# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

April 19 & 20 '08

**"Reboot" Series**

When its time to adjust the "default" settings...
Studies from the Sermon on the Mount

This Week's Message: **"Sand-Castle Lives"**
Pastor Mark Burch

We've all been in conversations when we realize half way into a paragraph that we don't know what the other person is talking about, because our mind has drifted…OR…we wonder if the person we're talking to is actually listening, because there is a "far-off" look in their eye and they don't seem to be tracking with us!

Jesus wraps up this long message with a very basic challenge: It is not the "hearer only" who will benefit from these principles, but the one who actually "builds upon" these words! He has offered a sure foundation that will carry us through the storms of life – the only question is whether or not we will build on it?

"On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand; all other ground it sinking sand."

James 1:22 *Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says!*

Do you have questions about Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount? Send them to sermonquestions@willowparkchurch.com and then listen to future messages for the answers!

**Home Group Study Questions**

**History (Making it Personal)**

1. Are you a great listener? Share some stories of friends you have who you KNOW will really listen and HEAR you when you talk. How do those relationships differ from others?
2. Do you think there is a cryptic significance to the fact that God gave us two ears and only one mouth!? Share a time that you got your self into hot water because you did not listen well!
3. Talk about the difference between hearing and listening…What do the words – "You are not LISTENING to me" - imply?
4. Why all the waste in foundations …couldn't we save a ton of cash and time if we wouldn't go down so deep before we start to build? We just bury all this under the ground anyway…

**Digging Deeper (Looking to the Bible)**

5. Read Matthew 7:24-29 and talk about what stands out to you in the first reading of the text. What are the similarities between the two lives and where do they differ? If you met these two listeners in church – could you tell them apart? How?
6. The text seems to indicate that it is in the storms that our foundations get tested. Compare this to John 16:33, Philippians 4:12-13, and 2 Corinthians 4:16-18
7. Read James 1:19-27 and talk about the connection between listening and doing. What do the words "deceive yourselves" in verse 22 refer to? Is there a connection to Matthew 7:21-23? Talk about the connection between our faith and our works.
8. Read Ephesians 2:8-10, Romans 4:4-8, and James 2:20-26. How do you understand this relationship between our "believing" and our "working." Are these texts in conflict?
9. Spend some time with James 2:14-19 alongside Matthew 7:15-20. What are the implications? What does this indicate to us about conversion, the "sinner's prayer" and eternal security?
10. These are heady issues that people love to debate 'til the cows come home, but at the end of the day, from a human point of view, what assurance do we have that we are actually God's children? Read I John 5:13 and contrast with James 2:19.
11. Talk for a few moments about the storms of life. Why are they such critical proving grounds? In your experience, have you seen an increase in the "fair-weather-faith" syndrome? Read Matthew 13:20-21. How do you see this lived out today?
12. Wrap up your discussion by talking about the importance of deep roots – or solid foundations. Consider Colossians 2:6-7 and Psalm 1. Then talk about the HOW. How do we grow deeper? What are the habits, practices etc.

**Taking It Home (Application)**

13. Pray for each other around the group. Some may be in the middle of a horrific "storm" right now – others may be in the "foundation laying" stage of life – but we all need a solid rock on which to build our lives?
14. Intercede for some whose "sand-castles" are crumbling, and pray that God would use the storm to draw them to Himself.
15. As we wrap up the Sermon on the Mount take some time on your own this week to re-read the three chapters and pray that His kingdom would come "on earth as it is in heaven."