

Sermon Notes

Practical Lessons for Understanding the Word of God



A Strong Life

KEY PASSAGE: Matthew 7:24-29 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE: Joshua 1:9 | Luke 6:38 | Philippians 4:13

SUMMARY

No one can accurately determine if someone is strong by simply observing external appearances.

That's because a physically fit body is not necessarily a sign of inner fortitude. In Matthew 7:24-29, Jesus told a story which vividly demonstrates the difference between a strong and a weak life. He said those who are wise build their lives upon the rock-like foundation of hearing and applying God's Word. However, a person who hears the Word, yet doesn't obey it, is basically building his life on shifting sand. The true test of strength occurs when storms come into our lives.

SERMON POINTS

Everyone is building their lives on something—either the firm foundation of the Scriptures or the unstable sands of this world.

But no matter what you've done in the past or how old you are, it's never too late to begin building on the rock. This is one building project which won't end until the Lord takes you home.

Characteristics of a Strong Life

As you think about the following characteristics, ask yourselves if these are true of you. A person with a strong life:

- **Has trusted in Jesus Christ as his personal Savior:** This is the starting point and the very foundation for a strong life that cannot be ignored if you wish to grow stronger in faith.
- **Is guided by the Holy Spirit:** At the moment of salvation, Christ sent His Holy Spirit to live within

us. His job is to empower us to obey, direct our paths, and wisely guide our decisions.

- **Has made spending time alone in prayer a priority:** This is our connecting point with God and the means for strengthening our relationship with Him. A person with a strong life is committed to the daily discipline of prayer and knows how to communicate with the Lord about everything.
- **Has built his life upon the teachings and application of God's Word:** The Bible is our most treasured possession because it's the voice of the Lord speaking directly to us. Obeying its truths should be the norm in our lives, not the exception. When we consistently feed on His Word, He'll give us Scriptures to strengthen us in our trials and sufferings.
- **Sees the Lord Jesus as the strength of his life:** When the Apostle Paul was in jail, he wrote these words: "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13). His foundation of obedience to Christ was so firm that nothing stopped or discouraged him from completing the work God had appointed for him. He knew his strength didn't come from within himself but flowed from His relationship with Christ.
- **Has direction for life:** A strong life has a sense of purpose. Every activity and situation is seen as an opportunity to be useful to the Lord. Even aging and illness shouldn't hinder us because they are simply new and different ways of serving Him.
- **Can withstand the storms and learn from them:** Many Christians complain and question God's love when they experience hardship and pain. But those who are strong understand that the Lord's purpose is not to remove us from all trials but to use them to strengthen us, transform us into godly people, and equip us to accomplish His will for our lives.

- **Has strong faith:** When a strong life is tested, it comes through the trials with greater faith. Wise men and women recognize that there's a lesson in every difficult situation, and they want each experience to increase their faith.
- **Has courage:** We all need courage to handle the difficulties and challenges of life, but courage only grows when we follow Joshua's example of trusting in the Lord (Josh. 1:9). As he obeyed the Lord and observed His faithfulness, he received inner strength to courageously face all his challenges.
- **Is optimistic:** Since God is the one who controls and guides our lives, we can be optimistic about our future no matter what uncertainties surround us.
- **Develops friendships with people who enrich his life:** Strong people surround themselves with godly friends who help and love them.
- **Expresses love and care for others:** Those who are strong willing give themselves away to others by making themselves available, offering encouragement, and making a difference in their lives.
- **Serves God with his spiritual gifts:** The Lord gives spiritual gifts to believers that enable them to serve exceptionally well in a particular area. When we operate out of our gifting, we'll have the strength to accomplish whatever God has called us to do.
- **Is quick to forgive:** An unforgiving spirit affects our emotions, relationships, and even our bodies. It also hinders every aspect of our walk with Christ. We're strong when we realize how much we've been forgiven by God, and can more readily forgive others.
- **Has inner peace:** When our relationship with the Lord is right, He gives us an inner sense of peace regardless of our situations.
- **Uses money wisely:** A person with a strong life isn't worried about money because he trusts God. He knows that the Lord promises to bless and care for those who give the first part of their income to Him (Luke 6:38).
- **Belongs to a Bible-teaching church:** No one ever outgrows the need to be taught the Scriptures.

That's why we all need to belong to a church where we can grow in our knowledge of the Word, participate in worship, and become fruitful for the kingdom of God.

- **Works to build a strong family:** If we have a strong life, we'll want to be a godly example for our children and train them in the faith.
- **Has a servant spirit:** Someone with inner strength delights in serving and helping others.
- **Is goal-oriented:** Since the Lord has a purpose for our lives, we need to set goals for ourselves in accordance with His will so we can live productively and accomplish what He desires.
- **Is confident:** Godly confidence isn't egotistical. It's self-assurance based on our relationship with the Lord. We know that whatever He's called us to do, He'll help us accomplish it.
- **Is fruitful:** If we're strong, others will see how God has transformed our character, conduct, and conversation, and they'll want Him to do the same in their lives.
- **Impacts the lives of others:** Strong people positively influence other people by their examples and words.

RESPONSE

- Are there characteristics of a strong life that God is shaping in you today? What are they?
- In what areas of your Christian walk are you weakest? How can you allow God to strengthen you for more impact?

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