



“The Path of Discipleship”  
Luke 6:46-49

**Idea:** There is no middle ground on the path of discipleship. One either obeys or disobeys the Word of God.

**Intro:** Read Luke 6:46-49.

In these verses, our Lord Jesus offers instruction on how one might build his or her life on a foundation that enables it to withstand the storms of life. I think it is safe to say that we all understand the power of moving water. This year, like every year, we have read news articles and watched reports from areas around our country that have been devastated by flood waters. Just a few weeks ago, a slow-moving weather system dumped between ten and fourteen inches of rain in the St. Louis and eastern Kentucky areas. Both of these two floods have been described as 1-in-1,000 year rain events, which have resulted in the deaths of nearly forty people and billions of dollars in damage. We watched videos of houses being moved off their foundations and carried down swollen rivers.

Storm waters bring devastation to everything in their path. The same is true of the storms of life. Many people get swept away in torrents by a medical diagnosis, the death of a loved-one, and the loss of a job. Others are wrecked by marital strife, substance abuse, and financial loss. The storms of life often slam against our lives unexpectedly and unannounced. While other times they are self-inflicted and the result of poor choices. One thing, of which we can all be sure, is that their presence is a reality we must recognize. We must prepare for them, and we should also allow them to help us further develop as Christ’s disciple.

The story of Job is full of storms. In one day, this man from ancient times lost his cattle, donkeys, sheep, camels, servants, and his ten children. Not long after that, on another day, Job was struck with a terrible disease that left him covered in loathsome sores all over his body. His life had been so devastated that his loving wife said, “*Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die*” (Job 2:9). At the beginning of his story, we discover that God allowed these storms to show His power over Satan, who strutted over the earth as if he were Lord (Job 1:7; 2:2). Job had done nothing to deserve or cause these storms. They were not self-inflicted (Job 1:1). The trials he endured were sent to teach Satan that God rules supremely, though he has yet to learn the lesson. They were also sent so that those of us who read the story of Job learn this truth for ourselves. At the end of the story, we find out that Job too had much to learn. This righteous and upright man was not perfect. There was room for growth in his walk with and understanding of God (Job 42:5-6).

Likewise, there is room for growth in our walk with the Lord. If you know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior today, then you have been invited into an ever-growing intimacy with God. This relationship is one of discipleship as we learn how to walk closer and closer to Him. Today, we finish Jesus’ teaching on this subject in the Sermon on the Plain.

**Inquiry:** As we have learned in the sixth chapter of Luke, Jesus is greater than and the fulfillment of the Sabbath (vs. 1-5). He is the repose that this weekly day of rest foreshadowed. We have discovered that love compels the Lord to seek and heal broken people (vs. 6-11). He is our Life-Giver. We have also seen that out of His desire to heal the broken, Jesus appointed twelve men to preach the message of the Kingdom and demonstrate its presence by performing signs and wonders. These apostles would continue the work of Christ after He was gone. They would establish the Church and its doctrine.

Following the appointment of the apostles, Jesus came down the mountain with them to a “level place.” There He presented the apostles with an object lesson. He offered lessons on discipleship. In verses 17-19, Jesus taught them the importance of standing on level ground with others and being with the people. He then went on to describe the profile, perspective, and practice of His disciples (vs. 20-36). Then He described the disposition of a disciple in verses 37-45. Believers have the moral authority and responsibility of pointing out and correcting sin both in the lives of others and the culture, but they are to do so redemptively free of an arrogant judgmentalism. There is yet one final lesson on discipleship. Jesus offers a description of the path of discipleship. He portrays it as one of obedience. We discover that there is no middle ground on the path of discipleship. One either obeys or disobeys the Word of God.

The Bible is God’s Word. It is both a map navigating us through life and a light illuminating our path. King David said of God’s Word:

*<sup>1</sup>Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord!...<sup>9</sup>How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word...<sup>105</sup>Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.* – Psalm 119:1, 9, 105

From our passage, there are three truths that illuminate our path.

## **1. Lordship necessitates obedience.**

Jesus asks a probing question: *“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?”* (vs. 46). Saying Lord twice intensifies the affirmation of allegiance in the disciple’s life. This title predisposes the idea of obedience. Ironically, however, Jesus had followers who did not listen and obey what He said. In a similar sermon, Jesus pointed out to the audience who listened to Him on the mountain that it is not enough to claim His Lordship or even to appear as being religious. What is important is doing what He has said to do (Matt 7:21-23).

As a Christ-follower the habit and practice of your life ought to be one of obedience to God’s Word. It is hypocritical to call yourself a Christian and fail to do what Jesus says. Even worse, ongoing disobedience proves that a person does not love Jesus, which reveals a false belief in Christ (John 14:15, 21, 24; 15:10, 14).

Obedience is a necessary ingredient of Christian discipleship. It, however, does not produce God’s forgiveness and acceptance. No sinner will ever “obey” his or her way into a relationship with Jesus Christ. The Bible clearly teaches that sinners are saved by grace alone through faith alone (Eph 2:8-9), yet saving faith is never alone. It is always complemented with an obedience that radiates from faith. James, the half-brother of the Lord Jesus, calls on believers to *“be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving themselves”* (James 1:22).

This is exactly what Jesus goes on to say in Luke 6. *“Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them...”* (vs. 47). The person who knows Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is one who has first come to Him in faith and repentance of sin (Rom 10:9-10). Faith is then followed up with and proven by doing what Jesus has said. You see, for our faith to be true our obedience must be real. The storms of life that often slam against our lives can arise unexpectedly from outside sources, yet they can also come as the result of our poor choices. Jesus offers no middle ground for obedience. The

structures of our lives will stand or fall in accordance with our commitment to obeying God's Word. This is true of both natural and self-inflicted storms, which leads us to a second truth that illuminates our path.

## **2. Obedience to God's Word safeguards one's life.**

The action Jesus speaks of in verse 47 is in the present tense. The person who comes and keeps on coming, hears and keeps on hearing, and does and keeps on doing the Word is like a man who built his house on the firm bedrock. As verse 48 declares, he is stable and grounded when the storm brings a flood of rushing water against him. It is important to take note of Jesus words here. He said, "*when a flood arose*" and "*the stream broke against the house.*" Just as storms are a natural, common, and routine aspect of nature, so are trials and difficulties common and routine in our lives.

This past week I visited one of our senior adults in the hospital. He has been battling a string of health issues for over a month. While that was happening, one of our younger ladies was diagnosed again with cancer. There is another family heartbroken over poor choices being made by one of their family members. I know of marital strife and ongoing conflict between divorced parents. Some of these storms slamming into the lives of our brothers and sisters are outside of their control. Others are experiencing self-inflicted storms.

What is Jesus' point in verse 48? The obedient disciple lays a foundation on the rock, and though his or her house is battered by the rains and the flood, it stands to the end. It stands because this disciple has chosen to build his or her life upon God and His Word. The disciple's life is not built upon what he or she may think is best or what culture and others believe. This disciple understands that God has spoken for his or her good and blessing. Just as God graciously set the parameters for Adam and Eve in Eden, He has graciously set the parameters for what is right and wrong and for what will bless and harm in our world today. The obedient disciple comes to the Lord, listens to His Word, and does what it says, which results in a life that is safeguarded.

Jesus is not promising in this verse a life without difficulties and suffering. Pain and trials are a natural part of living in a fallen world. What Jesus is promising is that the person who builds his or her house on the rock of His Word will endure through those trials. The house will stand strong through the battering of the flood waters. This disciple will not undermine his or her life with the pain that comes from sin.

God's Word's is "*a lamp to my feet and a light to my path*" (Ps 119:105). As a safeguard, it illuminates the path of the disciple so that he does not slip and fall. The only harm then that can harm the life of a disciple is that which is self-inflicted, which leads us to the third and final truth of illumination.

## **3. Disregarding God's Word weakens one's life.**

As we have seen, the faithful disciple comes, hears, and does what he or she has heard from God's Word. In verse 49, the faithless person who disregarded God's Word never came to the Lord. He or she is presented as one who heard but did not do because he or she refuses to come to Jesus and set under the authority of His Word.

God has spoken and given humanity words by which to live by. These words bring life to those who obey them. But when people refuse to obey, their disobedience weakens and undermines their lives. The house they build for themselves is eroded away by the storms of life, and in the end the fall of that house is great.

Do we not see this erosion in America today? Our nation and culture were established on the Judeo/Christian ethic. It was built on the Bible's worldview of how one ought to live life. America has never been a perfect people. Our history is flawed, but we have traditionally known what is right and what is wrong. We believed the Bible's teaching on the importance of marital fidelity and discipline in the home. We understood the dangers of sexual immorality and substance abuse. We recognized that one's identity is grounded in being made in the image and likeness of God. And we affirmed the teaching of Psalm 33:12 that says, "*Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.*" Today, American culture has rejected the truth we were founded upon. The CDC and the WHO tells us that the human gender can no longer be understood as being binary. Teacher unions, Supreme Court nominees, senators, U.S. congressmen, and White House officials refuse to use the word "mother." Instead, they prefer the newly coined term "birthing person." Like you, I have spent some time on a farm. I know how this thing works. It takes two to tango...two of the opposite genders. American culture has also rejected the Bible's teaching on sexuality. Rather than sexuality being reserved exclusively for a man and a woman in covenant, marital relationship with one another. Sex in America today is casual, free, and a source of identity. It is a label that brands one's life, and the list is ever growing (LGBTQ+).

These are just a few of the many areas eroding away the stability of our nation because they are eroding away our families and homes. Our nation is in a crisis on every level today. We are imploding! We are falling apart morally, socially, psychologically, spiritually, maritally, financially, and militarily. We keep hearing about the increase in mental health concerns. Depression, drug abuse, and suicide are epidemic. How is all this happening? Why is all this happening? It is taking place because we refuse to come to Christ, hear His Word, and apply it to our lives. How arrogant do you have to be to think that you can redefine the parameters God has set and think there are no consequences (Gal 6:7)? Genesis 1 explains that when God created this world, His declaration over it was that it was good. It was perfect just as He made it. Adam and Eve enjoyed the beauty of marital fidelity and intimacy. They walked with God as a man and a woman, and they found their identity in Him alone. Their identity was not found in their sexual orientation, perceived gender, ethnicity, or anything else outside of God's spoken Word. Unfortunately, all that changed in Genesis 3 when Adam made the choice to redefine what God had defined. He stepped outside the firm foundation of the rock of God's Word, and the result was a house built upon shifting sand that quickly fell.

From that gloomy day in Eden till today, mankind has struggled to build a house for himself that stands the test of time. Each individual inherently carries the rebellious nature of Adam within his or her heart. In our sin, we take over the role of the serpent in Eden and question God's Word ourselves (Gen 3:1), arrogantly thinking that we know best. The reality, however, is that man's vision and understanding of the world is short-sighted, flawed, and tainted by sin. God as the all-knowing, good Creator of heaven and earth alone knows all things. He sees the end from the beginning. Therefore, He alone is able to offer a clear and healthy perspective on how one ought to build his or her life. When an individual rejects God's Word on a matter of life, he or she does so to their own detriment. It weakens and erodes the foundation of the life being built.

**Conclusion:** In these verses, our Lord Jesus offers instruction on how one might build his or her life on a foundation that enables it to withstand the storms of life. These storms are normal and regular aspects of living in a fallen world. The key to laying a firm foundation is being a faithful disciple who keeps coming, hearing, and doing God's Word. These are the very three things that Job exemplified when the storm waters raged against his life. He had built a life upon what he knew of God and His Word. Throughout his hardships, Job held fast to his integrity and faith. He kept coming to God in relationship. He kept asking for clarity from the Lord. At the end of the story, God speaks and Job listens. The words Job heard were probably not what he expected, but he listened and heeded.

*I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes see you; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes. – Job 42:5-6*

Job's obedience (coming, hearing, and doing) resulted in God's blessing of his latter days more than his beginning (42:12). "*And Job died, an old man, and full of days*" (42:17). There is no middle ground on the path of discipleship. One either obeys or disobeys the Word of God. Obedience leads to blessing, and disobedience leads to destruction. If you want the life you are building to withstand the storms and endure into eternity, then the first step for you to take is to come to Jesus in faith and confession of sin. Hear what God's Word says about you and do what it says.

Good news: God loves you. He created you and desires to know you.

Bad news: You are a sinner in rebellion against your Creator.

Best news: God has done everything necessary to justly deal with your sin and bring forgiveness and restoration to your life. Today, He calls you to turn from your sin and self and turn to Him as Savior and Lord. Do you need to be forgiven?

As a Christian, Jesus reminds us of the need to constantly come, hear, and obey His Word. Is every aspect of your life and home being built on the sure foundation of what God has said? If not, what needs to be torn down and rebuilt?