

Greetings to you! Our theme for our morning's meditation is, "Be doers, not merely hearers, of the Word." We all are very good in hearing things but fail to practice them in our lives. We read our bibles regularly, we pray without fail, we attend church and participate in the Lord's Supper but we fail to be obedient to God in our daily lives. God speaks to us loudly and clearly through his Word and yet we don't obey it. The passages that we will be meditating on this morning reminds us of how Israel failed to obey the Lord and also about how Jesus challenges his disciples to be not just hearers of the Word but doers of the Word.

In the first reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah chapter 7 verses 1 to 11 we notice the challenge of Jeremiah to the people of Israel who kept coming to the temple and worshipping there offering all their sacrifices. Jeremiah is told by God to stand at the gate of the temple and to communicate to all those coming to worship that they must reform their ways if they were to continue to live in the promised land. The people were trusting in deceptive words merely saying 'This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of Lord!' Their belief was that as long as the temple was standing in their midst nothing could ever happen to them. Yahweh on the other side tells them that they need to change their ways because they were oppressing the vulnerable, committing violence on the innocent and following other gods. They were stealing, murdering and committing adultery and even lying under oath in the law courts.

Yahweh's word confronts the people of Judah telling them that they had made his house a den of robbers. Jeremiah is comparing the temple of God as a refuge, hiding from the sins committed during the week and then for plotting for what needs to be done the following week. They thought of the temple as a safe house. Sometimes we too can behave like that. We may do whatever we please during the week and then seek forgiveness on Sunday, participate in the Lord's Supper and then continue on with sin from Monday to Saturday. God calls us to reform our ways and our actions this morning. We must not trust in empty religiosity and rituals. A living relationship with God and Jesus should change our lives radically.

In the second reading from the gospel of Matthew we notice that it is the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus has been teaching his disciples about anger, lust and being truthful and then at the end of it he talks about the two foundations. Jesus warns his disciples saying, "Not everyone who says to me 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evil doers!'" Jesus is saying that mere lip service will not make us enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of the Father. There are two verbs that are to be noted, one is 'saying' and the other is 'doing'. Jesus challenges his followers that our claims to be his followers must be matched by our practice of doing his will in our day to day lives. God's will is clearly revealed to us through the scriptures and we are to obey them in our day to day lives. Obedience is better than all our sacrifices and piety.

Jesus then clinches his teaching with a parable about the wise and foolish builders. He tells them the story about the two people who built their houses on different foundations. One hears the Words of Jesus and puts them into practice in his life. He is like a wise man whose foundations were on a rock and the other man who did not obey God's Words is like a man who built his house on the sand. Both of them had trials and tribulations, but the one who had laid his foundation on the rock stood firm and the other crashed.

Jesus teaches us through this parable that we are to put into practice what we learn from God's Word. It is only when we practice this in our lives we will be able to face the difficult storms of life. If not, we will be found wanting when we are tested. Professing Christians both genuine and spurious look alike. Both read the bible, go to church, listen to sermons, participate in the Lord's Supper and buy Christian literature. However, a storm or a crisis will reveal their true foundations. May we truly lay strong foundations by obeying God's Word.