**BE A WISE BUILDER**

June 29, 2014

Luke 6:27-49 / Key Verse: 6:47-48

“I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and put them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built.”

Last week, we learned that Jesus chose 12 disciples to grow as future spiritual leaders and he began to train them. In the course of his training, Jesus taught them including other disciples so called, “sermon on the mount”. Today we continue to learn about Jesus’ “sermon on the mount”. In today’s sermon, Jesus concludes his teaching with the parable of wise and foolish builders. Let’s learn what we should learn to be his disciples and how we can be a wise builder for our life.

**I. Love your enemies (27-36)**

In the first part of Jesus’ sermon on the mount (v.22 &23), Jesus said, “Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man, rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven.” But in today’s teaching, Jesus goes even further. Let’s look at verse 27. “But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies,…” When you hear, “Love your enemies”, how do you feel? I believe that to everyone, loving our enemies is not easy and sometimes it looks impossible. But let’s look at Jesus’ teaching again. Jesus is giving this word not as an option but as a command. It means that to be his disciples, we must love even our enemies.

Jesus gives 6 practical examples for loving our enemies. Let’s look at verses 27b-30. “(1) Do good to those who hate you, (2) bless those who curse you, (3) pray for those who mistreat you. (4) If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. (5) If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. (6) Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.” Our enemies are those who hate us, curse us, mistreat or harm us, strikes us without due reason, takes our belongings or even our very life, etc. To such our enemies, our natural responses are to hate back, cursing back, mistreating back, or revenging even more than I got hurt. But if we want to follow Jesus, now we can not follow our natural; self-centered nature. Instead we should love them.

There is a reason why we should do so. Let’s look at verses 32-36. “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ lend to ‘sinners,’ expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” Here, we learn that loving our enemies is the evidence of the fact that we are children of God. In another word, loving our enemies is the most decisive barometer to distinguish the children of God from unrepentant sinners. Only children of God can love their enemies because they received the gracious, merciful, unconditional love of God while they were still sinners. In nature, we were originally the enemy of God. We displeased God through our stubborn disobedience. We betrayed God’s love. But God had mercy on us, willing to forgive us. So he sacrificed his One and Only Holy Son Jesus Christ for us. Because God loved us in such a way, we too ought to love others even our enemies. When we love in such love of God, we truly honour God by becoming like him in our character.

There is a woman who grew up harshly mistreated and beaten by her mother and lived as a beggar for her family and eventually became an abandoned orphan. She tried to suicide several times because her mother always said to her, “you have to die because after you were born all bad things happened in our family.” Because she was influenced by her mother in such a way, she had no hope except dying as soon as possible. But she failed her suicide several times and somehow when she was in an orphanage, she was invited to US by the help of an US army soldier in Korea. However, even in US, she became a beggar again and she alone had to survive in foreign country without knowing even English. But God showed his mercy upon her by leading her to meet a gentle US army officer. Miraculously later she could marry him and her life was changed like Disney Cinderella story. Later she met Jesus personally and became a mother of homeless people in Florida. She invited her mother to US after finding out her for long time searching for her. Her mother sometimes beat her even in US. But she continued to love her mother like Jesus loved his enemies. Later when her mother was about to die, she confessed her love for the first time to her daughter begging for forgiveness. But she confessed “I have not hated you and I don’t remember what you have done to me. God has worked for the good of us through everything happened to us. Therefore, even though I can be born again in this world, I will not change my mother and my life. I have loved you and my love will not change.”

Her testimony became known to many Christians and one time, she was awarded as the best exemplary Christian reflecting Jesus’ love in North America; especially in Korean community.

Christians’ characteristic and Jesus’ disciple’s characteristics are most well illustrated by loving unlovable; undeserving people like our enemies. Our heavenly Father is most honoured when we love in such love. In this matter, I am still far from practicing such love. But I have longing desire to grow in such love. I know among us, many of us have been struggling to learn Jesus’ unconditional love. I pray that we may continue to struggle until we may bear fruit of Jesus’ love.

**II. Do not be hypocrites (37-45)**

In practicing unconditional love, one of the biggest barriers is our judgmental attitude due to our own pride or prejudice or self-righteousness. Jesus knows our heart very well. So in verse 37 and 38, Jesus teaches about this. Let’s look at verse 37 and 38. “Do not judge, and you will not be judged, Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” The reason of why we should neither judge nor condemn others is for our benefit. When we judge others, the first feeling or emotion may be good because we feel superior to the condemned person but we are foolish because we do not know the measure we use to others will come back to us like boomerang. Those who are judgmental to others suffer from sense of condemnation because they themselves know that they will be condemned by others and by God when their sins or wrong-doings are found. Jesus forgave all our sins. So we should practice forgiving others as well as ourselves in Jesus’ love. How we treat others will be the measure used to us when we are measured. If I treat others graciously, I will be treated by others and God graciously. If I judge others without mercy, I will be judged without mercy by others and by God. So we should be careful about what measure we are using toward others remembering that with the measure I use, it will be measured to me.

In verses 39-42, Jesus also warns the tendency of people’s becoming hypocrites. Those who are judgmental always look at the speck of sawdust in other’s eye paying no attention to the plank in their own eye. Speck of sawdust usually represents some small matter like something irritating eyes. It needs to be removed but it is not fatal to our life. On the other hand, a plank in one’s eye is serious and would require immediate emergency care. So a plank in one’s eye represents our serious sin which requires our immediate action of repentance. Jesus wants us to have such attitude toward our sin problem not to be hypocrites. If we view our own problem as the plank in our own eye and other’s problem as the speck of sawdust, we can avoid from becoming hypocrites and truly grow as a well trained disciple. Then we can help others who had problems to be fixed. Jesus called 12 ordinary people to be his disciples and apostles. Jesus did not ask them to have more qualification that world can offer but Jesus taught them to repent more thoroughly than others until they can love even enemies.

In verses 43-45, Jesus taught how we can distinguish good man from evil man. Good or evil man can be distinguished by his fruit. Jesus said, “No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thorn bushes, or grapes from briers. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.” As we know in our science study, what decides the fruit of the tree is the DNA of the seed of the tree. Grape is borne when we plant grape seed. Watermelon is borne when we plant watermelon seed. Bible says, the word of God is like seed that makes us be born again as God’s children (1 Peter 1:23). Not only to be born again, but also to continue to grow to be fruitful tree, we continually need the seed of word of God. When the word of God is planted and stored up in our heart continually, we grow as good tree that bears good fruit.

**III. The wise and foolish builders (46-49)**

After all teaching, Jesus concludes his sermon with the parable of the wise and foolish builders. Let’s look at verses 46-49. “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say? I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.” After hearing all Jesus’ teachings, what finally matters is our practice. Jesus says that the one who practices Jesus’ teaching is like a man building a house who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. On the other hand, the one who does not practice Jesus’ teaching is the man building house on the ground without a foundation. When we see the outward visible buildings, they may look same because the foundation is not seen from the ground. But when are they diffentiated from each other? It is the time when the torrent of flood strikes them. Here the torrent of flood can be present and eventually in the time of God’s final judgement. To everyone, the torrent of flood will surely come. The torrent of flood can be in many ways. Such as failure of study, losing job, children’s rebelliousness, failure of marriage life, serious sicknesses or death of our beloved one including ourselves, natural disasters or unexpected accidents etc. In the time of torrent of flood, those who do not have foundation laid on the word of God through personal practicing will be shaken severely losing their hope and eventually destroyed completely separated from God. But those who have rock solid foundation on the word of God through personal practice will be not be shaken because they were well built on solid rock. Jesus and his word is eternal solid rock on which anyone’s building of life can be safe.

Today we learned, “Love your enemies, do not be judgmental, store up the word of God in our heart. May God bless each of us to put what we learn into practice in our daily lives so that we may become wise builder building our life building on rock! Amen.