

On one visit to see my brother in Texas, he showed me a house that was built on sand rather than rock. At one time, the sand offered a firm foundation. As the sand eroded, the house became unsafe. It sat on the edge of a precipice and with a few more feet of erosion it was ready to drop 60 feet and face utter destruction.

Jesus teaches us to be wise and build our homes on solid rock. Nothing is more rock solid than our immortal God, the creator of the heavens and the earth, the author of life who has no beginning or end. God created each of us for eternity. To build on solid rock, we need to think beyond the moment to that which will endure forever.

While the world bombards us with messages of consumerism built on sand, God quietly calls us to prepare for the coming of the Christ child. Make room for him in your heart, your mind, your soul. To make room, most times you need to let go of things. What truly matters most in life? If you want an answer built on solid rock, ask an elder. My own father had this wisdom to share.

Someday your life will come to an end. There will be no more sunrises, no more minutes, hours, or days. All the material possessions that you collected and treasured will all pass on to someone else. Wealth, fame, and temporal power will all shrivel to nothingness. It will not matter what you owned or what you owed. Grudges, resentment, frustrations, and jealousies will all finally disappear. So, to your hopes, ambitions, plans, and dreams. Everything that once seemed so important will fade away. It won't matter where you came from, or on what side of the tracks you lived. It won't matter whether you were brilliant or beautiful.

So, what will matter? It is not what you bought but what you built; not what you got but what you gave. What will matter is not what you learned but what you taught. What will matter is every act of integrity, compassion, courage, and sacrifice that enriched and empowered and encouraged others. What will matter is not your competence but your character. What will matter is not how many people you know, but how many will feel a lasting loss because you are gone. Living a life that matters doesn't happen by accident. It is not a matter of circumstance but of choice. Choose to live a life for others and you will live a life that matters.

Look to the example of Jesus. He came into the world in utter poverty. When the time was right, he was led into the desert for 40 days of fasting and prayer. He listened to his Father about what was most important. He resisted the temptations of the devil. He proclaimed the Good News. He taught us to forgive. He taught us to love our neighbors. He healed the sick. He fed the hungry. He reconciled the sinner. He looked for the lost sheep. He challenged the status quo. He taught us to serve rather than be served. He returned to prayer time and again so that he could listen to the will of his Father. "Not my will, but thine be done" (Luke 22:42). This was the solid rock for Jesus, the will of his Father. In loving obedience, Jesus offered his life for us on the cross. He sacrificed his human life, that we might have eternal life.

"Trust in the LORD forever! For the LORD is an eternal Rock" (Isa 26:4).