Jesus in his life and ministry fulfilled the OT Scriptures (The NIV Study Bible)

**Personal Insight**

We can probably all agree that anything is only as helpful for as we make use of it. For example, we might have a rowing machine or a treadmill, or any other fitness gadgets at home, but if we never do workout on them, they won’t make us any stronger or healthier. We need to be willing to spend time and energy on improving our physical strength and health.

Jesus teaches us that it is the same regarding our spiritual well-being. It is not enough just to listen to his teachings; we actually have to practice what He tells us. As He said: **“Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man...”** (Matthew 7:24).

In these days, when the pandemic has been causing so much ongoing uncertainties, it is not a surprise that this rollercoaster makes us weary and worried. We feel like being inside Jesus’ parable: **“The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew...”** (Matthew 7:25) The good news and the promises are that when we abide with Jesus, and really follow his guidance, his presence, strength, and wisdom can give us the mental stamina we need in any challenging situation.

Grace and Peace to You All,

Rev. Maria



## Resilient Faith

*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.*

Matthew 7:26

### READ Matthew 7:24–27

Towering dunes along the north shore of Silver Lake put nearby homes at risk of sinking into shifting sands. Though residents tried moving mounds of sand in efforts to protect their homes, they watched helplessly as well-built houses were buried right before their eyes. As a local sheriff oversaw the cleanup of a recently destroyed cottage, he affirmed the process couldn't be prevented. No matter how hard homeowners tried to avoid the dangers of these unsteady embankments, the dunes simply couldn't provide a strong foundational support.

Jesus knew the futility of building a house on sand. After warning the disciples to be wary of false prophets, He assured them that loving obedience demonstrates wisdom (Matthew 7:15–23). He said that everyone who hears His words and “puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock” (v. 24). The one who hears God's words and chooses not to put them into practice, however, is “like a foolish man who built his house on sand” (v. 26).

When circumstances feel like shifting sands burying us under the weight of affliction or worries, we can place our hope in Christ, our Rock. He will help us develop resilient faith built on the unshakable foundation of His unchanging character. – By **Xochitl Dixon**

### REFLECT & PRAY

**Jesus, please help me develop resilient faith. Empower me to demonstrate my trust through loving obedience to You. Amen.**

How does obedience demonstrate your trust in God? In what areas of your life are you standing on the shifting sands of disobedience to Him?

### SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

The last section of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7) contains the parable of the wise and foolish builders (7:24–27). It's important to note that this parable begins with the word therefore, a word which always connects what follows to what directly precedes it. It indicates a consequence or a result. Readers are to back up and consider what was written in the preceding verses.

What precedes the concluding parable of the Sermon on the Mount is the entire sermon, not merely a few verses. Jesus' challenge isn't simply to live a morally rigorous life, but to live as citizens of the kingdom of heaven and to let our lives reflect the reality of God's rule in our hearts. This parable is Jesus' challenge to His listeners to put His words into practice. They're to base their lives on Him and His teaching, for all other foundations shift and blow away. - By **J.R. Hudberg**

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