

# The Parchment

Volume 2, Issue 3  
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January 31, 2010

## Is Your Faith Weatherproof?

How have you weathered all the storms we've had recently? On the one hand, I'm quite glad for the rain to mitigate the effects of our recent drought. On the other hand, I especially dislike commuting in poor weather. It took me almost ninety minutes one evening to drive home from church! Another disruption occurred in my townhouse. Two of the windows leaked water and two spots leaked from my roof. When it rained during the night, I found it difficult to sleep as I obsessively wanted to check the leaks to make sure my buckets still caught the drips from the windows and walls.

Those leaks revealed parts of my house where the weatherproofing failed. Without the hard driving rain I would not have known where the windows and roof were compromised.

We experience something similar with our faith when the storms of life come. In the "sunny" times, when things are going reasonably well, we may not notice that cracks or leaks have formed in our relationship with God. But when the trials and difficulties come, we'll notice where we are depending on our own strength, ways, or power instead of leaning on God. We may see places in our life where we've stopped living by faith or with godly purpose. We may fall back into old patterns of handling difficulties or into bad habits or sins.

Jesus speaks of building a solid foundation on His teaching in the Sermon on the Mount: *Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock* (Matthew 7:24-25). Jesus describes a life that is "weatherproof." So many people I've known fall away from God

when the storms of life inevitably fall on them. We may question whether God truly failed them or if they failed to build their life on the foundation of Jesus' teaching.

Recently I came down with a bacterial infection, strep throat, *again*. I queried why or how I could contract strep twice in six months. I didn't come to any definitive answer. However, during those times I lay in bed with a high fever, unbearable body aches, and a horrible sore throat, God began to speak to me. He had my attention. As is often the case, there are areas of my life He raised to my consciousness where I needed to repent, confess, and make right. In normal circumstances I might tell Him I'll deal with them later. This time I could not deny I needed to make some real changes. Strep throat revealed the areas of my life that are not "weatherproof."

As we listen to Jesus' teaching in His sermon, we can respond in one of two ways. The wise person hears Jesus' words, takes them into his/her life, and acts on His teaching. The foolish person hears Jesus' words and lets them pass from one ear and out the other. We must admit that we often find ourselves as the latter, letting His teaching fall on deaf ears. That's when the cracks start forming in our faith. We can experience gratitude for those events in our life that reveal where our faith is weak for they show us where we need to strengthen and exercise faith.

I called the window contractor to reseal our windows and will contact the homeowner's association regarding my roof. Now that I know where the leaks are I would be foolish not to address them before the next major storm. In the same way, we must correct weakened areas of our life that life's circumstances reveal. In this way God can build our faith in a way that will withstand any storm.

Next week I will focus more on this passage from Matthew 7 as we conclude the series on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. May we heed His words to build the foundation of our life on the solid rock of His teaching.