



**Sermon outline of Pastor Karl Kruse, Regional Director of Prayer Watch International, given Sunday, November 21, 2010 at Crossroads Community Church, Cokato, MN.**

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**(Isaiah 56:6b-7 NIV)** The Lord said through the prophet Isaiah, "... all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant – these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations."

**(Matthew 21:12-13 NIV)** Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. **"It is written,"** he said to them, **"My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'"**

First let's take a closer look at Isaiah 56:7

1. God, speaking through his prophet Isaiah, says the that the Temple of God will be a **House Of Prayer**
  - a. Now there are lots of important things that God's people do when they get together, Worship, Education, Fellowship – just to name a few. These are all very important.
2. But note carefully what God did not say. **God did not say:**
  - a. My house will be called a house of worship
  - b. My house will be called a house of education
  - c. My house will be called a house of fellowship
3. God's choice was to call his house a **House of Prayer**

4. Let's take a quick look at Matthew 21:13.
5. Jesus discovered that people had turned the Temple into a **Supermarket**. Present in the temple were:
  - a. **Banks** (Moneychangers)
  - b. **Animals** for sale
  - c. **Birds** for sale
6. Jesus echoed the words of God through Isaiah and said that the Temple of HOUSE OF PRAYER (from Isaiah 56:7)
7. Jesus proceeds to **cleanse** the Temple and **restore** it to its original function and **purpose**, a HOUSE OF PRAYER.
8. You can see the concept of HOUSE OF PRAYER is clearly expressed in both the Old and New Testaments, and its meant for the church **Today**.
9. Here's the question: **Is Crossroads Church a House of Prayer?**
  - a. If Crossroads is not a House of Prayer, then it is at least partially **Outside Of God's Purpose** for the church.
  - b. He said so in both the Old and New Testaments.
10. So, does Jesus need to do some cleansing even at the very beginning of Crossroads' ministry.

**WHAT IS A HOUSE OF PRAYER** (Three important aspects of a H. O. P.)

### **The First Important Aspect**

1. Prayer is the **Top Priority**, individually and corporately
  - a. **(1 Tim. 2:1-4 NIV)** I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone– {2} for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. {3} This is good, and pleases God our Savior, {4} who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

- b. The Apostle Paul understood this and practiced this.
- c. This was excellent advice to the new and young pastor, Timothy
- d. Look carefully at the language used in verse 1; **I URGE!**
- e. Then **First Of All**, – not only a good idea, or something to think about, or do if he had some extra time!
- f. Pray for whom?
  - i. **Everyone**
  - ii. **Kings**
  - iii. **Those In Authority**
- g. Connection between prayer and **Evangelism** (Vs. 4)

### **The Second Important Aspect**

- 2. God's Spirit of **Grace** and **Prayer (Supplication)** is being poured out over the church.
  - a. (**Zechariah 12:10 NIV**) “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.”
  - b. Grace brings us into **reconciliation** with God.
  - c. God's Spirit of Prayer is very important because
    - i. We pray not out of **duty**, but
    - ii. Because of an **Inner Desire** to live in communion with God
    - iii. It produces a **deeper** and more meaningful relationship

### **The Third Important Aspect**

- 3. Everything in the church **Begins With Prayer** and **Flows Out Of Seasons** in prayer rather than praying just when we get ourselves in trouble
  - a. (Matthew 6:33 NIV) **But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.**
  - b. When we seek **God First**, then the other things seem to work out okay. However, we tend to **Jump In** and **Do** things **First**, then ask God for help when we get ourselves into trouble.

What God wants, is for this to be a House of Prayer ... and every house needs a rock solid foundation.

**(Matthew 7:24-29 NIV)** “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. {25} 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. {26} But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. {27} The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.” {28} When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, {29} because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

In Matthew 7:24-27, we read about two builders. They were both excellent builders. But one of them made a terrible mistake.

Jesus talks about these builders in different ways. In verse 24 he describes one builder as being **wise**, and in verse 26 he describes the other builder as being **foolish**.

Prayer involves hearing what God (**Father, Son & Holy Spirit**) is communicating to us is communicating to us and then responding to that. Jesus wants us to **Know** and **Do** God’s good and perfect will.

Knowing and doing God’s good and perfect will comes as a result of our communication with God in **Prayer**. For us and our life, this is building upon a **Strong Foundation**.

If the foundation isn’t strong to begin with, then it really doesn’t matter what is built on top of it.

The one builder made a terrible mistake by building on poor soil and not giving **Attention** to the foundation. As a result of this terrible mistake, it **Fell** with a **Great Crash**.

1. Why do think the foolish builder made such a fundamental mistake?
  - a. **This was not an intentional mistake**
  - b. **The builder didn’t take time to check out the foundation**
  - c. **He may have been too busy to give proper diligence to the foundation**
  - d. **He didn’t plan, and because he didn’t plan, he was referred to as the one who was foolish**
    - i. **He didn’t plan to fail – he failed to plan**

And so, as individuals, as families, as this faith community called Crossroads, we have to make sure that the **Foundation** we stand on is **Solid**.

Now, the story doesn’t end here, but instead, points us to a **Wise** builder.

2. So, what do you think motivated the wise builder?
  - a. **Maybe he was once in the same shoes of the foolish builder, and was not going to repeat a previous mistake.**

- b. **And perhaps he took the time to explore the possibilities, and knew that a strong foundation was essential.**

Looking at the two houses, they looked the same from the outside. However, one thing changed all that – there was a storm that **Exposed** the **Foundation**. This happens in our lives and our churches too.

A lot of churches or faith communities also look the same from the outside, until there's a storm that exposes the foundation. That's when you discover what's really at the heart of that faith community.

- 3. So, how can we build on a solid rock foundation? How can Crossroads be a faith community that Jesus would describe as **Wise**?
  - a. Invite Jesus to be the **Center** of our **Lives**. If Jesus isn't at the center of the life of this place, then Crossroads will just become another social club.
  - b. We must be **Obedient** to Jesus
    - i. God places a high priority on obedience – not to take away our fun, but so that we'll experience the best God has to offer.
    - ii. Jesus said, "If you love me, you will obey what I command.
    - iii. A strong foundation comes about by being **Obedient** to what God has shared with us
  - c. Prayer is a Rock Solid Foundation, because it is an **Intimate Communication** with God.
  - d. Prayer should be a **Dialogue** and not just a **Monologue** of us bringing our shopping list to God.
    - i. God is talker
  - e. Prayer brings the **Presence of God** into our lives, and into the life of our church.
    - i. Just take a look at Luke 24:13-35. This the story of the resurrected Jesus coming along side two disciples on the road to Emmaus.
    - ii. These disciples were not only talking with each other, but they were also talking with God – Jesus.
    - iii. In verse 32 it says: "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"
      - (1) Prayer brings us into the presence of God.

- f. And of course, lack of prayer ultimately brings **Disaster** and **Hardship** into our lives. Lack of a foundation of prayer in churches also brings disaster and hardship. This foundation of prayer is simply indispensable when it comes to be the person, or the family, or the faith community God wants you to be.
- g. So what make the foolish builder foolish?
  - i. Either he failed to **Hear** what Jesus was saying to him OR
  - ii. He heard what Jesus was saying, but didn't **Do** what Jesus said.
- h. And what makes the wise builder wise?
  - i. He **Listened** to what God was saying, AND
  - ii. He obediently **DID** what God was saying for him to do.

If we hear what Jesus want us to do about prayer in our personal life and the life of our congregation, but don't **Do** it, we will be like the **Foolish Builder**.

From the New testament book of James we hear: "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." (James 1:22 NIV)

Deception leads us away from God. This happens when we **Hear** the Word of **God**, but we don't **Do** it.

Deception can be slow and incremental, but it has long lasting effects.

The good news is, that we can always **Return To God** and begin again with a life built upon a **Rock Solid** foundation of **Prayer**.

**SUMMARY** So ... how do we wrap this up?

- I. The foundation is always the **Place Of Beginning**.
  - A. So it is with prayer
  - B. Prayer is where all of us begin.
  - C. Prayer is where this faith community must begin.
  - D. Prayer is the **Highest Priority**.
- II. The foundation **Determines** what can be built on top of it.
  - A. **Growth, Revival, and Renewal** will not happen without a deep and strong foundation.
  - B. This is the same for your personal life as well as for the life your church.
  - C. So, how deep do you want your foundation to be? Do you want to see a just few people reached or this whole, spread-out community reached in Jesus' name

- III. Foundations **Support** everything that is built on top of it.
- A. Prayer supports everything we do
  - B. If our **Prayer Foundation** is weak, then everything we do is no stronger than our own efforts and our own strength
  - C. If our prayer foundation is strong, then everything we do is done with **God's Strength** and effort, and not our own.
  - D. When we work, we work. When we pray, God works.
- IV. Finally, a foundation is normally **Not Seen**.
- A. The same is with prayer
  - B. People may not normally **See** or **Know** that we are in prayer for **People** or **Projects**.
  - C. Prayer is not often seen by others, but we are rewarded by simply being in God's presence.
    - 1. Teresa of Avila, in the 1500's once said that ultimately prayer is not saying anything at all ... it is simply being in the presence of the one who love you infinitely.
  - D. Prayer is often unseen, but is absolutely necessary.

My prayer for you personally, and for Crossroads Community Church is that you will build your life upon a firm foundation of prayer ... empowered by God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.



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