

Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. Matthew 7:24

As Lutheran, I must admit, we are sometimes confused about believing and doing. We are certain that salvation has nothing to do with doing. We believe believing is enough. Of course, even this is a corruption of what Luther taught. Luther didn't believe we could believe. He believed that even believing was a gift of God. Listen to his explanation of the 3rd Article. "I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but instead the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel."

If the object of faith was simply belief, we could expect Jesus to describe the wise person in a different way. He would say, "Whoever hears these words of mine and *believes* them is like a wise person." Only, that isn't what Jesus says. He says, "Everyone who hears these words of mine and *puts them into practice* is like a wise person." For Jesus, the object of faith is not to believe, but practice what we believe.

If we are to believe Jesus, then the most important thing we do during the week isn't worship. Worship is the one or two hours in our life where we hear Jesus, and it is important time. We need to know what Jesus said in order to do it. Sunday morning isn't about helping us make it through the week. It is about equipping us to practice our faith during the week. Sunday morning isn't about making us feel good about ourselves; it is about empowering us to practice our faith the other 160 something hours of the week.

The most important time for wise Christians is the rest of the week. This is the time allotted to us to "put Jesus' words into practice." It is during the week that we love one another. It is during the week that we care for those who cannot care for themselves. It is during the week that we forgive each other. It is during the week that we serve God and our community.

Practicing what Jesus preaches isn't about our salvation. It's about not building our house on the sand.

Pastor Parnell