**Sunday 14th June 2020**

**Glynde Lutheran Church**

**Sermon on Matthew 7:24 – 27**

**Theme: “Build your life on the Lord Jesus Christ”**

***Question: “How can I have a secure life?”***

***Introduction:***

Well, life has certainly been a bit different in the last few months or so, hasn’t it!? Things are easing up somewhat now, but life in this Corona virus pandemic time has been very different…. We have been doing all sorts of things in order to try to have a secure life, *rather than an insecure life: social distancing, washing our hands, keeping to ourselves, and so on…* Now I’m not knocking any of these: I think that they are vitally important to save lives and to enable us to function as a society….

But the question that I want us to think about his morning is: “How can you and I built a secure life without fear, *regardless of what is happening around us?”* Well Jesus tells us how in our Bible reading for today, and the children’s song that we sang before sums it up:

**So, build your life on the Lord Jesus Christ**

**Build your life on the Lord Jesus Christ**

**Build your life on the Lord Jesus Christ**

**And the blessings will come down**

**Oh, the blessings come down**

**As your prayers go up**

**The blessings come down**

**As your prayers go up**

**The blessings come down**

**As your prayer go up**

**So build your house on the Lord Jesus Christ.**

That’s our theme for today is: “Build your life on the Lord Jesus Christ”. That’s the message that I believe God wants to say to each one of us today.

I want to make three points as I encourage you

to build your life on the Lord Jesus Christ….

Build your life on the Lord because:

* **Only he can set us free from mean old crocodile sin**
* **Only then can you live life in all its fullness**
* **Only then are you well prepared to face eternity**

***Part 1: “…because ‘Only he can see us free from mean old crocodile sin’”***

Firstly, “Build your life on the Lord Jesus Christ”, because only he can set you free from mean old crocodile sin”, *as Colin sings in that Children’s song of his.* Do you remember the words:

**Sin is like a great big crocodile
Sin is a dangerous trap
Sin can creep up like a crocodile
All of a sudden, SNAP!**

**Only Jesus wins forgiveness
Gotta stay close to Him
Only He can set us free
From mean old crocodile sin**

I want to begin talking about this by telling you a story. It’s one of a number of stories by Tony Campolo in his book, *Stories that feed your soul.* It’s a story of something that happened to him when he made an aeroplane trip from from Denver to Colorado Springs.

Let me let Tony tell you the story:

**It was a short flight of less than half-an-hour. As I stood waiting to be called to board the plane, there was no escaping a noisy and happy little girl who was bouncing around, clapping here hands, and chanting joyfully, “I’m gonna see Daddy! I’m gonna see Daddy!”.**

**She said that one line over and over again in a most obnoxious way. At first, I tried to smile at the little girl who was resplendent in a fluffy dress, patent leather shoes, and pigtails, but it became more and more difficult to smile as she continued to jump up and down, letting everyone know the good news that she was going to see her father. After the first ten minutes of this, what once had been cute had become irritating and obnoxious. I was glad when it was time to board the plane.**

**However, when I took my seat on the airplane, I found that, much to my dismay, the noisy little girl was sitting right across the aisle from me. She continued to clap her hands and announce to all, in a singsong fashion, that she was going to see her daddy.**

**Because it was a short flight, the flight attendant was only offering cookies and Coca Cola. Every time when she passed the happy little girl, the child took a cookie and another Coca Cola. I found it amazing how many cookies and Coca Colas that little girl was able to consume during the short flight.**

**As the plane approached the airport in Colorado Springs, it went through a thunderstorm, which made for rough, bouncy ride…. It wasn’t long before there was an eruption *from the little girl,* and what came out was the worst smelling vomit imaginable. It was all over the little girl and all over her mother. What made things even worse was that it came out in waves. Every time I thought that the vomiting had come to an end, there would be another eruption and then another. When the airplane finally touched down, I couldn’t wait to get down the aisle and away from the whole smelly mess. As I walked up the connecting corridor…into the airport, I saw a man standing at the end of the walkway, dressed in a while flannel suit, eagerly looking for someone. I just knew who he was, and I lingered behind because I wanted to see the encounter between this elegantly dressed father and the little “vomit-face”.**

**What happened next really took me by surprise. The little girl came running up to her father and he got down on one knee and swept her into his arms. She was covered with vomit and she smelled very bad, but it didn’t make any difference to him. He had his little girl and that was all that mattered** *(p. 30-31).*

Well, it’s an interesting little story that Tony Campolo tells. And I’ve retold it to you because this is a wonderful picture of how much God loves you and me. You and I are “mess-ups”, *“vomit faces” if you like,* in the eyes of God. We are all “sinners”, *to use the term that is used in the books and letters in the Bible.* In God’s sight, we all a look a lot like that smelly, messed up girl. This is our natural condition before God…. But what does Paul tell us in one of his letters:

**God has shown us how much he loves us – it was while we still sinners that Christ**, *Jesus,* **died for us!** *(Rom. 5:8).*

Do you hear what Paul is saying? He is saying that God loves you and me so much that He was willing to reach out to us *and send His Son, Jesus, to die for us on a cross,* even though we are smelly, messed up people because of our “sin”.

John sums this up in one of my favourite verses in the Bible:

**For God so loved the world that he gave His one and only Son, so that whoever believes in him may not perish but have eternal life** *(John 3:16).*

When we “believe in” Jesus as our Saviour, *when we put our trust in Jesus and what he has done for us on the cross,* then we will not “perish”, *that is, “be lost eternally”,* but have eternal life*.*

In other words, the only way that we can be set free from “mean old crocodile sin” is by trusting in Jesus as our Saviour. He suffered and died on the cross “for our sins” *(1 Cor. 15:3).* He took the punishment that we *all* deserve “for our sins… *(cf. ‘the cuts’ illustration).*

Jesus took everyone’s punishment on himself when he suffered and died on the cross. But, we have to receive for ourselves what Jesus did for everyone…. And we do that when we are baptised, and as we trust in Jesus as our Saviour *(Gal. 3:26-27).*

And not only are we set free from the effects of “mean old crocodile sin” as we trust in Jesus as our Saviour, but we are also given the power to avoid “mean old crocodile sin”!

When we were baptised, the Holy Spirit came to live in us, and he gives us the power to avoid “mean old crocodile sin”, as we try to follow Jesus *(John 3:5; 1 Cor. 6:19; 12:13).*

What’s the result of us receiving what God has done for us smelly, messes up people? We are washed clean, and we have **“peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ” *(Romans 5:1).* We don’t need to live our life in with guilt and shame because of what we’ve done to hurt others in our life, and we don’t need to be afraid of what might happen to us in the future because of what we’ve done….

Paul sums it up. Listen to what he writes in his letter to the Christians in Rome:

**Now that we have been put right with God through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ** *(Rom. 5:1).*

Building your life on the Lord Jesus Christ gives you peace, and gives your life security for the future, *regardless of what may happen.*

***Part 2: “…because only then can you live life in all its fullness”***

Secondly, “Build your life on the Lord Jesus Christ”, because only then can you, and do you, have life as God intended us to have life: life in all its fullness.

Let me tell you another quick story from Tony Campolo. It’s entitled, “Living in a joyless world”. Tony tells it like this:

**I was in an elevator in the Hyatt hotel in Chicago, Illinois. A fellow passenger was a teenager who looked to be about 15 or 16 years of age. He was wearing his pants low in that new “ghetto” style that has become all too common among boys who want to look tough….**

**“How you doing?”, I asked, trying to be friendly.**

**His voice was grumpy as he replied, “All right”.**

**“You having a good day?”, I asked him.**

**“Yeah”, he mumbled. There was no joy in this young man.**

**When we got to the ground floor, the elevator doors did not open. I panicked and began banging on the doors, shouting, “These doors won’t open! Will somebody get these doors open? I need to get out of here!”**

**Then I heard a voice behind me say, “Sir, the door is open”. As I turned, I realized that this was one of those elevators that had two doors on two sides, and I was banging on the wrong doors.**

**What amazed me was that my fellow passenger didn’t laugh. As he started off the elevator, I…said, “Hey, kid, Laugh. This is funny!” He couldn’t wait to get away from me. *I don’t blame him!!***

Anyway, Tony goes on to say:

**Now, if you are asking me what this has to do with Christianity, let me ask you something: “Did you laugh out loud, or at least chuckle on the inside, when you read about my most embarrassing moment?”**

**Unlike the often joyless world *in which* we live, there is often a joyful hilarity that permeates those who are infused with the Holy Spirit and who know the joy of the Lord** *(p. 46).*

What do you think? I think that it’s true that our whole life is changed, *and the whole way in which we see life is changed,* when we “build our life on the Lord Jesus Christ”. **“Joy”** is one of the fruits of having the Holy Spirit of God living within us *(Gal. 5:22-23).* As we build our life on the Lord Jesus Christ, we can rejoice and smile because we know that no matter what we are loved and forgiven by God…. …And because we know *through Jesus* what life is all about: it’s about loving and caring for one another and others….

Jesus said:

“**I have come in order that you may have life – life in all its fullness”**, *or as it says in the old translation, “and have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).*

I love that old song where these words are used. It goes like this:

**John 10:10**

**Jesus Christ says:**

**‘I have come that you might have life,**

**and have it more abundantly (have it more abundantly).’**

**John 10:10** *(ATA #136)*

I think that it’s true…. No, I know it’s true, *that as you build your life on the Lord Jesus Christ, trusting in him as your Saviour, and following him in the way that you live your life, you have life in all its fullness!!*

*And I would add, you can rejoice because you know that you are building on a secure foundation, namely “the Lord Jesus Christ”.*

***Part 3: “…because only then are you well prepared to face eternity***

And thirdly *and lastly*, “Build your life on the Lord Jesus Christ”, because only then are you well prepared to face eternity, *for life after death.*

Can I share with you another story? Since I’m in story telling mode, let me tell you another story. This one has been around for a while….

I’ve seen in a variety of places. I share it with you because it reminds us that this world now is preparation for eternity. The story goes like this:

**A prominent speaker in the United Kingdom tells this story about something that happened in his boyhood. When he was six years old, his mother explained that if he ever needed help, he should dial “O” for the Operator as ask for “Information”. One day, when the boy’s mother was away, his pet canary, which always sang for him, seemed to be sick and unable to sing. He remembered what his mother has told him, dialled “O” for Operator, asked for Information, and explained that his canary was ill. The operator, who happened to know a lot about canaries, gave him some very helpful advice and it was not long before the canary was singing again.**

**Thereafter, every time he was alone and needed help, the boy would dial “O” for Operator. Since he lived in a very small town, it was the same operator who answered each time. One day his canary died and the boy called the operator, who had become his friend, and asked if there was anything he could do to bring his canary back to life again. The kind woman simply comforted him and told the boy, “Remember his: there are other worlds in which to sing”.**

**Years later, after the boy, now a young man had returned home from his university studies, he remembered the kindly operator, and decided to call her again.** **A woman answered and he explained who he was, gave his name, and told her how helpful her predecessor has been whenever he had needed help.**

**The woman said, “I was told by Mrs. Jones, the former operator, that someday you might call again. She told me about you when she was very, very sick. Mrs. Jones has passed away, *she has died,* but she told me that, if you ever called, I should tell you to remember that there are other worlds in which to sing. And she wanted you to know that what was true for your canary was also true for her”** *(Tony Campolo, Stories that feed your soul, 125).*

When you “Build your life on the Lord Jesus Christ”, you know through Jesus that this isn’t just wishful thinking of some sort, but that it is true. Jesus, God’s Son, promises us that this is so, and Jesus’ own resurrection from the dead is God’s guarantee that this will be so *(cf. 1 Cor. 15:20).*

Listen to what Jesus told his disciples, and what he says to us today:

**“Don’t be worried and upset. Believe in God, and believe also in me. There are many rooms in my Father’s house, and I am going to prepare a place for you.** I would not tell you this if it were not so. **And after I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to myself, so that you will be where I am….**

**I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one goes to the Father except by me”** *(John 14:1-3, 6).*

*Through Jesus, God’s Son*, we know that “there is another world in which to sing”. And we know t*hrough Jesus* that we will be there with God, our dear Father in heaven, and with Jesus himself, and with all those who are God’s forgiven children, *if we are trusting in Jesus as our Saviour.* We have a certain “hope” for the future*.*

And we know that we will there not because we have earned our way into heaven, *you can’t do that,* but because of God’s mercy, and His forgiveness of us.

Remember always what Paul says in one of his letters:

**For it is by God’s grace**, *His mercy,* **that you have been saved through faith**, *through trusting in Jesus as your Saviour****.* It is not the result of your own efforts** *(lit. “not by works”),* **but God’s gift so that no one can boast about it** *(Eph. 2:8-9).*

God’s gifts of His forgiveness, of a changed life now, and the gift of eternal life with Him in the world to come *are free!!* Sure they cost God plenty, *the suffering and death of His Son, part of His very self, on the cross,* but they are free to us, and we receive them by trusting in Jesus as our Saviour*.*

Each morning, I read a prayer from the late Allan Schreiber’s little book entitled *Personal Prayers.* Can I share with you part of the prayer that I prayed on Tuesday morning, *day 9 of the book,* as I was writing this message:

**Because of Jesus and his life, death, and resurrection, I will never fear. I will trust you, dear God, now and always.**

As we trust in Jesus as our Saviour, and live our life before God our loving Father in heaven, we don’t need to be afraid, regardless of what is happening or will happen. We have “peace” with God, we have an inner “joy” that no one or nothing can ever take away, and we have a certain “hope” for the future.

***Conclusion:***

So as the Children’s Song puts it:

**So, build your house on the Lord Jesus Christ**

**Build your house on the Lord Jesus Christ**

**Build your house on the Lord Jesus Christ**

**And the blessings will come down**

**Oh, the blessings come down.**

All other grounds, *all other foundations* *for building a life on,* are sinking sand!!