



**KING'S
CHURCH** (<http://kingschurchedinburgh.org/>)
EDINBURGH

Matthew 7:24-29 Defined By The Bible

We are a church defined by God's Word, the Bible. In the parable of the two builders, we see that this is Jesus's intention for us. This calls for humility, wisdom, and faith.

The parable of the two builders may seem like a simple choice between doing the right or wrong things, and how we cope with the storms of life but Jesus was saying more than that. Using Old Testament language about God's Temple and God's judgement, He told His listeners that He was doing a new thing (Ezekiel 13:10-16, Jeremiah 7:11-15, Isaiah 28:16-17). Peter summarises this in 1 Peter 2:4-6, explaining that the dwelling place of God is now the church, the gatherings all over the world of those who have put their trust in Jesus and been filled with God's Holy Spirit, built on the foundation of Christ the rock.

We are committed as a church to building everything we do on Christ, the Word of God. Believing and following it is the only way to please God: Jesus told us that if we love Him, we'll obey His commandments (John 14:15). It's the only way to represent God to Edinburgh and the whole world because it is in His Word that He has shown us who He is (John 1:14).

The way in which we read and obey God's Word is vitally important...

1 . Humility

God promises His attention to those who tremble at His Word (Isaiah 66:2). We don't sit in judgement of it, it judges us. We mustn't let personal preferences or peer pressure shape our thinking when we read things that challenge and even trouble us. The Bible is not an echo-chamber, it is sword that cuts to our very hearts, it is a rock that we cannot reshape. This means we will have to spend our whole lives adjusting ourselves to it, as God reveals more of Himself and His ways to us.

2 . Wisdom

If you've been a Christian for almost any length of time you will have faced decisions that the Bible doesn't give a clear answer to. Wisdom is knowing what God wants without Him having to spell it out. This isn't pragmatism because the motivation is always to please God rather than just get things done, and the foundation remains what He has said. We grow in wisdom by learning more about the story we're in and the Author of that story, staying open to learning no matter how experienced we are, using the common grace God gives the whole world, listening to diverse voices who love God's Word.

3 . Faith

God speaks so that we can hear, believe, and act upon what He's said. It is the moment of obedience which Jesus said was essential if we're to be built on the rock. When we obey what God has said it may seem crazy to those around us, even some Christians. Many of us wince at the prospect of someone saying, "So you're a Christian, do you believe the Bible is true?" The path of least resistance, in individual conversations and church life, is to stay as controversy-free as possible but our culture is built on shifting sand, it changes all the time and no-one can get a secure footing. God's Word is timeless and unchanging, because God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. It has faced down many storms. Yes, it has some sharp edges, but it is the place of safety and our confidence must rest on it alone. By faith we stake our entire lives on Him, not hedging our bets and keeping a few rival gods like success or popularity or money happy too. We put everything on Him, believing that He is the one we must build our lives upon.

Recommended resources

There's a link to the Reading God's Word Together handout in the news email.

To help you trust the Bible:

- Why Trust the Bible? by Amy Orr-Ewing
- Can We Trust The Gospels? by Peter J. Williams
- Hidden In Plain View by Lydia McGrew
- Confronting Christianity by Rebecca Mclaughlin
- The Reason for God by Timothy Keller

To help you understand the Bible:

- How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth by Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart
- Grasping God's Word by J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays
- Women of The Word by Jen Wilkin

Questions for small group discussion

- What did you find surprising or challenging about Luke's preach?
- What does humility towards God's Word look like? Why do you think we struggle with this?
- Why do you think God didn't give us direct answers to every question in life we face?
- How can we ensure that being wise about the Bible doesn't end up as pragmatism?
- Can you give an example of when God's Word has led you to make a faith decision?
- When do you feel least confident about the Bible? How can we strengthen ourselves and each other in these situations?
- Many people, when they feel that they're on the defensive, try to close things down, like a castle under attack. How can we respond to those who challenge what we believe positively and keep welcoming them?
- How is Reading God's Word Together going for you? (If you've got suggestions on things that would help you more, please feel free to email Luke as we're always trying to improve this.)



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