A question that has often been asked of Christians is, “If you were ever put on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?” If your life was ever compared to an ungodly and non-believing person, what would distinguish your life from theirs?

A sad reality is that our world is increasingly becoming ungodly. The old belief that America is a Christian nation has ended; most say we are now in the post-Christian era. Political correctness has now become a god so even now the phrases “one nation under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance, and “In God We Trust” on our currency, are in jeopardy.

Yet the saddest reality is that even those of us who call ourselves Christian are adopting ungodly ways of living. Increasing numbers of people who call themselves Christian swear, live immoral lives sexually, lie and cheat, and live selfish lives concerned mostly about themselves. In fact, sometimes those who claim no faith in God live more Godly lives than so-called Christians.

It was the great Hindu leader from India, Ghandi, who stated, “I would become a Christian, but for the Christians.” Ghandi read the Bible extensively and he was really drawn to the teachings of Jesus. He loved Jesus’ message of love, peace, doing good things for one’s neighbor along with caring for the poor and needy.

Yet when he looked at how Christians actually lived and acted, he often saw behavior and words that were completely contrary to Jesus. Rather than love and peace, he saw church people living mostly for their own desires. He saw divisions where church people wouldn’t forgive each other and where anger, hurt and divisions prevailed. “I would be a Christian but for the Christians.”

As we continue our Walk through the Bible, as we look this morning at Psalms 42-77, we see a number of Psalms where David is crying out against his enemies. He is crying out against those who are living ungodly lives and defying God’s truth. David is crying out to God for help so he can remain firm in his faith in the face of this ungodly opposition.

In Psalm 55, David says, “Confuse the wicked, O Lord, confound their speech, for I see violence and strife in the city. Day and night they prowl about on its walls, malice and abuse are within it. Destructive forces are at work in the city; threats and lies never leave its streets.”

Yet David goes on to say, “If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it.” But he says in verse 13, “But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend, with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship as we walked with the throng at the house of God.” The plain fact according to David was that these ungodly forces were also found among religious people who had also turned against the truth.
He goes on to say in verse 20, “My companion attacks his friends; he violates his covenant. His speech is smooth as butter, yet war is in his heart; his words are more soothing than oil, yet they are drawn swords.” The reality for David was that the ungodly forces he faced were not just in an ungodly world; they were among people who proclaimed to be believers.

C.S. Lewis wrote a famous book called “The Screwtape Letters,” in which Screwtape is Satan’s undersecretary or assistant in hell. As the story unfolds, Screwtape is training some apprentice devils to go to earth and to try to lead people into sin; to try to turn them against God.

As Screwtape asks them the strategy they will use to accomplish this mission, one says that he is going to go to earth and try to tempt and get people to believe there is no God. Yet Screwtape scolds this devil asking him why he would do this since most people on earth already live and act as if there is no God.

In asking another devil her strategy, she talked about tempting people to live immorally, yet again Screwtape questions this since immorality is already an epidemic on earth. Finally Screwtape asks a third devil his strategy, “I’m going to go to the churches,” he says, “and I’m going to whisper in people’s ears that the usher is a hypocrite, the pastor’s sermons shouldn’t be listened to, the Deacon/Leader is a liar, etc.”

Screwtape responds, “You do that and you will ruin Christians and churches by the millions.” The question is, my friends, where do we face our biggest challenge in living a Godly life? Unfortunately, it is often in the church where as David says our “speech is as smooth as butter.” The challenge is how to live a Godly life in the church, and in an increasingly ungodly world.

David cries out in Psalm 56, “When I am afraid, I will trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?” And in Psalm 57 David says, “I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purposes for me, rebuking those who hotly pursue me; God sends his love and faithfulness.”

In the New Testament, Matthew 7, Jesus tells a parable to help us understand how to live a Godly life. In this he tells about the foolish person who built their house upon the sand, and the wise person who built their house upon the rock. When the wind, waves and storms came, of course, the house on the sand was washed away while the house on the rock stood firm.

I’ve told the story before of the wealthy developer who made a fortune by designing and constructing homes in a fast growing suburb. As he grew older, this man began to spend more time in Florida in the winter. One year during the late fall he told a faithful construction superintendent who worked for him to build a beautiful mansion for his use when he would be home from Florida. Spare no expense. Quality is much more important than cost.

This superintendent went to work immediately, yet as the project began he realized he could make lots of extra money if he used inferior materials and labor. He could use marginal lumber, cheaper pipes and insulation, and cover these things up with paint and veneer. It would look sensational on the outside, yet would be totally inferior in its construction.

When the developer returned from Florida he drove out right away to look at this dream house. As far as he could see it looked superb. He praised the employee for his excellent work, as well
as his faithfulness and loyalty through the years. Then with tears in his eyes the developer said to his trusted worker, “In gratefulness for your many years of service, I give you the keys to this new house. It’s yours! I had it built for you. You, of all people, deserve it.”

In a sense, my friends, this is what happens to each of us. We are given instructions to build our lives with care and respect; to build them on the lasting foundation of God’s word. Yet often we are tempted to turn to ungodly things that are cheap and inferior; to throw away our time, energy, values and physical well-being on that which is empty and will not last.

I know of a young person who played her way through school. She rarely took a course that challenged her intellect. She only valued the pleasure of the moment. “Let the future take care of itself,” she said flippantly. She had no roots or foundation. Friends who were building strong foundations soon drifted from her.

Shortly after she finished school she awoke to find wind and rain lashing against her life. She found that there was nothing around her but sand. With a crash her life caved in. It has taken her many years to get her head above water again.

I know of another young person who built his life on drugs and alcohol. His foundation almost made sand look solid. When he was not drunk or stoned, life was boring and meaningless to him. He even fooled himself into the ungodly thinking that his life was great. Partying was what his life was all about.

Yet the storms did come; and how did they come! They battered him at every turn. He wasn’t strong enough to withstand them and he landed in the hospital and in treatment. His dreams, body, mind and spirit were broken. His house built on the sand fell flat.

I also know a young couple who thought they were madly in love. Friendships, church, God and family were all shoved aside because all that mattered to them was their “romantic” love. They believed the ungodly deception that their human love was all that mattered; their love would be the foundation for their future together.

However, a storm came; the winds gained hurricane force; they were totally unprotected. They had no faith, no church, no real foundation for their lives. They had bought into the ungodly idea that all they needed was themselves. So when they fell, they fell hard, and life came crashing down.

The Psalms tell us, and Jesus reminds us, to build your life on the rock. To build your life on that Godly foundation that is lasting. We need to build our lives on Jesus and walk each day in his example. The truth is that a Godly life in Jesus is the only foundation that will never crumble.

So again I ask you: If you were put on trial for being a Christian would there be enough evidence to convict you? Are you living a Godly, or an ungodly life, in your daily life and in the church? Jesus said that the wise person builds their life on the rock. May your life be a Godly life in an ungodly world.