



**SCRIPTURE:**

Matthew 7:24-26

**SERMON NOTES:**

How influential was John Wycliffe? What impact did his life and teachings have on people? Even after being dead for 43 years, officials in the Catholic Church dug up his body, burn his remains, and spread the ashes into the River Swift, a 14 mile river just 80+ miles outside of London, England. He is called by many, "The Morning Star of the Reformation." Why? Because he laid the foundation and prepared the way for what is known as the Protestant Reformation. Someone later observed, ***"Thus the brook hath conveyed his ashes into Avon; Avon into Severn; Severn into the narrow seas; and they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine which now is dispersed the world over."***

What would cause or lead to such actions? Who was this man? What did he teach and do? What is this doctrine now dispersed the world over? That is the subject of our sermon today as we continue "The Cloud" series.

Throughout my adult life, I have been reminded through trials and pain how vital our faith is to our lives. Having a part-time commitment to Jesus or Christianity will be of no use to you when real life comes crashing upon you. Our faith is not segmented and segregated off into a compartment away from the rest of our lives. Our faith is not simply a Wednesday night or Sunday morning thing, disconnected from the everydayness of life. Part-time religion and half- butt commitment to Jesus are worthless. Lukewarm faith will not hold you up when life is throwing you down. Without our commitment to Jesus and personal communion with him, I do not know how we would have survived these last 3-4 months. Several weeks ago I stood in a hospital NICU with a family in our church who were holding their little daughter in her final hours. We cried. They grieve. We grieve. And while their legs may be weak, the ground their standing on is not. They cling to God through His Word. They hold the truths of the Scriptures and all the promises contained within it.

Do you prize and esteem this book? Can you say with David in **Psalm 119:103** “**How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!**”? Consider how blessed we are. Until the 1500’s, common people did not have access to what the Scriptures said. Only priests and scholars could read the original languages and had access to them. So for thousands of years, people, even God’s people, did not personally own copies of God’s Word. Not only that, but most of the world throughout history has been illiterate. So even if you had the Scriptures in your language, you likely couldn’t read them. So consider today how blessed you are.

Through His Word, God not only gives us commands, but He gives us Himself. He makes Himself known and gives us the experience of fellowship and communion with Him as we learn to hear His voice through the Scriptures. So we pursue God in the Scriptures and we hear His voice in the Scriptures. This means the Scriptures guide what we believe is true; what we believe is right and wrong; what we believe the future holds; and how we believe God interacts with the world and His people. All of these things are found in the Bible. The God of the universe and Creator of everything communicates who He is and what His will is to us, through His Word.

Our danger today is not so much that we have quit believing the Bible, but we have become so familiar with it that it no longer stuns us that God has spoken and is speaking through this book.

Three kinds of people here today:

- 1. Those who reject the Bible as God’s Word.** (cynical, skeptical, but largely ignorant)
- 2. Those who claim it is but live like it isn’t.** (they practically reject the Bible - way too many professing Christians)
- 3. Those who know it is and treasure it.** (they believe the Bible, love the Bible, and build their life and faith on it)

Here at TJC, we want to be people found in the third category. We want to form people here into the third category. Why? Because the Bible is the very Word of God, and God’s Word is how we have a relationship with Him and how we’re built to stand when all else is crumbling. Without grounding ourselves in the Word, we set ourselves up for a great crash.

**Exegesis: Matthew 7:24-27** — (Jesus compares those who build their life on the Word and those who don’t)

**VS 24 -- “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.**

Jesus compares everyone who both **HEARS** His words and **DOES** them to a wise man who built his house on rock. Wise people build their homes on sturdy foundations. This is because we know that the strength of the foundation will determine the strength of the home to stand in adverse conditions. Jesus says that hearing and obeying/applying/living his words are like that wise man.

**VS 25 -- And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.**

When the rains, floods, and winds came and beat on the house, it stood. The house did not fall. Why? It was built on the rock. This is what the life of those who trust Jesus will be like. When the trials and troubles of life come - and friends they are coming - you will be able to stand if your life is built on the words of Jesus.

**VS 26 -- And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.**

But the opposite is true for those who don't. Those who hear, but do not do them/live them/apply them/build their life upon them, is like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. Those who do not build their life upon the Word are fools.

**VS 27 -- And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”**

Why? When the rains, waves, and winds come and beat upon the house, the house built on sand falls. The same is true with our lives. That is Jesus' point. He is simply giving an illustration about a house built on sand or rock and which can withstand the rains, winds, and waves. The house built on the rock can. Your applying God's Word and living upon it is the difference between rock and sand. If you build your life on the authority of something else, your life will collapse and fall when the troubles and trials come.

Friends, please listen to me, it is vital that you see this and believe it. If you do not think it is that big of a deal, to be building your life and dependence upon the Scriptures, then you will be building your life on the sand. And here's the deal, you can build the house on the sand and get away with it for a while. You may be able to get along for a period of time without submitting your life to the Scriptures, but it will eventually catch up with you. (Illustration: It's like someone stealing money from the company, it may benefit them temporarily, but it will eventually cost them; It's like someone having an affair on a spouse, it may provide short-term thrills, but it will eventually be exposed for what it really

is; It's like eating terribly every meal, every day of your life, it may be satisfying to the stomach, but eventually your heart and body can no longer support it.) In other words, you may get away with building your life on the sand for a season, but it will eventually cost you. Jesus said, "And great was the fall of it."

Jesus prayed to the Father in **John 17:17** "*Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.*" We grow spiritually, and mature, by God's Word. It must be the foundation your life is firmly built upon.

Believe it or not, whether you think any of this is controversial or not, these truths from 2 Timothy 3:16, Matthew 7:24-27, Psalm 119:103, and others were not prominent. The church didn't see or understand them in this way. They had been lost, veiled, you might even say hidden. And the fact that challenging you to read the Word, know the Word, and build your life on the Word is not a brand new idea to you, is because of the work and influence of John Wycliffe.

### **Biographical Sketch:**

John Wycliffe (not to be confused with Wyclef Jean) was born in the 1320's in Yorkshire, England. Wycliffe received his formal education at Oxford where he started attending as a teenager. He studied theology and philosophy and it wasn't long before he joined the faculty himself. He began with teaching philosophy, but his interest in theology pulled him in that direction and produced in him a strong desire to study the Scriptures and early fathers of the faith. It was this interest in the Scriptures and theology that led him to the realization how far the Roman Catholic Church had veered from what the Scriptures teach about many things.

Wycliffe became a strong proponent of the authority of Scripture above everything else. In the 1370's, Wycliffe produced three very important works aimed at the church's corruption. The first was "On Divine Dominion." This book argued that there was no biblical warrant for a Pope, and he sought to show the Pope's authority over the church was invalid. His major point was that the Pope's authority clashed with the Scriptures teaching on the church's true authority: the Scriptures themselves. In his second major work "On Civil Dominion," Wycliffe argued that the Roman Catholic Church's claim to have authority over the English crown. He refuted it and made the case that England had no obligation to support a corrupt church. His third major work of this era was "On the Truth of Sacred Scripture." Here is where Wycliffe lays out a fully formed view of the authority of Scripture. He called for the Bible to be translated into English, which strictly went against Roman Catholic law. They considered translating the Bible into common, vulgar language as heresy punishable by death. You may ask why? One of the reasons is

the power it provides the clergy to teach and lead unchecked from a higher authority. If people cannot read the Scriptures, but can only depend on you to interpret for them, then you can interpret and teach whatever you like. It's control. By this time in the Church, this is where things had gone. Papal authority reigned unchecked, though they were often corrupt. Doctrines had been formulated and propagated that didn't accord with Scripture at all (doctrines like purgatory, indulgences, withholding communion, priestly intercession, transubstantiation, and others). Wycliffe believed the Bible not only needed to be translated into the common language of the people, but copied and distributed for them (remember, this is before the printing press, this would be hand-copied).

Wycliffe translated the Bible into English and distributed those Bibles to pastors all across England, and eventually people in the churches. It then spread beyond England. Wycliffe wrote, ***"The laity ought to understand the faith, and since the doctrines of our faith are in the Scriptures, believers should have the Scriptures in a language familiar to the people, and to this end the Holy Ghost endued them with knowledge of all tongues."***

These three works set the stage just a hundred years later for the Reformation. One faculty member at Oxford returned to their home in Prague with copies of Wycliffe's writings. They eventually made their way in front of a young man named Jan Hus. Hus eventually served as a second "Morning Star" of the Reformation. Wycliffe and Hus became the two pillars that led a German monk by the name of Martin Luther to nail his 95 theses' to the church door in Wittenberg and launch the Reformation.

These actions by Wycliffe, from his writings to his work of translating the Bible to English, were not well received by the Church (if you can imagine). Despite their disapproval, Wycliffe continued his work, and helped Christians learn to study the Bible and live according to its teachings. In the years before his death, he increasingly argued for the Scriptures as the center and authority of the Christian faith. The foundation and rock upon which everything was built.

On December 28th, 1384, while in his parish church, he suffered a stroke and died a few days later on the last day of the year (December 31st). He was 56. On May 4th 1415, the Church declared him to be a heretic. Thirteen years later, in 1428, following the orders of a Council that convened, Wycliffe's body was dug up, burned, and his ashes were scattered in the nearby River Swift.

**Application:**

### **1. The Scriptures are the authority for the Church and the Christian.**

*"Holy Scripture is the highest authority for every believer, the standard of faith and the foundation for reform."*

*"The gospel alone is sufficient to rule the lives of Christians everywhere - any additional rules made to govern men's conduct added nothing to the perfection already found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ."*

### **2. It is a gift from God to have the Scriptures and privilege to have it in our language.**

*"Englishmen learn Christ's law best in English. Moses heard God's law in his own tongue; so did Christ's apostles."*

*"The New Testament is of full authority and open to the understanding of simple men as to the points most needful to salvation."*

*"It is certain that the truth of the Christian faith becomes more evident the more the faith itself is known. Therefore, the doctrine should not only be in Latin but also in the common tongue, and as the faith of the Church is contained in the Scriptures, the more these are known in the true sense, the better."*

*"It is not good for us to trust in our merits, in our virtues or our righteousness; but only in God's free pardon, as given us through faith in Jesus Christ."*

### **3. The Scriptures keep our theology in alignment with truth.**

*"Trust wholly in Christ; rely altogether on his sufferings; beware of seeking to be justified in any other way than by his righteousness."*

### **4. The Scriptures ground our faith when suffering comes.**

*"Belief fails when it works not well indeed but is idle as a sleeping man... Each virtuous deed is strong when it is grounded upon the solidity of belief."*

Jesus reminds us of the importance of building our life on the rock and not the sand. We look to Christ and His Word to endure the winds and storms of life when they come. We know the house, our life, will stand, because Christ tells us. We know what Jesus tells us, not only because the Scriptures were given, but we have them in our own language. We can thank God for providing us John Wycliffe for this grace.

## REVIEW:

- ❖ Read Matthew 7:24-27
- ❖ What does Jesus mean by hearing and doing?
- ❖ What is the foundation that Jesus is referring to?
- ❖ Why does the house fall when trials come?
- ❖ Why does not acting on the words of Jesus make one foolish?

## REFLECT:

- ❖ What are the different ways that you hear the words of Jesus?
- ❖ How are you acting on the words of Jesus?
- ❖ What type of foundation would you say you have?

## RESPOND:

- ❖ What is one thing you can act on this week that you've been putting off?

## MEDITATE:

- ❖ Matthew 7:24-25 -- 24 *"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.*

## MEMORIZE:

- ❖ 2 Timothy 3:16-17 -- *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

## PRAYER FOCUS:

- ❖ Directional Elder - **Chris Townson**
- ❖ Ministry - **Jail Ministry**
- ❖ **Pray for our long-term families:**
  - The Wilsons
  - The Grays
  - The Starks (departing in October)
- ❖ **Pray for our mid-term sent ones:**
  - Kaesi (gap year - departing in August)
- ❖ **Pray for our short-term teams:**
  - Central Asia team departs in September
- ❖ **Pray for the lost - Unreached People Group (UPG):** Jenaama Bozo in Côte d'Ivoire (West Africa)
  - **Population in country:** 23,000
  - **Global population:** 445,000
  - **Christian Adherent:** 0.00%
  - **Evangelical:** 0.00%

- **Primary Religion:** Islam
- **Primary Language:** Bozo, Jenaama
- **Summary:** The Jenaama Bozo derive their name from the term 'Boso,' meaning "straw-house," a reference to dwellings in temporary fishing camps. They live in a hot, dry region where they make their livelihood from farming, fishing and commerce. The women spin cotton. Accessibility by boat or road is making travel easier. While educational levels remain low, they are growing. This is giving them a greater awareness of the world around them.
- **Prayer Focus:** Pray that mission organizations and churches would accept the challenge of reaching the Jenaama Bozo. Pray that God would grant wisdom and favor to mission agencies that are focusing on this people group. Ask the Lord to save key leaders who will boldly declare the gospel. Ask the Lord to raise up strong local churches.
- Want to keep up with other Unreached People Groups? Download the Unreached of the Day App  
<https://joshuaproject.net/pray/unreachedoftheday/app>