Series slide

Intro to message
Last week: Big Faith – it’s what God desires; what He’s been trying to restore: Trust

Today: Practical Biblical Teaching

Discovered: When people tell their stories about growing in their faith, this consistently shows up.
- I’d knew about God …
- I’ve gone to church …
- But then I was invited … to a Bible Study / small group
  … to a church I’d never been to before
  … to a youth group
  … and someone was teaching the Bible, and I heard stuff that I never knew was in there.
- Not just information
- It was taught in a practical, applicable way.

One of the things that grows our faith is when we’re exposed to practical biblical teaching.
At the end of the teaching we don’t just know more – we know what to do with what we’ve learned.

When we begin to see the Bible as something we are to DO, and not just KNOW, our faith grows.

The problem is it’s easy to just feel content covering the material. “God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.”

And the reason people like shorter and shorter sermons is because they feel they already know what the person speaking is going to say, because they just cover the material.

But when Jesus opened the Old Testament to teach, it was different.
When Paul began to speak on the teachings of the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus, it was different.

Jesus taught for application, not simply knowledge.

Matthew 7:24-29

Background:
  Jesus just finished teaching the Sermon on the Mount.
  This entire message was about what we’re to do, not just what to believe.
The reason Jesus taught in a very applicable way was because he knew simply knowing stuff doesn't make a difference. It's what you do with what you know that makes a difference.

We're not talking about our salvation ... i.e. works.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus was saying:

*If you really had big faith in God, here's what you would do:*

- If you're asked to go one mile, go two.
- If someone sins against you, forgive them.
- By the way, lust – what you think about – is a sin.
- Give as much as you can.

*Here's what you do if you really believe God and trust His ways.*
*Not to gain God's favor – we already have that.*

So we pick things up at the end of His sermon.

Matthew 7:24

"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.

*If you want to see a difference in your life ...*
*If you want to see God show up in your world ...*
*Then you have to do these things.*

In our culture we have a fallacy that we rate our spirituality on our church attendance.

- I didn't miss church this week.
- Maybe life would go better for you if you went to church more consistently.
- God, how could You let this happen to me? I went to church for 3 months in a row!
- God, I promise to get back in church if You will ...

As if somehow we think the consistency of attendance is what makes the difference.

Jesus says:

- No
- You can hear all my sermons ...
- write them all down ...
- index and catalog them ...
- but if you don't do any of this stuff, it's not going to make any difference in your life.

The thing that's going to make your faith grow isn't hearing this stuff, or even understanding it ... it's doing something with it.
That’s why when people tell their stories about growing in their faith they’ll say:

- I heard practical biblical teaching.
- I understood it.
- And for the first time I knew what I was supposed to DO …
- and then I went and DID IT.
- I never knew you could apply the Bible to your life!
- I applied it to my family
  … my marriage
  … my business
  … my finances
  … my future
  … my morality

When I did this it was like God suddenly came alive in my life.
I believed this stuff before.
But since I began doing it, my life is different.
I see God at work in my life.

When your faith intersects with God’s faithfulness God honors your obedience.
Because your obedience is an act of faith.

You say:

  God, I’m going to do what You’ve asked me to do.
  Not because it makes sense.
  Not because I saw someone else do it.
  Not because I think it will “work” or make my life better.
  I’ll do it simply because You said to do it.
  God, I trust You.

And God comes through.
He’s there in your relationships.
He’s there in your mind and heart.
He’s there in your marriage.
He’s there in your finances.
He shows up in tangible ways in your life.

But that doesn’t happen until somebody helps you to understand how to apply the Bible to your life.

Dave & Dave / Health Club scenario
You might be an fitness “expert”.

If you want God to explode in the reality of your life, you have to do things.
Here’s why.
One of the things that grows your faith is when you put yourself in environments where people teach the Word of God within the context of application.

You are around someone, or a group of people, who will aspire you – not to knowledge – but to do something with God’s Word.

Jesus is in essence saying,

1. Thanks for coming to church today.
2. Thanks for listening to the sermon.
3. But it’s not going to do one bit of good if you don’t do something with what you’ve been taught.

Being a consistent attendee has almost no value … unless you do something with the things God teaches you.

Jesus isn’t up in heaven taking church attendance.

One of the best things you can do for your life, your family’s life, is to be in environments where somebody opens the Bible in a way that’s practical and applicable.

Matthew 7:25
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.

Why didn’t the house fall?
It wasn’t because they knew about storms or house construction.
It was because they did the right thing.
They built their house on a rock.
Listening and obedience.

If you want your life to be like a person who built their house on a solid foundation, Jesus said you have to do this stuff.
Not just simply hear it, or even hear it and believe it.

Matthew 7:26
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.

These are those who just show up.
Jesus is saying:

1. You can have 100% perfect attendance … and be a fool.
2. 100% perfect attendance .. and build a house that will be an absolute disaster.

God, how could you allow this to happen … I never miss church!

Attendance doesn’t make the difference.
It’s obedience that makes the difference in your life and faith.
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.

The teachers of the Law just gave more knowledge.  
They may have been creative.  
They may have shared accurate, historical facts.  
They may have come up with some new twist on the teaching.

But Jesus said, “Here’s what this looks like in the real world.”  
That’s an act of faith.  
It shows you trust in God.  
And God honors that faith and makes you grow.

So what’s the “to do” with today’s message?

As this parable portrays it, what’s the relationship between putting Jesus’ words into practice and having a rock-solid foundation? How would that be reflected in your life?

Have you ever applied a specific teaching of Scripture that, looking back, prepared you for an unexpected storm?

Can you think of a difficult time you’ve faced that could have been avoided if you’d applied the principles of Scripture?

How different do you think your life would be if you’d consistently applied scriptural teaching on relationships during that time, what would be different today in your marriage, family, or friendships?

Will you make the choice to put yourself in an environment where you will regularly hear practical biblical teaching AND make a commitment to God that – with His help – you will put His words into practice in your life?