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*As follows in Jesus' name:*

"Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you? Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great."<sup>(ESV)</sup>

*This is Your Word, heavenly Father; **sanctify us in the truth, Your Word is Truth.** Amen.* (John 17:17)

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In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Dear Fellow Redeemed,

There are many people who have just experienced the truth presented to us here by Jesus.

The aftermath of Hurricane Ian is devastating: flooding because of rain and storm surge, houses and businesses leveled by the wind, and so much more.

Those who evacuated are going back to see what is left of their homes and places of business.

Many are going back to see what is left of their lives.

If this life is all that they have lived for, they may feel like they don't have much to live for now.

Can you imagine how useless it would feel... all those years of labor and planning... and for what?

All you have built up, or been building up... gone in the matter of a few hours.

Imagine the deep feeling of hopelessness. How would you go about rebuilding your life?

If this life is all that you have lived for, you have built your house, not on Florida beaches, but upon sand.

It is times like these when a person's faith is severely tested.

It is times like these that Jesus is warning us to prepare for.

Our Lord would rather these times not be faith-shaking or faith-destroying, but instead faith-strengthening.

And so He warns, "**Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?**"

He is warning against the simple appearance of being a Christian (what is called 'hypocrisy'), of hearing what He says, yet not doing, not believing it—it's like building a house on sand. Those who merely hear His words, have the material to put up a structure that looks strong, but ultimately is a mere facade.

The hypocrite may well look the part of a Christian, may strive to align himself with the 10 Comm.s, but it is only an appearance.

Perhaps he is simply being deceptive, living such a life publicly, while privately living as he wills.

Or maybe he is genuine, really striving to obey the Lord's Comm.s,

but wrongly believing that he can earn God's favor and thus salvation by His obedience to them.

These have the knowledge of Jesus' words, they have heard it,

but there is no true faith in them, they do not cling to the firm foundation, the bedrock of Jesus' perfect life as their righteousness, and His death on the cross as the price for their salvation.

So realize that 'doing' God's word is more than simply striving to obey the 10 Commandments. The 10 Comm.s certainly are God's words, & thus Jesus' words, given to protect His good gifts to you. For example: the 5th Comm. (**You shall not kill.**) protects His gift of life, the 6th Comm. (**You shall not commit adultery.**) protects His gift of family, and the 1st Comm. (**You shall have no other gods.**) protects His gift of faith. The Lord would have you keep these because these are the ways that correctly express perfect love, both to Him and to your neighbors (other people). In a perfect world, these would not be difficult for us. They would be our delight to do. But because of the sin that corrupts each of our hearts, the 'love' that naturally motivates us is selfish. It's the selfishness that justifies ignoring God's Comm.s for what you personally think is right; that says, 'its okay to punch your brother because he hurt you first;' 'its okay to look and fantasize about someone else,' even though in reality it undermines your love for your spouse.

...

When we sin, when we fail to keep God's law, we hurt not only others, but also ourselves. That sin causes a separation between you and God. Whether you feel it right away or not, you burden your conscience with those sins. In fact, when you sin against your neighbor, you are also sinning against your Lord Jesus, who not only gave life to your neighbor, but also died to redeem him. When you sin, you disobey His commands, showing that you do not *fear, love, or trust in God above all things.*

This creates, at best, uncertainty about whether or not God is pleased with you. But really, it isn't just uncertainty, it creates doubt in His love & fear that He wants to punish you. And when you face difficult times, like destructive weather, or serious illness/even cancer, or employment challenges, or significant financial loss, or mental health issues, or bullying... then what you thought you believed about God's love, is flooded over with fear, even despair. And where previously you thought your house, your faith, stood firm, it comes to total ruin.

Those who build their house only on sand find themselves without comfort or hope in life's trials.

But as I indicated earlier, there is more to Jesus' word than just the 10 Comm.s, there is also the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the good news of His life and death lived and died for you. While the 10 Comm.s tell us how we are to love God and our fellow man and show us our sins, the Gospel tells us how God has shown His love to us and shows us Jesus as our Savior from sin. It tells how Jesus fulfilled all of God's 10 Comm.s perfectly for you, in your place, and how He carried your sins to the cross and suffered the wrath and punishment you deserved.

While it cost Jesus His comfort and ease in this life, it is the cause of great comfort... and hope for you. To hear His Words and do them, is not only to hear and strive to obey the 10 Comm.s but even more so to believe in your full and free salvation through Jesus Christ. It is to recognize and believe that Jesus is your Lord and Savior. It is to believe that Jesus completed your obligation of obeying the 10 Comm.s to God the Father, so that He credits you with already having fulfilled them. It is to believe that the Father does love you and that He punished Jesus completely for all your sins... so completely, in fact, that He will never punish you in His wrath or anger.

It is to believe that when difficult trials happen in your life, these are not punishments, but a Fatherly discipline, to strengthen your trust in His care and keeping, rather than trusting in yourself or anything else for your good and protection.

...

When Jesus talks about the wise man who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock and built his house upon that foundation, He is talking about the person who not only has a house made of strong material, namely His word, as one can see, but who also has anchored that house on the unseen rock of Jesus' salvation.

The building of this house, the digging deep to lay the foundation on the rock, this is not something that just happens in adulthood.

It begins as soon as the Lord gives one faith... and continues throughout ones' lifetime.

This is one of the reasons that PLC has continued to maintain a school for the last 128 years.

It is the reason that we call teachers who are theologically trained to teach our children, not only to hear God's 10 Comm.s, but also to hear of Jesus as their Savior.

It is the reason that you hear children on the playground, not only learn to ask for forgiveness, but also learn to say, "you are forgiven."

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Today, we have the joy of praising the Lord for the faithful labors of 2 special ladies who have served and taught Jesus' little lambs for 40+1 years.

...40 years of God's grace to be helping parents teach their children (almost a 1/4 of PLS's existence).

In Scripture the number 40 is often the number for trial and temptation.

Think of it, for 40 days Moses was on Mt. Sinai, and Israel was tempted to worship the golden calf.

For 40 years Israel wandered in the wilderness and fell into many temptations.

For 40 days Jesus wandered the wilderness, being tempted by the devil, yet never fell into sin.

These ladies, Mrs. Davis & Mrs. McClung, have had their share of trials and temptations.

Within those 40 years, they have both gotten married and raised families of their own.

They have grandchildren now. (Mrs. Davis has not gotten to teach two of them.)

They have had floods come upon them and try to break them.

But we dare not say that it was their own strength that got them through these trials, it wasn't their obedience of the 10 Comm.s that got them through, but Jesus Himself...

that they will both readily confess.

And as it was the Lord who held on to them, so they have faithfully taught their students to dig deep for that same foundation for their lives. Just by way of example of how these happen:

Mrs. McClung starts each day with songs and prayers for the well-being of the students & families.

She is teaching them, not to rely on themselves, but to call upon the Lord in the day of trouble and thank Him for the blessings that He gives.

Mrs. Davis thoughtfully reads through the published devotions that she uses, occasionally tweaking some of the them, because sometimes they focus on morals, on our behavior, rather than on Jesus as our comfort from sin and our hope for eternal life.

The Lord grant you His grace...

and grant you faith to wisely build on the foundation of Jesus' life & death

for your comfort and hope through the floods and hurricanes of this life.  
So that when the 40 years of this earthly life's trials and temptations are over and death,  
like a flooding stream would break against you, you will not be shaken,  
because you have been well built upon the life and death of your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.  
There is certainly more to this life than this life.  
There is a life to come with eternal peace and joy, where there will be no floods of temptations or fear,  
and where your mansions will stand forever before your Lord who prepared it for you.

In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

*Soli Deo Gloria*