

Jacob's Well

Lesson Title: Stories from the Savior—The Wise and Foolish Builders



Key Concept: Jesus often spoke in parables, stories with both spiritual insights and practical applications. In the parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders, floods reveal the quality of the foundation on which the builder stands.



Scriptures:

²⁴“Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. ²⁵Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock. ²⁶But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn’t obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. ²⁷When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash.”

(Matthew 7:24–27 *New Living Translation*)

Through [skillful and godly] wisdom a house [a life, a home, a family] is built, and by understanding it is established [on a sound and good foundation].

(Proverbs 24:3 *Amplified Bible*)

Context Scriptures: Luke 6:46–49; 1 Samuel 16:7; 2 Samuel 12:9–14; Psalm 51, 59; Isaiah 8:7; Amos 6:14; Genesis 6:5–8



Lesson Thoughts:

Physical and metaphorical floods occur frequently in the Bible. They typically symbolize tough times due to either the indirect consequences of living in a broken world or the direct consequences for human disobedience. In the parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders, Jesus tells his listeners that those who build their lives on his teachings are wise, those who listen but fail to obey are foolish, and the floods in life distinguish between the two.

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First Samuel 16:7 tells us, “People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” If wisdom and foolishness cannot be judged by the outward appearance, then how are they determined? The answer is revealed through the outcome of floods. In Isaiah 8, God sent “a mighty flood,” the Assyrian army, to conquer Israel and Judah for their disobedience to him. When the flood came, the foolish were swept away, leaving nothing behind. In contrast, in Genesis 6, Noah believed and obeyed God. He was saved from a literal flood, though the rest of humanity perished because of their unbelief and disobedience. In both stories, the floods revealed the wise and the foolish.

The floods of life can happen to anyone, guilty or innocent, but when they happen to the wise, the word of God sustains them. When David was innocent, he was chased down by Saul in a flood of jealousy, yet he still mustered the strength to write Psalm 59, a psalm of faith. When David was guilty of an affair with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband, he faced a flood of consequences, beginning with the loss of his baby. Yet after suffering this loss, he still penned Psalm 51, a psalm of repentance. Whether guilty or innocent, his response to God amid these floods revealed his strong foundation.

One of the key takeaways in the parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders is that floods will come in this life without exception. Floods not only expose weakness, but also reveal strength. Both the wise and the foolish builders produced a finished structure, but it was only the test of the flood that revealed the quality of each foundation. It is wise for us to listen to and obey Jesus’ teachings, so that our lives are built on solid rock, withstanding whatever floods come our way.

? Discussion Questions:

- 1) How can we check our foundation without the presence of a flood? What can we do to fortify our lives in preparation?
- 2) Share a time when a flood tested your foundation. What weaknesses and strengths did it reveal? How did you respond?
- 3) Have you witnessed the collapse of someone else’s life? What did you learn?
- 4) During times of floods in his life, David encouraged himself in the Lord. What are ways to encourage ourselves or others during these times?

Next Lesson: The Good Samaritan

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Notes and Reflections

- 1) Many accounts of judgment in the Scriptures show that God simply handed over his people (and communities) to face the consequences of following their own desires. Find some of these accounts in the Scriptures. Reflect on how you viewed God's judgment before versus how you view it now.

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Notes and Reflections, cont.