

Life Improvements --- Mountaintop Makeover --- Solid Rock or Sinking Sand

Isaiah 28:16-17 & Psalm 18:1-3, 30-33 & Matthew 7:21-29

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on a rock.” Matthew 7:24

Isaiah 28:16-17

¹⁶ Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, “See, I am laying in Zion a foundation stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation: One who trusts will not panic. ¹⁷ And I will make justice the line, and righteousness the plummet; hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and waters will overwhelm the shelter.”

Psalm 8:1-3, 30-33

¹ I love you, O LORD, my strength. ² The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my rock in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. ³ I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, so I shall be saved from my enemies.

³⁰ This God—his way is perfect; the promise of the LORD proves true; he is a shield for all who take refuge in him. ³¹ For who is God except the LORD? And who is a rock besides our God?—³² the God who girded me with strength, and made my way safe. ³³ He made my feet like the feet of a deer, and set me secure on the heights.

Well, today is the day! Today we come to the END of the SERMON ON THE MOUNT!! Today is the day when we yell, shout, jump up and down, and scream: **“move that bus!”** Our “Life Improvements --- Mountaintop Makeover” has finally come to a conclusion! We began our Life Improvements Sermon Series on January 17 of this year! Let’s set the scene of the Sermon on the Mount one last time: Jesus has just started His ministry. He’s picked the first of His disciples, and they are going throughout Galilee preaching the Good News of the Kingdom, healing every disease and sickness among the people. The news about Jesus has spread throughout the region; people from all over are bringing the sick, suffering, demon possessed, and paralyzed to Jesus. Large crowds from Galilee (like Williamson County), the Decapolis (a ten Gentile-city area), Jerusalem (like Austin), Judea (add Travis County) and the region across the Jordan (all the way down to the border and into Mexico) have chased Jesus down. When Jesus saw the crowd, He didn’t waste any time. He didn’t call a Session meeting or a Congregational meeting—He sat down and started to teach: *“Blessed are the poor in spirit --- blessed are those who mourn --- blessed are those who are meek --- blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness --- blessed are those who are merciful --- blessed are the pure in heart --- blessed are the peacemakers --- blessed are those who are persecuted.”*

During Lent of 2008, we spent eight weeks dissecting the Beatitudes in Matthew-- “Blessed and Broken.” Jesus starts His teaching by telling the crowds that God’s way of living is going to contradict man’s: give when others take, love when others hate, help when others don’t.

Last summer we did an 8-week series on the Lord’s Prayer: “The House of Prayer.” Do you remember when the ushers gave you a piece of bread as you came forward to the Communion table? We lifted that bread to the cross, and we asked for God’s forgiveness...then we took Communion as forgiven children!

Interwoven among the Beatitudes and the Lord’s Prayer message are these 15 mountaintop messages. We’ve spent 31 weeks studying the three chapters on the Sermon on the Mount! I started the series this year by saying that if we wanted a mountaintop makeover—we needed to learn to build on a Solid Foundation. Do you remember where the safest place is in San Francisco? It’s in the middle of the Golden Gate Bridge! Experts

estimate the bridge will sustain a 9.0 quake! Why? Because of two things: It's flexible—it will sway with the earthquake, and it's relational—every piece of the bridge is preoccupied with its foundation. Here is where we arrive once again today—will we choose to build our lives on Solid Rock or Sinking Sand?

Friends, let us listen to our Gospel reading from our really good friend, Matthew.

Matthew 7:21-29

²¹ “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. ²² On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?’ ²³ Then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers.’ ²⁴ “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. ²⁵ The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. ²⁶ And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!” ²⁸ Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, ²⁹ for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.ⁱ

Let us pray --- Lord, may Your Words be alive and redemptive today in our lives! May Your Words shape us, mold us and fashion us into Your servants. May we hear Your Words and put them into practice. May we build our house on the Rock of Christ, today, tomorrow and forever. Amen

As I've thought about my last sermon at RRPC, I have prayed earnestly and fervently about what I should say. What haven't I told you yet? What do I need to tell you? The questions prompted my wife and I to go back and look at what I HAVE told you:

I arrived in August of 2006 and started preaching from the book of Ephesians on the first Sunday of September—“A Call to Community.” Our plumb line was God's amazing grace. During our first Advent and Christmas, we looked at the book of Luke and discovered our “Hope Revealed”...Jesus! We started our new year in 2007 with, “Dancing With THE Star!” I AM THE LORD OF THE DANCE, said He!

Lent 2007: we spent six weeks with the Shepherd and Psalm 23. We read Philip Keller's, “*A Shepherd's Look at Psalm 23.*” It was our first ALL CHURCH STUDY! We celebrated Holy Week and Easter and headed into Pentecost with our second ALL CHURCH STUDY, a 50-day, 8-week adventure: DARING TO DREAM! Do you remember meeting my good friend, California Carl?

Summer 2007: we spent five weeks learning about worship, “Why We Do What We Do.” (Show them the ichthus painting that Magda did for us.) We concluded our summer with our August series, “The Great Cloud of Witnesses.” We learned about our good friends: St. Augustine, John Calvin and Jonathan Edwards.

We kicked off the Fall of 2008 with our third ALL CHURCH STUDY; an 8-week, 40-day study, “*The Purpose Drive Life*” by Rick Warren. During Stewardship, we studied the book of Galatians and the fruit of the Holy Spirit. For Advent and Christmas, we journeyed to Bethlehem—looking at the Nativity through the eyes of Mary, Joseph, Angels, Shepherds and God.

“Dipped, Dunked or Sprinkled” we kicked off the 2008 New Year by remembering our baptism. Everyone received a stone to remember Revelation 2:17, *“To them who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give them a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.”* I pray you will always remember your new name: Son of the King, Daughter of the King, Child of the King.

Our 9-week Lenten series taught us the Beatitudes. We celebrated Holy Week and Easter Sunday with Resurrection Power! From Easter to the end of July, we studied the book of Acts. “Will you please turn to Chapter 29 of the book of Acts?” ☺ We were blessed to hear personal testimonies every Sunday--from many of you in this congregation. We even wrote our first book together, “Resurrection Responses.” Truly we are living Chapter 29 every day.

During August we continued our Christian Biography series, “The Great Cloud of Witness” and learned about Jesus, our Pioneer, David Brainerd, and Henrietta Mears.

Our fourth ALL CHURCH STUDY was a 7-week series with John Ortberg, *“The Life You’ve Always Wanted.”* Our November Stewardship series was “Treasures in Clay Jars.” Do you remember Carla Ek throwing pots in our sanctuary? Advent/Christmas brought Charles Dickens and his famous story, *“A Christmas Carol”*—Christ turned us from “Humbug to Hallelujah!”

In 2009 we studied the Gospel of John from January through June. Our Lenten Series was based on “The Great I AM” statements of Jesus. (Hold up Magda Enslin’s painting!) We concluded with “I AM THE RESURRECTION” on Easter Sunday! We continued in John with our Pentecost series on the person and the work of the Holy Spirit. John 14:16 *“And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another counselor to be with you forever...the Spirit of Truth.”* And the word “another” means “identical”—we learned the Holy Spirit is Jesus’ IDENTICAL TWIN who will lead us into all truth! No need to fear, the Holy Spirit is here!

Last summer we looked at the Lord’s Prayer and continued our August “Great Cloud of Witnesses” with John Bunyan, John Newton, William Cowper and John Calvin. By Fall, we continued with our fifth ALL CHURCH STUDY. Fellow Texan, pastor, author, and teacher, Max Lucado, taught us how to be “FEARLESS!” During Stewardship, we loved First Corinthians as we “Continued The Journey.” Our Advent/Christmas series was about “Advent Interruptions.” We looked at the song of Mary, Elizabeth, Joseph, the Angels, and Zechariah. God really loves to interrupt our lives with His song! On Christmas Eve we sang the SONG OF SALVATION—the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

During 2010 we’ve been trying to “move that bus!” On April 25, we celebrated turning 25! Who could ever forget the standing ovation that was given to the founding members? What joy filled our hearts! How about all of our VBS sermons? I heard Captain Jack Seagull has taken the eternal cruise!

SO WHAT?

(Pastor Dave takes off his robe and puts on his tool belt...it’s empty.) When I went to seminary, my best friend, PJ, hired me part-time, any-time, to work construction. He called to tell me he’d pick me up in the morning, did I have a tool belt? I called my good friend, Pastor Tony, and asked him if he had an extra tool belt. I went and

got his tool belt—notice—NO TOOLS. I was assigned to work with Alex, a recent immigrant from Poland. Seriously, we listened to Polish music and Polish news and talk shows on the Chicago radio station as we drove to our job site! After my first day on the job, PJ called Alex to see how I worked out. Alex told my boss, “He’s a good worker but could you ask him to bring his own tools?”

PJ called me that night and told me to be ready by 6 a.m. As we got out of the truck the next morning for work, PJ said, “Just a minute, Dave, I think you’re gonna need this...” And he proceeded to fill my tool belt with his tools: a framing hammer, a speed square, a chisel, a tape measure, a punch, cats claw, a pencil, chalk box utility knife...”

I still remember the day when PJ’s older brother, John, and I framed a chimney chase for a two-story home. PJ stopped by and said, “Tear it down. It’s 1/4” off.” PJ is a man of few words. John and I had worked on that thing for a few days. I said, “No way. We measured twice cut once!” (PJ’s favorite saying.) PJ went out to the truck and got his plumb line. Guess what? We were off by 1/4”! We tore it down, squared it up and built it plumb.

Friends, here’s my final “so what” for my final unveil at RRPC. Here’s my final “MOVE THAT BUS!” Are you ready? Here it is. I don’t want you to miss it:

Do you know the safest place in the whole world? I do. (Pastor Dave stands upon his Bible.)

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock.

Friends, put the living word of God into your life’s toolbelt. This is the right foundation on which to build your entire life.

My final “so what” is a song. As it plays, read the words, look around the room—look at my pictures of Jesus, look at the many wonderful memories of our time together.

Friends, I pray that everything I’ve done or said has been to help you to fill your tool belt so that you, too, can, and will, build your life on SOLID ROCK.

Will you love Jesus more?

Round Rock Presbyterian Church
Round Rock, Texas 78681
July 25, 2010
Reverend David Peters

Phillips, Craig & Dean
Will You Love Jesus More lyrics

I feel quite sure if I did my best
I could maybe impress you
With tender words and a harmony
A clever rhyme or two

But if all I've done in the time we've shared
Is turn your eyes on me
Then I've failed at what I've been called to do
There's someone else I want you to see

[CHORUS]

Will you love Jesus more
When we go our different ways
When this moment is a memory
Will you remember His face
Will you look back and realize
You sensed His love more than you did before
I'd pray for nothing less
Than for you to love Jesus more

I'd like to keep these memories
In frames of gold and silver
And reminisce a year from now
About the smiles we've shared
But above all else I hope you will come
To know the Father's love
When you see the Lord face to face

You'll hear Him say "well done"

[REPEAT CHORUS TWICE]

I'd pray for nothing less
Than for you to love Jesus more

©1994 Ariose Music\Lehsem Music, LLC DBA Lehsem Songs CCLI# 1459549

ⁱ *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*. 1989. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.