

The JESUS we never knew x39. Sunday 24th September_2017.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TAILVIHZIzU>

Read: Matthew 7: 24 – 29. The 2 house builders.

AIM for this year and this theme: for each of us individually and together to become better friends with JESUS. That is the real Jesus – not the Jesus of sentiment or others invention. To do this we need to be able to recognise and follow his voice.

I once was on holiday with 2 friends and we pitched our tent on a sandy headland, above the calm and beautiful Mediterranean Sea. We went to bed hearing the gentle breeze and smelling the sea. A few hours later we were woken by the sound of the wind and hearing the crashing sea pounding close by. As we opened the front of the tent the wind caught it and began to lift it off the ground. We emerged and tried against the driving rain and rushing wind to grab the tent and its contents and shove it into the boot of the car and then to climb into the tiny hatch back to spend the rest of the night with the storm driving around us. The next day we awoke to a calm sea and hot sunshine, A real lesson about **not pitching a tent let alone build a house on the sand by the sea.**

We had a choice and made the wrong one. Many people in the Caribbean and parts of Asia have little choice but to erect shanty houses on sand with no foundations and insubstantial building materials. The first hurricane that comes along usually means (if you're still alive) gathering scattered materials and rebuilding your house maybe even on the same ground and with no firm foundation.

Jesus was a Carpenter and would have known about the importance of building a house with enough of a firm foundation to withstand storms and gales. In Palestine, too a house built by a gentle stream in Summer could become a raging torrent in Winter storms.

JESUS: to know, to love, to follow his voice.

So, let us start with a significant claim about Jesus. People came to Jesus with all sorts of questions and needs. His significant core teachings Matthew gathers together in chapters 5 – 7 of his Gospel and we call it the Sermons on the Mountain. At the end of these few verses we have looked at Matthew notes that the people were amazed at his teaching – not just its content but also the way he lived it because in contrast to the other teachers of his day he had an AUTHORITY. His teachings had a moral authority and they made real sense.

JESUS did not ask people to simply listen to his teaching – but he called for us to OBEY his teaching. Either JESUS is then very arrogant or he knows that he speaks the truth and is the very mouth piece of God.

It is not enough to simply know the facts about Jesus – that will never satisfy the human heart or God's heart - but it is about relationship with God. It is about choosing to respond to Jesus – to receive him and actively believe and trust him (*John 1:12*). Jesus came in such a way into the world – as Son of Man, as fully human that we can approach God through him – **he calls for us to BUILD OUR LIVES ON WHAT HE TEACHES.** These are

not dead teachings that were spoken thousands of years ago but living teachings that millions of people base their lives on now. What truths are we building our lives on? How do we decide what is the right thing to do and the way to live and build society and community?

JESUS describes us building our lives as though we were building a house and calls upon us to build on what he teaches and shows with his life. Many people in the world do NOT know what Jesus says and what he teaches. There are even some peoples in the churches who don't know what Jesus really says.

Jesus does NOT say – it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere and a nice person. He doesn't agree that all routes lead to God. He says simply: there **are 2 ways you can build your life**. If we build on him and his teaching then we are building on solid rock and we will survive whatever storms and hurricanes life throws at us. To build on any other faith or philosophy will ne be adequate to survive the final storms and gales and testings. ITS NOT THE HOUSE – whether grand or simple that's important – IT'S THE FOUNDATION. It's not what we've done that will save us – it's who Jesus is and what he's done that is essential. It is not our reaching up to God through religion that rescues us – but God reaching down in Jesus Christ that rescues us.

Jesus called on us all to both come to listen and to do what he did. (To know, to love, to serve). That listening and doing will provide a deep foundation and keep us safe as well as able to live in this very pressurised struggle of life in the world. Those who hear the words but change nothing are building on unstable ground. To hear Jesus' teaching but change nothing gives us false hope and an arrogance that is unattractive to others and unfulfilling personally. (What a great/ terrible collapse will happen to those who do this)

You know it really does matter how we build our lives! It may not matter what part of the world we live in but it DOES matter whether we are listening to and doing the things of JESUS! That is a message for all of us and – indeed it is the Way to live for all of us.

PAUSE....

But I promised you 3 guys moving to Exmoor something from Scripture and here it is. As you pool your resources and form a new intentional community then hear the words of Jesus: **Wise women build their house on the solid rock teachings of Jesus – hearing and doing what please him!** They do not follow other voices or teachings. When the winds and rain blow your house/ your lives will not collapse because they are built on rock. (This is true for all of us).

PRAYER: that I may with God's grace come to know Jesus more deeply and intimately, and so love him and be enabled to follow him. Amen.

Pray for the grace to know the voice of Jesus and to follow as he leads us out.

Pray for the grace NOT to follow any voice which takes me away from Jesus.

Pray for the grace to enable others to know and follow the voice of Jesus only.