

BELPRES CHURCH

Put it into Practice

Matthew 7:24-29

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All right. The scripture for today is Matthew 7. Jesus, at the end of the sermon on the Mount, says this. "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. 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. 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. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash. When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching because he taught as one who had authority and not as their teachers of the law."

This is the last sermon in a long series we've done called You've Heard It Said where we've been contrasting what our culture says to us with what Jesus and the Bible says to us. The goal of this sermon series has been to help us all develop a biblical lens, a biblical worldview not just around certain issues, but to think biblically, to see the world biblically through the lens of scripture, not through the lens of our culture, but it's not just then to have a biblical lens or think biblically or have a biblical worldview. More importantly, it's to actually do it. It's to actually live it.

One of the marks of a disciple is they obey Jesus as Lord through prayer and scripture. We spent all summer talking about prayer, and we spent fall and January talking about scripture, but the key word in that is to obey Jesus through prayer and scripture. Obey. It doesn't say the mark of a disciple is to take notes on sermons. It doesn't say the mark of a disciple is to have the right opinions about all the right issues. It doesn't say the mark of a disciple is to form a committee to study the idea of doing what Jesus says to do. It's to do it. It's to put it into practice.

In that text, Jesus says, if we don't put his words into practice, we'll be like someone who built their house on sinking sand and, as soon as the storms of our lives and the storms of our worries come after us, we're just going to collapse, anxiety, fear, worry, lack of motivation, lack of meaning, lack of purpose, boredom. Jesus says, if we put His words into practice, we're like a house on a rock, and nothing can move us. We have to put them into practice. We have to do it.

I remember learning this lesson a very painful way actually a long time ago. I was working on my dissertation. Each chapter of the dissertation took about four months to write. I was putting some finishing touches on one of the chapters, and I don't know what I did, but somehow I erased the whole thing. I deleted the whole thing. This was before the cloud and I didn't have any backups. Four months of work, just poof, it was gone. I tried to get it back, but I couldn't, so I did what any rational person would do in that moment. I blamed my wife. I said, "It's this cheap computer. This is the computer you wanted us to buy. It's your fault that I just lost five months of work," and that led to a really interesting conversation about my work habits and lack of planning and inattention to detail, fascinating conversation.

I knew about having backups, how important that was. My advisor had continuously told me about having backups. I was knowledgeable when it came to backups. I could have told you anything you wanted to know about backups. I just didn't do it. I learned my lesson, and from then on, it was like backup, backup, and backups to the backups.

To conclude this sermon series, to put an exclamation point on it, we want to talk about doing what scripture tells us to do, not just knowing it, but actually doing it, but we wanted you to hear from people other than pastors. We wanted you to hear from some normal people, so we've invited some normal people to come and talk about their experience. I tell a lot of stories in sermons. Today, the stories are live, so I'm going to invite Josh Wyckoff, Linda Fluke, and Frank Ryu to come up, and Anthony and I are going to ask them some questions.

Frank, we're going to start with you because I know that you have been trying to put scripture into practice and it's shaping how you are as a young father with little kids. Could you tell us a little bit about how it's shaping your family life?

Yeah. First of all, thank you for having us here and myself and be in the panel. It's a great honor to be sharing some of the story that we are experiencing. Yeah, I know that there's a lot of way that God is working on our family to shape up the family with more of a Bible based and then scripture based, but I want to just share a quick story about how it is impacting our family, and then it is shaping our family. As you mentioned, we have a 3-year-old. No. No. He's four years old now. It's so fast. A 4-year-old little boy, his name is Ezra, and he's so adorable.

We wanted to raise him really scripture based and then so he could be a really influential Christian person that he can influence the words, the scriptures and by his life. On his second birthday, his grandparents bought him a little toy. It's called Sapin. It's a little media player that, when you click on this little card, it will play of music that reads a Bible verse. Especially, they also bought a flashcard that has a Bible verse. It's about a set 50. One side is English and the other side is Korean, so he can also play English and Korean like that. What it does is it plays music. It sings along the Bible verse. It's more kid friendly so they can sing along.

At one point, at the beginning, he was just, "Oh, it plays. It plays." It's really interesting. At some point, when he was about three-year-old, he started reading it and like, here, he says, "Sing to the Lord," and he's like, "Sing to the Lord all the glory." He's singing along at the same time he's memorizing it. At one dinner, he got so happy that he was like, oh, he's singing, but at the same time he's memorizing the verse and then, oh, we're so fascinated. I was like, "Can you repeat that one more time?" He does it again. He also sings in Korean. He also sings in English. He's basically memorized a verse in Korean and English. Right now, he's probably just reading it. He doesn't really know what it means, but, at some point, it will really work on him.

That gave us an idea that, hey, from this year, we're going to do this as a family. I said there's a 50 set of card, so us, as a family, we will memorize a verse as a family every week. We're doing it. We're trying it, but kids catches it really fast. Adults, it's kind of slow, but we were trying. It shapes us as a family that we are practicing the scripture and word as a family together. It also motivates myself and Esther to keep the word close to us as a family and practice the scriptures.

We actually have a video of Ezra reciting a memory verse in both English and Korean that we can look at.

... anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present by request to your God.

Uh-huh, Philippians 6:4, [Korean 00:08:34] in Korean?

[Korean 00:08:35].

[Korean 00:08:35].

[Korean 00:08:35].

[Korean 00:08:35]. Amen.

Amen.

That was at one of our family gathering. At the end of the family gathering, there was a kids' talent show, so there were 10 other kids.

Proverbs 22 says that, if you train up a child in the way that he should go, when they're older, they will not depart from it. You say that maybe he doesn't know what he's thinking now or what he's saying now, but I tell you, when he hits college, those things are going to just spring out of him. They might wobble a little bit, but they will not depart from the word of the Lord, so well done to you and Ezra for doing that.

Also, I just got to say this worship service is not sponsored by Sapin, if the sales go up. Well, it was good, but, Frank, one more question. How has this been a blessing and what has been the fruit of this in your family?

Yeah, I mean, as you can see, it's already starting. As you said, right now, it's just a word for him, but at some point, the true meaning will be impacting his life once he learn about it, and then it will become his practice. It will become one of the verses or many verses throughout his life, and then, as the parents, it motivates us to keep up the work also as a family and as one family. Also, now he's saying that Sunday is his favorite day of the week. Why? Because he goes to church. It is already working in our family, and I'm glad to hear that. We have way more long journeys to go, but this is another start and it is great for us. Yeah.

Amen.

Psalms 19 says, "I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You." What you're doing is you are making sure that deep in Ezra's DNA is the word of God, and that is going to, as Anthony said, guide him up through his life.

Linda, I'm going to ask you, because I know you are a very biblically based woman. I know that about you. Have there been certain verses or passages, stories from the Bible that have shaped how you're living?

Yes. I'll be reading. The scripture that I'm centered on is Proverbs 3:5-9. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him, and He will make your path straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes. Fear the Lord and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones. Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops, then your barns will be filled to overflowing and your vats will brim over with new wine."

What I do in response to God's word is pray and tithe. Prayer, a word we use to mean conversing with God, it is communication. It involves faith, believing God hears me and cares. It includes trusting God and listening to God. For me, a powerful and productive prayer is "help me God". This assists me to let God take over and focus on God's will and desire His will foremost. I pray alone, but also, for about 50 years, I have been part of some type of weekly prayer group. Initially, this helped me pray out loud. I found this important as I have to think differently and use a different part of my brain to articulate my thoughts clearly. I also need to be fully honest with God and myself. I let God know

when I am worried, happy, sad, angry or joyful and the cause of my emotions. I pray with and for others. When praying with others, there is community as God brings us together in Him and uses others to speak words I need to hear.

Three qualities of prayer groups I find most important are the commitment of the people to the group, trust, and people who are a variety of ages, stages of life, occupations or vocations and interests. Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4 give us the Lord's Prayer. In these words, I find encouragement to want God's will, not mine, and to ask Thy will be done. Philippians 4:6-7, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God, and the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." Ephesians 6:18 says, "Pray in the spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep praying for all the saints."

Tithing, when I first heard the invitation to honor the Lord with your wealth, I didn't think I had any wealth. I was scraping by financially, but as I thought about it, I realized that I was called to give to God first, not from any leftovers, and I began to want to tithe. This journey was a process. I started moving forward, gradually increasing my giving. God kept me on that path, providing for me and, over time, I slowly increased giving to a 10% tithe of my income. Then I kept going incrementally beyond a tithe as I found God faithful in His provisions for me. This has continued for several decades.

Last July, I finally retired and chose to continue my same amount of giving to God financially through this church. I find God trustworthy to provide me more than I can ask or imagine. Praise be to our Lord and God.

Amen. Thank you, Linda.

I'm just reflecting on the fact that Linda said this has been a 50-year journey of prayer, of tithing. It doesn't just happen overnight, right? This takes time, and I would say, for those of us who are on the younger side, don't let that freak you out. That means we have time to practice these things, to grow and to change over the course of our lives.

Linda, do you want to briefly share what fruit has been in your life, too?

It has made God so very real to me. Not that I am thinking or feeling His presence every single moment, but I know deep down always that He is with me and that, no matter what comes up, He's going to take care of me.

Amen. I also know that you have helped many other people experience that presence of God because you are a prayer warrior and you do take scripture seriously. I know, through the inner healing prayer ministry, you've helped a lot of people experience the fact that Jesus is real, so thank you. There are a lot of people in this church. They're lives

are better because you're following what the Bible says to do. You're doing it, so thank you.

Josh, I know you're also, like everyone here, trying to do what Jesus says to do, live out of scripture. Have there ever been any times when you had to give up something or there was a sacrifice, that you had to make a sacrifice to follow God's commands in the Bible?

Yes, definitely, there was a scenario that arose at work. For context, I deal with private money loans on the investment commercial side and, at the time, I was a broker. I was a middleman connecting one with a lender. We received the inquiry one day from a man named George. We'll call him George. It was for a large loan here locally on construction loan. We were moving along in the loan process, were set to close on the loan in about a week, and George was cut out of communication at one point, all of a sudden an email chain. I noticed it right away, and I asked. He was representing a borrower. I didn't know this, but he was promised a commission on the sales of these homes that were being constructed, but, again, he was cut off communication, so arose questions. I questioned the borrower, and he said George did not need to be in communication anymore. I let it drag along, but George reached out to me and was wondering where we were at with the loan process, and then he expressed the promise that was made to him.

My position, I have no liability in the loan. I don't take the risk on either side, but there is the scripture that says, "The root of all evil is the love of money." This transaction would have generated my company 120 grand alone. I would've taken 60 grand. I felt compelled to tell my lenders out of duty to Christ. Yeah, that was my example.

That George needed to be included, right?

What's that

To include George, right?

Yes. Yeah. I would've taken 60 grand myself on this transaction. That would've changed my life substantially a lot. It would've helped with the giving.

I think that's the kind of work situation where we're faced with an ethical question. We've all faced this, right? Everyone's doing it this way and all the pressure is to go this way, but you chose the harder path, lost some money in the process, but followed Jesus' commands.

Yeah. We were struggling as a company at the time, and it would've assisted a lot. Thankfully, the Lord provided later on. In a couple of months, we obtained another large transaction, so, yeah, it beared fruit in that way.

I'm just curious if Josh had the angel and the demon on his shoulders telling him like, "Take the money. Take the money."

Definitely did.

I'm just kidding.

Definitely did.

On another note, Josh, has your faith or the Bible impacted some of your personal relationships and, if so, how has that happened?

Absolutely, it's impacted a lot of relationships in my life. I did not grow up a Christian nor in a Christian home, and so, when I came to Christ, it changed a lot of relationships. The one I would like to speak on today is the one with my mother. Again, I did not grow up in a Christian home. My identity was in sports, and a lot of my emotions were channeled in a healthy way on the field, but, when I came home, I was bitter, angry and disrespectful to a lot of just people in my family. When I go into college, I came to Christ there. I was introduced to Christ through friends and, as time went on, I was part of a group called FCA. I was invited or told, voluntold, to speak on forgiveness which then brought me to the fourth commandment. Honor your mother and father.

I felt a deep conviction there because it does not say if, there's nothing attached. You just honor your mother and father. I wanted to be more like Christ, and so I started with my mother. I did not call her just because I needed something, which all kids do. I wanted to call her just to see how she was doing. I wanted to speak more kindly to her. Thankfully, she is loyal, loving, kind. She stuck with me all the way through. We saw counseling one day and, in a counseling session, she said, "The day that Josh got baptized," which was April 22nd, 2018, "was the day that Josh changed." Of all the days, that was the day. Shortly after that, she started coming to our church. She is here today.

Hi, mom.

She came to an Easter service spring of '22. Scott said a sermon, and he said that God turns all things around. He used this hand motion. I'm using his. It's not good people that go to heaven. It's bad people that recognize me, Jesus. I looked at my mother and I said, "Hey, mom, you're a bad person." She's been coming ever since. Praise God.

Interesting evangelism strategy, but go ahead.

It worked like a charm.

I wouldn't use that one, but...

No. I thank God for that conviction. I don't know where I would be in either the scenarios without Him and where me and my mother would be today.

Amen.

The full part of that command says, "Honor your mother and father so that your days may be long on the earth." Josh, may your days be long on the earth as you honor your mother and father.

I'll say she's a good person, too.

She's a good person. I've met her before. She's great.

She's a good person.

Yeah. The reason why we have these folks here is these are people who you will see walking in the lobby. They'll be opening doors for you. You've probably seen them before hopefully. It's to show us that discipleship doesn't just happen with pastors or super Christians or whatever, but normal people who are following Jesus one day at a time and they're growing and they're getting a little bit better over time. It might start when we're toddlers, maybe when we're young adults or it may take 50 years for us to get somewhere as we continue to grow, but it's for all of us. I hope all of you see a piece of yourself in some of these stories and learn how you can begin practicing, living out scripture in your day-to-day lives. Again, it's not easy, but it's so important, and I think we've heard that it's so worth it as well.

Anything else?

Please thank our panelists. Yeah.

Linda, will you pray us out? Give us some of that power.

Loving God, I thank You that You have brought each one of us here today for Your will and purpose. I thank You for Your word that tells us how much You love us, and You sent Jesus to be skin and flesh and to die for our sins so that we can be in communion with You for the rest of eternity.

Lord, I thank You for this community of faith. Lord, I ask that each one has been touched somehow today during this worship service, drawn closer to You and, if they have questions or concerns, they'll find someone to ask, that each person's faith in You has been strengthened and You'll continue to lead them in the ways that they can share Your love with others in their lives where You have placed them. Thank You for this time, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen.

Discussion Questions:

Read this week's scripture(s) & answer the below questions with your friends, family, or All In small group.

Opening Question: Looking back to last week's sermon and scripture... How did you live differently or practice what we talked about in your life this week? What did you do and how did it go?

Scripture Reflection Questions: Read this week's scripture together and discuss the following:

- What does "the rock" represent in this passage?
- What does Jesus promise to those who are willing to live by his words?

Sermon Reflection Questions: Reflecting on this week's sermon, discuss the following:

- How would you describe your spiritual foundations right now (eg: shaky, solid, brand new, slowly eroding away, being rebuilt, etc.)? What actions do you think Jesus calls you to in light of this?
- As you reflect on what you've learned during the "You've Heard it Said" sermon series the past few months, as well as the stories shared by the panel this Sunday, do you have any stories of your own to share or a way that you are viewing life and your circumstances differently via a biblical or scriptural lens?

Closing Question and Application: Given what we've discussed together today, how might God want you to apply these learnings to your life or in the life of your community this next week? Who might you share this with?

Closing group prayer: Spend a few minutes together in your group sharing prayer requests and then praying together for each other. Thank God for the time together, the conversation shared, the other people in the group, and for encouragement in the week ahead.