

ON THE ROCKS
[written in oral form]

Matthew 7:24-27
Sunday School series

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Where would we be without Rocks?
--perhaps, in central Kansas.....seriously, they don't have rocks there.

Even though we live with glacial residue, we like rocks. And, we put them to good use. Behind me is a perfect example.

I like rocks. I collect rocks as cheap souvenirs. I have rocks from all over the place, including from Europe.

Of course, rocks are a great building material.
Back in the 1960's, there was a mild competition between Montreal and Toronto over who could lay the most subway tracks the quickest.

Montreal easily won. Montreal is built on rocks, and they simply tunneled through it. Much of Toronto is on sand and loose loam. Toronto had to dig down, then pour concrete walls, and then cover the fabricated tunnel.

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Rocks are hard. Rocks are heavy, and they are solid for the most part.  
The sermon title is a play on words.

It's nice to step out on the rocks from a cabin up north.

Yet, it's not so nice to hit the rocks while on a Mediterranean cruise ship. Rocks can be a very rude awakening, when we ignore them.  
Also, rocks can be used merely for our viewing our cooling pleasure, such as landscape rocks or keeping a drink cool in the heat. Technically, ice isn't a rock.  
We can use them when we choose to do so.  
Rocks are all over the place around here, and sometimes in the way.  
Still, we like rocks; we know rocks, and we understand the analogy that Jesus used in today's text.

We appreciate the importance of a strong stable foundation. Humans quickly learned this lesson as soon as they learned to make shelters.  
Sand makes a lousy foundation, even though it's easy to manipulate.  
Remember that attribute of sand in regards to this passage.

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Jesus used this simile to stress the importance of acting on the wisdom that he taught and presented.

This passage is the final punctuation for the Sermon on the Mount.
The Sermon on the Mount is likely Matthew's compilation of numerous messages from Jesus. Jesus sayings / main points are nicely presented in this concise unit.
The Sermon on the Mount is a collection of Jesus' core message about "wisdom" for living.

The sermon contains eternal / divine truths.

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Also, clearly, Jesus understood the flawed human character. That is: we hear warnings, yet too often don't act or react to them.

It seems we humans think we are exceptional. We know that warnings are good, but we're the exception, individually, as if beyond the laws of probability and nature.

For example: Everyone would agree that it is dangerous to drink and drive or text and drive,....YET..... it happens,.... and sadly it is then proven that there are no exceptions. Luck is Not reliable.

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Distracted driving can be lethal,.....and so can **distracted living**.

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Relating to the point Jesus is stressing, I sometimes wonder if we applaud and celebrate the wonder and wisdom in God's message through Jesus, yet.....choose not to apply the lessons,.....for whatever reason we may have.???

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Another analogy:

There was a seminary student crossing a road one day, when a frog called out to him and said, "If you kiss me, I'll turn into a beautiful princess."

He bent over, picked up the frog, and put it in his pocket.

The frog spoke up again and said, "If you kiss me, I'll turn back into a beautiful princess and stay with you."

The seminary student took the frog out of his pocket, smiled at it and returned it to the pocket.

The frog cried out, "If you kiss me and turn me back into a princess, I'll stay with you and do anything you want."

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Again, the seminary student took the frog out, smiled at it and put it back in his pocket.

Finally, the frog asked, "What is the matter?"

I've told you I'm a beautiful princess and that I'll stay with you and do anything you want? Why won't you kiss me?"

The student said, "Look, I'm a seminary student. I don't have time for a girlfriend, but a talking frog,.... now that's cool."

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Loving our enemies, God giving us good things when we ask, the Golden Rule, living in peace with others,..not worrying about money and so on,..... all that stuff is COOL.... Even,.... maybe...entertaining. But, to act / to kiss the frog....well.....that's a commitment... that's a relationship..... That is a whole different ballgame. You can't put that in your pocket!

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I think we actually do try to follow Jesus, albeit picking and choosing the lessons that fit / that aren't too demanding.

However, there is a big problem with picking and choosing. Most things in life just don't work if parts are missing.

Nevertheless,.....we keep thinking we are exceptional / the exception.

For example, We know about climate change. We believe the dreadful warnings, and see the changes already happening.

We are applying and using **some** green, clean practices and sources.

Most of us recycle. We are trying to reduce our carbon footprint.

Yet, we are afraid to radically alter our life style and economy.

So, most people buy into the illusion that we can still profit from and use fossil fuels as we do some things to curb carbon emissions.

That's picking and choosing. It's half acting,.....and... how's that working out for the planet?

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Oxygen levels are dropping in the oceans. Polar ice is melting. The animal extinction rate is surging, and ...no need to go on.

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A house built on a mix of rocks and sand..... will still be unstable when challenged.

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In addition,.....it doesn't work to substitute parts or to alter them to meet our needs.

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I once entered a cake making fundraiser. The challenge was to make the best cake from scratch. I'd never even made a cake from a boxed mix!

*I think I may have been confused by those white crystals. I could have used salt inside of sugar.....*

To put it this way,..... I didn't win and most of my cake was left uneaten.

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It doesn't work to substitute, dilute or alter the parts,.....and this is especially true with God's wisdom / God's gift to us for living.

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Perhaps, you noticed the alteration in the sermon title?

I used the plural--"rocks".

Jesus compared his "words"/his whole message to A rock.

It's one unit. All the parts in the sermon on the mount and all the examples and teachings of Jesus are parts that make up one whole.

It's one rock. It's ONE Jesus.....the son of God the One God.

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This afternoon or evening, read all of the sermon on the mount. It's only two chapters, but read it slowly and carefully.

Think about what Jesus is saying,.....and consider what **acting on it** means.

Some parts are easy. Some parts just make sense, such as the Golden Rule. Other parts, such as judging others or depending on God,... are a lot more challenging.

Is it possible to do it all? What should we focus on the most?

What do we hold dear?

What makes our foundation?

What is the base from which our actions /our choices are made?

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In away, the many parts in this one whole message / this rock are merely examples / illustrations on how to live Love.

Jesus presented some scenarios on what **love living** looks like, and love living.....is divine. It's with God; it's the way of Christ.

This whole sermon could be summed up in Love God and love others as yourself.

Today's text is Jesus saying, "NOW Be that Love / Be with God."

Take in that Love!

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Our lives rise from our core values--our true and honest core values, and not just what we admire or think is cool.

What we hold dear is our foundation.

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Fred Craddock told the following story:

It's a story about missionaries, we now call them witness workers, in another country who are under house arrest.

They were finally given word that they could leave the country.

They were told they could take two hundred pounds with them.

So, they packed and weighed things. They repacked and re-weighed what they'd gathered, and argued about personal items, keepsakes, books and other valued things.

Before too long, they had it all figured out. They had packed just two hundred pounds of stuff that seemed most valuable to them.

The soldiers arrived to escort them.

One asked, "You have just two hundred pounds?"

"Yes, two hundred pounds, right on the nose", they replied.

"Did you weigh the children?"

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"No, we didn't weigh the children. Why would we weigh the children?"

Sternly the soldier commanded, "Weigh the children!"

Suddenly, all the other stuff that had seemed so important was nothing. It wasn't that they thought the other stuff was garbage; but, compared to the lives of the children, well.....

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What is framing our lives? What is Controlling You and Me?

What do we hold dear,... and that no matter what, will never ever let go of?

THAT IS THE FOUNDATION.

Consider the words of Jesus. Consider the Rock?