



The summer, Sam and I experienced the birth of two precious grandbabies, Whitman and Poppy. My love for those little humans is deep and my desire for them to be happy is beyond explanation. I feel so protective of them; I don't want anyone or anything to hurt them... ever!

I wonder if that is how God feels about each of us. His "father love" is so deep for us, and He wants us to experience life to its fullest. This is why Jesus came. He said, "*I have come that you may have life and have it more abundantly*" (John 10:10). Our Creator wants us to thrive and to be a force that helps others in our world to thrive.

The birth of our two grandbabies has changed the Thanksgiving season for me. I have been reflecting on a grandparent's opportunity to influence the life of a grandchild.

The simple story at the conclusion of the "Sermon on the Mount" keeps coming to mind.

Jesus said, "*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.** But everyone who hears the words of mine and does not put them into practice is like **a foolish man who built his house***"

***on the sand.*** *The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash*" (Matthew 7:24-27).

What an incredible claim! If we build our house, our life, on the teachings of Jesus and we put our faith in Him, **we will stand firm even through the most violent of storms.**

For those of us who live on the Malibu campus, Jesus's illustration comes to life. Even in sunny Southern California, we experience the destruction that comes with forceful wind and mighty rain. We have experienced the howling of the winds barreling through the canyons and across our patios blowing tables, chairs, and the accompanying pillows off the deck. In the night, as the wind howls, we can hear roof tiles flying off and crashing on the driveway below.

We can also literally see the impact over time of **"building your life on the sand"** when we walk the Malibu beach and observe the multi million dollar homes. We see the erosion of the homes' foundations threatening the integrity of the structure. Daily, heavy rocks and fresh concrete are being added to the foundations so that these spectacular homes won't **"fall with a great crash"** and be swept out to sea.

Here Jesus is teaching us how to build a life—a life that flourishes—a life that not only survives the storms of life, that will inevitably come, but stands strong. **Jesus warns us here that there are two ways to build a life—one that lasts and one that crumbles.** He is providing us the roadmap to joy.

This Thanksgiving, as I hold close my two new grandbabies, my heart will be overflowing with gratitude. God has been so faithful and generous to me. But it has been in the storms of my life that I have held onto Him the tightest; I have experienced His presence and His power. **Jesus has been my rock.** I want Whitman and Poppy to know that. My prayer is that through the years, they will grow in their love for Jesus, and that **He will be the rock on which they build their lives.**

That will make **ALL** the difference.

May it be so for us all this Thanksgiving season! May God bless you and yours.

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