Show Me The Blue Prints - Matthew 7: 24-27

Open ask someone in your group to pray for God to open our hearts to His Word and our ears to Him and the comments to others. Pray for trusting and free dialogue.

Discuss any issues your group needs to address.

The Point
The context of the parable of the wise and foolish builder concerns people who call Jesus Lord but end up not following his teachings. What a timely reminder for us who are claimed by Christ, to live for Christ. One recent study showed that 84 percent of Americans call themselves “Christian,” and yet behavioral studies show no areas of distinction between “Christians” and “non-Christians;” Not in personal morality, not in social ethics, not in family life, not even in giving to charity. Could it be that we have a form of Christianity that’s been built on shifting sand? Jesus told his followers that they had a choice of two paths: The path of discipline, which often schedules the tough stuff up front...or the path of procrastination and least resistance, which schedules the fun stuff up front and remains oblivious to the coming weather.

Read Matthew 7: 21 - 27

Watch the video clip that illustrates this parable

Discussion Questions
1. How do you understand building your life upon the foundation of Jesus protect you in life’s storms?
2. What are the things that distract us from digging deeper and founding our lives upon bedrock?
3. If you could identify one area of “shifting sand” in your life, what would it be?

Study
Using the Sermon on the Mount as our study text, look at any of the following sections of Scripture:

Oaths/ Commitments Read Matthew 5: 31 - 37
Why do you think oaths or pledges are necessary for society? What is Jesus’ intention for His followers regarding their promises? See also James 5:12
In what area of life do you wish there would be more loyalty? Where do you sense a need to be more loyal in your own life?

Dealing with Conflict Matthew 5: 38 - 42
Moses intention for the “eye for an eye” law (EX 21:24) was to limit vengeance and to keep retaliation and violence from escalating. What is your evaluation of this “law”? Do you see retaliation ever solving problems? Read 1 Peter 3:9 - How is blessing the opposite of retaliation? How do you balance justice with forgiveness?

Spiritual Activities Matthew 6: 1 - 18
What 3 acts of piety does Jesus talk about here?
How do you understand Jesus’ words in MT 5:16 and MT 6:1?
What is the earliest prayer you can recall?
If our Father knows what we need before we pray (vs 8), why pray?
What is the purpose of fasting? If our church scheduled a fast would you participate?

Faults of others Matthew 7: 1 - 6
What does this mean?

Wise & Foolish Builders 7: 24 - 27
Why does the foolish builder build his house on sand?
Which of the following storms of life do you think claim the most spiritual casualties?

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<tr>
<th>intellectual doubts</th>
<th>moral failures</th>
<th>relational conflict</th>
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<tr>
<td>personal crises</td>
<td>creeping apathy</td>
<td>others you can think of</td>
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What is Jesus promising to those who live by His words?
What challenge is the Holy Spirit leading you to take on?

Points to Remember
Stable lives are built on living out faith in the promises of God.

Praying For and With Each Other
*Use this prayer and add your own petitions:*

Father, I come to pray for myself and others in my church (name them)...

May we have faith in You and not in ourselves, for You are faithful. Help us to trust Your promises, for they are all “yes” and “amen” in Christ. *(1 Corinthians 1:9; 2 Corinthians 1:20)*

May we be determined to seek Your kingdom and righteousness before all else, confident that as we do, You will take care of what we need to live day by day. Help us to ask You for what we need in total dependence, trusting You as our Father who will give us far more than any earthly father could. *(Matthew 6:33, 25-32; 7:7-11)*

May we not worry about tomorrow, simply turning every anxious thought into prayer. Increase our faith – and don’t let it fail! Help us to live as those who amaze You with our faith; may our lack of faith never limit You. *(Matthew 6:34; Philippians 4:6; Luke 17:5; 22:32; 7:9; Matthew 13:58)*

Give us faith to get out of the boat, as Peter did, to walk on the water – and keep our eyes on You and not on the waves. In Jesus’ name – amen, so be it!

Please also pray for:
*The people receiving the personal care kits through Lutheran World Relief.*
*Pray that our praying, fasting and acts of charity are done to transform us to be more Christ like.*