

The Untouchables  
*Matthew 7:24-27*

A couple years ago there was a television competition show called “American Inventors”. The premise of the show was that America’s next greatest invention was somewhere out there, waiting to be found, supported, and produced. So the judges toured from city to city, taking applicants, and people would bring their personal inventions in before the judges and try to convince them that this do-daddy that they have made was going to revolutionize America. The final winner received a large grant to begin marketing and producing their invention.

Here’s what struck me about all of that. When each “inventor” came in one by one to tell their stories, they were never just some regular guy who thought he had come up with a good idea; it was always a 50 year old man who quit his job, used all of his children’s college funds, sold his cars, and took out a second mortgage on his house, *all so he could make whatever it was that he had made*. Each contestant told the story of how they had staked their whole lives on the success of their inventions. If they failed at this, their marriages would fall apart, their friends would leave them, they would have to file for bankruptcy, and, their lives would just be over! They had no hope left if this invention failed.

All of these folks *built their lives on a such fragile foundation*. These people had taken all of their hope, all of their trust, and all of their joy, and they laid it *all* upon a foundation of sand. Their foundation stunk,, and it wasn’t able to hold any true weight. Any little wind might come along and blow their whole entire lives right over and everything would come crashing and crumbling down.

Today’s sermon is called “The Untouchables”. God does not promise us that our Christian lives will be free from sorrow and pain. He hasn’t promised us that our lives will be storm-less. In fact, Jesus Christ *promises* the exact opposite. But he has promised us, that despite of those storms, if our lives are built on the right foundation, we will be invincible. If our lives are built on the right foundation, then even if the hurricanes of life come, even if life shakes us and quakes us and hails down upon us, we will not be moved.

Here’s our main idea this morning: *whoever submits to the Word of Christ cannot be destroyed by this world*. All we’re going to do is take the two halves of that statement, expound them and see how we get them from the text.

1. So, first of all we said, “**Whoever submits to the Word of Christ**”

Those are the people we’re talking about here. Jesus says in verse 24, “Everyone who *hears* these words of mine and *does them*.” We’re talking about those people who *submit* to the Word of Christ. Jesus is not just saying that blessed are those who *hear* the Word of God. It’s hearing and doing. It’s hearing and reading and listening to what God says, and then doing what he says, obeying what he says, submitting to what he says.

So, two personal questions from that:

1. Are we *hearing the Word of Christ*?

- a. Are we, individually, taking time out of our day and our week to hear what Christ has said to us, what he has commanded us, what he has taught us?
  - b. Before we can submit to what he has said, we first have to *know* what he has said, don't we? How can we be submissive and obedient to our Lord when we don't know what he has said? And how will we know what he has said unless we spend regular, even daily time listening to what he has said in this Word.
  - c. So we need to be spending time, week after week, and I think the Bible is pretty clear in setting the standard of day after day too (especially in Psalm 1), we need to make it a habit of our daily life to spend time by ourselves and with our families learning and searching to see what God has *said*, what he has spoken.
  - d. We need to be in this Word every single day.
2. When we hear what Christ says, in the sermon, in our Sunday School, in our Bible study, question two, are we then *doing* those Words of Christ, are we obeying and submitting to the Word of God as we heard it? If not, Christ isn't speaking about *us* when he speaks about the man who built his house on the rock.
- a. Week after week, we gather here together and go through God's Word together. Every week we go home and, at a minimum, we've heard two separate and distinct lessons from the Bible about what God *says* to us. And, I trust, from both Sunday School and the worship service, if we're listening, we have heard several direct commands from Christ about our lives. That's every single week!
  - b. And then we go home. And we go to work. And we live and breathe and raise our kids and make a living. But what are we doing with the Word that we hear? When we spend our time every day in the Bible, what are we *doing with that Word*? Are we just hearers only? Are we just hearing the Word and then setting it down or going home from church saying, "Oh that was pleasant"? Are we hearers only? Because James 1 says, "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." In other words, if I am only *hearing and listening to God's Word*, if I am always just listening and never submitting and DOING what he has told me to do, I am deceiving myself. What confidence do I have that Christ is Lord and I am his sheep? None! None!
  - c. Don't be hearers only but be *ye doers of the Word*! Receive the Word, and then deliberately submit to it and put it into practice in your life.

Here's what this comes down to. It's so important, as a disciple of Christ, to spend regular time *listening and hearing* his Word is because if I'm not listening to his Word, I'm listening to someone else's! And it's so important to spend time, not only *hearing* but also *submitting to and obeying* his Word, because if I'm not obeying him, I'm obeying someone else.

This is a principle Jesus came back to time and again in his earthly teaching. For us as humans, the decision we have to make is not whether to obey or not to obey. We are all *obeying someone*. We are servants to someone. (Mammon, Caesar) We obey, we serve, we have masters. So Jesus does not come calling us to obedience. No, when Jesus Christ comes, His call to us is much more specific and concrete. He comes to us and calls out to us, not obey, but come, listen to, submit to, obey ME! My Word! Because if you're not hearing and then obediently *doing* my Word, you're doing someone else's.

To see that in our text, just think about the image that Jesus gives us here of these two different kinds of people. Considering all of the time and preparation and forethought that goes into planning for a new house, think about a man going to find that perfect plot of ground upon which to begin the building process. Jesus gives us two men. The first goes and he hunts and he finds this area of ground that has absolutely never subsided an inch. It is *rock solid!* No earthquake, no flood, no tornado is going to come and shake this piece of ground. That's where he begins to build.

But, there's another man hunts and he hunts, and he eventually settles upon a nice, flat, level piece of perfectly suitable *sand*. (This word might mean *beach*.) This man looks up at his bewildered contractor and says, "Oh yeah, this'll do just perfectly! Let's build *here!*"

So here's the point: **both** men in the story are building their house. The variable is not whether you are or will build your house. Sometimes people think *obedience* is the foundation that you are supposed to build your life on here. That's not quite accurate. Both men are building their house and the building of the house in this story represents the "doing" or the "obeying". Everyone is doing. We're all deciding all day every day who and what we'll obey. Right now, this very second, we are building our houses. We've been building our houses our whole entire lives. The question is simply this: WHERE? Not are we obeying but *who* are we obeying, that's the question. Who are we going to submit to as King?

Over the past year, we've walked together through the New Testament book of Philippians and the Old Testament book of Joshua. If Christ's call to us in this passage is to build on lives on his Word by first of all *hearing his Word* and then by *doing his Word* or *submitting to his Word*, ask yourself the question: how have I submitted to the Word that I heard?

In Philippians we have heard him say:

- love his Church with the same affection he has for his church
- make the advancement of the Gospel for God's glory your heart's single most desire
- treasure Christ so much that you can say with Paul, dying would actually be gain, an advantage
- live a life worthy of the Gospel
- be unified in one Spirit
- do nothing out of rivalry
- work at having the mind of Christ
- submit absolutely and unequivocally to his Lordship
- work out our salvation
- put away filthy things from our minds and to fill our lives with godly things
- give up worrying by trusting in his Sovereign, Good plan and protection.

We have heard the Words of Christ. But are we hearers only? Have we continued to build our lives on sand by hearing his Word and then by refusing to submit, or by not trying to obey his Word and put his Word into practice in our lives? Have we cared so little for his Word that we forget what he has said before we even make it home from Sunday worship? Will we submit to Christ's Word or will we not? Will we build our lives on the rock, that is, on the authoritative, sustaining Word of God, or will we be content with the shifting, crumbling sand, where we serve a different king and a different word?

Remember our theme: *whoever submits to the Word of Christ cannot be destroyed by this world*. That's what building your house on the rock looks like, *hearing and submitting to the Word of Christ*. It means you choose to embrace his kingship and you choose to acknowledge his authority over you. You choose to cherish his Word and to cling to everything he has said to you. That's what it means to build on the rock. Build *there* Christian!

So that's who this Scripture is talking to. The second point is, what does this Scripture promise about those folks? What does Jesus say about those who build on his Word, the rock?

2. Quite simply he says that **those people become *invincible* to this world**.

I'm using the word "invincible" and not "invisible". Sometimes we get those words mixed up in our everyday speech. "Invisible" has the root verb "to be seen" and it has the prefix *non* or *not*. It means, *not-seeable*. Not *visible*.

"Invincible" has a different root word. It comes from the verb "to conquer" or overcome. So *invincible* means *not able to be conquered or overcome*. If that football player receives a kickoff at his own 10 yard line, and if he runs to the right and gets hit but it doesn't knock him down, and if he runs back to the left and he's dodging and getting hit and dodging and they just can't knock him down and he makes it all the way for a touchdown. He would be most assuredly *visible*, able to be seen, but yet, *invincible*, not able to be conquered.

That's a very important difference. That makes all the difference in the world between the true Gospel and a fake Gospel. This world is clearly aware of our existence. It can see us; we're here and they know it. We're not invisible. Jesus said in John 16, "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." He goes on, "If they persecuted me," which of course they did, "they will also persecute you." He then finishes that whole discourse by saying, "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

We are not invisible. But all of us have been that pitiable football player, struck and hit and hit again and hit again by this world. Some, even recently. Some have been hit with sickness. Some have been struck by vehicles. Some have gone through close family losses. Others struggle with depression, with loneliness, with illness. So many things in this world come at us. Hard times at work, hard times at home, hard times in the economy. Some have even been struck by the church, by those who say they care, by those who call themselves by the name of Christ! We are being pounded day after day after day. And sometimes, it feels like the world will just never give up inflicting pain upon us. We are not invisible.

But, though we are not invisible, Jesus does indeed call us *invincible* to the world. For everyone who has embraced the authority, the Kingship of Jesus Christ, for everyone who *hears* his Word and then *does his Word*, for everyone who builds his or her life on the rock which is the revelation of Jesus Christ, they are like that player who gets hit, and hit, and struck, and beaten, and bruised, and yet he crosses the line and enters the end zone. He makes it! They can hurt him, but they cannot stop him.

They can bruise him but they cannot destroy him or conquer him or overcome him. If Christ has adopted me and I have submitted to his authoritative Word, I am eternally invincible.

That's why I said that this is the difference between a fake Gospel and the true Gospel. Some false preachers tell people that if they believe, visualize it, and have faith, they won't have the rain and the storms and the winds blowing and beating on their house. Wrong! That is a false Gospel. For the man who builds his life on the rock, *and for the man who builds his life on the sand*, the situations and circumstances in life were the exact same. I mean the *exact same*! For Christian and non-Christian, it rained, the rivers rose, and the winds blew, and *literally*, they beat that house. You see, becoming a Christian doesn't magically make the hurt and the pain and the bad things in life disappear. They will still happen. That's not the difference in being a Christian. The circumstances that happen *to you* don't change. It's the effect those circumstances have *on you* that changes. Christian or non-Christian, your mom might die, your brother might die, you might get cancer. Regardless of whether you're a Christian.

The *difference* is what those things are able to accomplish. For those who are not in Christ, for those who build so foolishly by submitting to someone else, the rains and the wind are all too much. They collapse, they crumble, and "O sometimes," Jesus says, "great is the falling."

But not so for the Christian (and that's the difference). They will still be beat. They will still be hurt. But the house will not fall. They will still stand. God will preserve them. That's the key. God will sustain them. He will not allow them to give up the faith or quit the race or deny Jesus Christ. They will bear up under the heavy loads of pain and suffering and he will bring them safely into his eternal abode. Invincible. Unable to be conquered by the trials and sufferings of this life.

Paul put it like this, and just hear how, in his own way, he says that he is *hurt* by the world but that he will not be conquered. "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed." Praise be to our Rock!

Conclusion:

We've got some decisions to make. We've got 40 decisions to make today; we've got 400 decisions to make this week. And remember, the question for each of us is *not*, Will we obey. The question is: *who*? We have heard the Word of Christ! We need to *continue* this week, daily, to hear the Word of Christ. And, we need to be more than hearers only. We need to pray for God's grace to help us *hear* his Word and then *DO* his Word! Will we continue to build our lives on the dangerous sand by only listening and never obeying and submitting to God's Word? Will we continue to serve other masters, other lords, other kings? Or will we, by God's grace, submit to Jesus Christ as King, and take his Word as the authoritative, absolute rule for our lives? That is the rock. Build *there*.

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