

Sermon #121 — Isaiah Series

Title: **WITHERING FLESH**
 AND THE WORD OF GOD

Text: Isaiah 40:6-8

Subject: *The Immutability of God's Word*

Date: Sunday Morning — March 1, 2020

Reading: *Luke 16:19-31*

Introduction:

The title of my message is **WITHERING FLESH**
AND THE WORD OF GOD. My text is Isaiah
40:6-8. — **WITHERING FLESH AND THE**
WORD OF GOD (Isaiah 40:6-8).

(Isaiah 40:6-8) The voice said, Cry. And he said,
What shall I cry? All flesh *is* grass, and all the
goodness thereof *is* as the flower of the field:
(7) The grass withereth, the flower fadeth:
because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it:
surely the people *is* grass. (8) The grass
withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our
God shall stand forever.

God the Holy Ghost inspired the apostle Paul to write
the same thing to the Church at Corinthians in 2nd
Corinthians 4.

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(2 Corinthians 4:17-18) “**Our light affliction,** which is **but for a moment,** **worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;** 18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.”

“*The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*” — I wonder if we will ever learn that. — “*The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*” — — “**Eternal!**” — What a heavy, heavy word that is! We all tend to treat the material, sensible things of time as realities and eternal things as fables. We ought to reverse our thinking. That which is temporal is insignificant, compared with that which is eternal. **Eternity is reality! We deal with reality only when we deal with eternity!** All the arrangements and attainments, relationships and experiences, joys and sorrows, successes and disappointments, hopes and fears of life in this world

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are without meaning, unless they are seen and measured in the light of eternity.

Proposition: Soon, we must leave this world where all things are temporal and enter into that world where all things are eternal.

When I think about these things, I realize that you, like myself, have family and friends, people we dearly loved, who are now either in heaven or in hell. We have many others, very dear to us, brothers, sisters, parents, grandparents, and neighbors, many very dear to us who will very soon be in heaven or hell. Soon, very soon, we will all be in heaven or in hell.

THREE STATEMENTS

Let me make three statements that I hope, by the blessing of God, will be helpful to you. Here are three things I know. These three things sustain and strengthen me in life, in the sick room, and in the funeral parlor.

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1. **Whatever God does is right and will be alright with me.**

My family and yours, my friends and yours, my life and yours, all are in the hands of our great God, our heavenly Father, who is too wise to err, too strong to fail, and too good to do wrong. Whatever he does is just, right, and good. Whatever he does with you, whatever he does with me, whatever he does with my wife and children, whatever he does with your wife and children, whatever he does with my brothers and sisters, whatever he does with your brothers and sisters, whatever he has done with my parents, whatever he does with your parents, ——— Whatever he does is just, right, and good.

Nothing is of greater comfort to my heart, nothing gives me greater satisfaction and strength than the blessed knowledge of God's sovereign goodness.

- God is sovereign.
- God is good.
- God has done that which is right.

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- God has done that which is good.

2. This is shocking to most people; but it must be said. If I am faithful to your soul, it must be said. — **You fully deserve to suffer the wrath of God forever in hell, because you are a sinner, a sinful, abominably wicked, God hating rebel.**

That is true of you and of me, of mine and of yours. Let that sink in. Like all other sons and daughters of Adam, you were “*shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin*” (Psalm 51:5). Like all others, you were born with a deceitful and desperately wicked heart (Jeremiah 17:9). Yes, you fully deserve to suffer the unmitigated wrath of God in hell; and you know it. You don’t like to be told about it. You don’t like to think about it. But you know it!

- You’ve never done anything good!
- You drink iniquity like water!
- You only do evil continually!
- You know that I speak the truth!
- Romans 3:10-19

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- Romans 5:12
- Romans 6:23

(Romans 3:10-19) As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: (11) There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. (12) They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. (13) Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips: (14) Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness: (15) Their feet *are* swift to shed blood: (16) Destruction and misery *are* in their ways: (17) And the way of peace have they not known: (18) There is no fear of God before their eyes. (19) Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

(Romans 5:12) Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so

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death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

(Romans 6:23) For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

3. **If you are saved, if I am saved, if any of us are saved, we must be saved by the free and sovereign grace of God in Christ.**

We have no other hope! There is no hope for any sinner, but the grace of God flowing to us through the sin-atonement blood of Christ. — “*Salvation is of the Lord!*” It is the work of God alone (Romans 9:16). The will of man, the work of man, the worth of man has nothing to do with salvation. Salvation comes to poor, lost, ruined sinners according to the will of God, because of the worth of Christ, and by the power of the Holy Ghost (Ephesians 2:8-10; 2 Timothy 1:9-10).

(Ephesians 2:8-10) “For by grace are ye saved

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through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: ⁽⁹⁾ Not of works, lest any man should boast. ⁽¹⁰⁾ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

(2 Timothy 1:9-10) “Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, ⁽¹⁰⁾ But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

If you are saved, if any sinner is saved, it is the result of God’s work.

- Sovereign, Eternal, Unconditional Election and Predestination (John 15:16; Ephesians 1:4-6)
- Particular, Effectual, Accomplished Redemption (2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13-14; 1 Peter 2:24)

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- Omnipotent Mercy and Irresistible Grace (John 6:63; Ephesians 2:1-5)

In the light of these facts, facts plainly revealed in Holy Scripture, will you give me your attention, while I try to talk to you about **WITHERING FLESH AND THE WORD OF GOD.**

(Isaiah 40:3-8) The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. (4) Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: (5) And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see *it* together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*. (6) The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh *is* grass, and all the goodliness thereof *is* as the flower of the field: (7) The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people *is* grass. (8) The grass

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withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever.

Everything earthly and human is withering grass!

In the Word of God man is often compared to withering grass. What can be more unstable than grass? Our text is a declaration of the instability of everything earthly and human. “*The things which are seen are temporal*” (2 Corinthians 4:18).

Let me show you five things from the Word of God about **WITHERING FLESH AND THE WORD OF GOD** and I will send you home, or (perhaps) to eternity!

1. **WE LIVE IN A WORLD WHERE ALL THINGS ARE TEMPORAL AND PASSING AWAY.**

Nothing here lasts very long. Even a blind man must see that. Everything around us is decaying, dying, and coming to an end. The only thing you have here

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that you will carry with you into eternity is your undying soul (Mark 8:36-37).

(Mark 8:36-37) “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? ⁽³⁷⁾ Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

“The things which are seen are temporal!” — *“The fashion of this world passeth away”* (1 Corinthians 7:31). We live in a world where all things are temporal and passing away. In the light of this fact, let me give you some words of counsel.

Cherish every blessing and privilege God gives you in this world and take advantage of it while you have it. I am thinking particularly about relationships that we often neglect and abuse.

- Children!
- Husbands and Wives!
- Friends!
- Brothers and Sisters!
- Widows, Sick, Needy!

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Set your heart on Christ and heaven (Matthew 6:19-21, 33; Colossians 3:1-3). Seek Christ and his will. Seek the glory of God. Let nothing come between you and your Savior.

(Matthew 6:19-21) Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: (20) But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: (21) For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

(Colossians 3:1-3) If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. (2) Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. (3) For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

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See that you value nothing in this world more highly than you will value it when you are about to leave this world. I urge you, “*Love not the world*” (1 John 2:15-17). If you do, it will cost you and cost you dear. Hold everything here with a loose hand. Be prepared, at a moment’s notice, to leave it.

(1 John 2:15-17) Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (16) For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. (17) And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

2. We live in a world where all things are temporal. *Second, **WE ARE GOING TO A WORLD WHERE EVERYTHING IS ETERNAL.***

Eternity is a subject about which the wisest of men can only know very little! We have no eyes to see it fully, no rule by which to measure it, no mind to

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grasp it. Yet, consider it we must. Lost or saved, blessed or cursed, justified or condemned, every one of us is living upon the brink of eternity right now! There is but a breath between you and eternity! There is but a breath between me and eternity!

I know we do not half believe this; but it is true. That great, unseen world that lies beyond the grave is eternal. Whether it is a world of happiness or a world of misery, a world of light and joy or a world of darkness and sorrow, it is forever! — *“The things which are not seen are eternal!”*

- Lazarus, as soon as he died, was carried to Paradise, for eternity!
- The rich man, as soon as he died, woke up in hell, for eternity!

The future happiness, bliss, and glory of God’s saints in heaven is eternal (Psalm 16:11; 1 Peter 1:4; 5:4).

(Psalm 16:11) Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fulness of joy; at thy right

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hand *there are* pleasures for evermore.

(1 Peter 1:4) To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.

(1 Peter 5:4) And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

You who are saved by the grace of God live in hope of eternal life, eternal glory, and eternal bliss; and your hope shall not be disappointed. It is “*a good hope through grace.*” We are going to **a home** that will never be broken up, **a family gathering** that will never end, **a day of joy** that will never be followed by a night of weeping. — Heaven is eternal!

The future misery and torment of the lost in hell is also eternal (Matthew 25:46).

(Matthew 25:46) And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into

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life eternal.

- There is a place of torment called hell!
- It is a place of torment, a place where justice is executed but never satisfied!
- It is eternal.
- There is “*a worm that dieth not!*” — Your Conscience!
- There is “*a fire that is not quenched!*” — Guilt!

3. **WHAT WE ARE HERE WE WILL BE FOREVER IN ETERNITY.**

It is a common delusion that death changes things. It does not. Many foolishly imagine that a person may live in wickedness and yet rise in righteousness, that you may live without Christ here and then rise to be with Christ hereafter, that you may live in sin on the earth and then rise to be a saint in heaven. But that is a vain delusion. — This is the day of grace. There will be no other (Revelation 22:11).

(Revelation 22:11) He that is unjust, let him be

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unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

Here is a weighty, tremendous thought, one that should cause us to sit up and pay attention. — **Though our life in this world is very brief, our eternal destiny depends upon what we are here.**

I know that God's purpose will not fail, or be altered in any way. Those he has chosen and predestinated shall be saved. Christ's redeemed ones will be with him in glory. Those, only those, and all those, who are called and saved by the Spirit's almighty grace will enter into heaven. But no child of Adam will enter into heaven unless he experiences the regenerating, transforming, sanctifying work of God the Holy Ghost in regeneration called "*the first resurrection*" (Revelation 20:6; John 3:3-7; 2 Corinthians 5:17-6:2).

(Revelation 20:6) Blessed and holy is he that

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hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

(John 3:3-7) Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (4) Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? (5) Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (6) That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (7) Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

Only the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, can make us fit for eternity, fit for heavenly glory.

(2 Corinthians 5:17) Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed

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away; behold, all things are become new. (18) And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (20) Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. (21) For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (6:1) We then, *as* workers together *with him*, beseech *you* also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (2) (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.)

Thomas Brooks wrote, “The great weight of eternity hangs upon the small wire of time.” I repeat — This

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is the day of grace. **There will be no other! You must enter into the ark before the door is shut. If you would be saved, you must be saved now!**

- You must be reconciled to God now!
- You must bathe your soul in the blood of Christ now!
- You must be robed in his righteousness now!
- You must trust the Son of God now!

4. **BLESSED IS THAT SINNER WHO CAN, IN THE FACE OF ETERNITY, TRUTHFULLY SAY, “I TRUST CHRIST.” THAT PERSON HAS ETERNAL LIFE, AND SHALL NEVER DIE** (John 11:25; Revelation 20:6).

(John 11:25) Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

(Revelation 20:6) Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with

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him a thousand years.

(John 3:36) He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

(Acts 16:31) And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

(1 John 5:1) Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and everyone that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

The Lord Jesus Christ came into this world, lived, died, and rose again as the sinner's Substitute to save his people from their sins. He came to give hope and peace while we live in this world and glory and blessedness in the world to come. He came to "*bring life and immortality to light by the gospel,*" and to "*deliver those who through fear of death were all*

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their lifetime subject to bondage” (2 Timothy 1:10; Hebrews 2:15).

The Lord Jesus Christ purchased and obtained eternal redemption, the forgiveness of sins, and eternal life for all his people by his death upon the cursed tree as our Substitute (Hebrews 9:12; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 3:18).

(Hebrews 9:12) Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*.

(Ephesians 1:7) In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

(1 Peter 3:18) For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.

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The Son of God gives eternal life freely to all who trust him (Matthew 11:28-30; John 6:37; 7:37; 8:12; Isaiah 45:22).

(Matthew 11:28) Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (30) For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.

(John 6:37) All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

(John 7:37) In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

(Isaiah 45:22) Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else.

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If you die without Christ, if you perish under the wrath of God, the fault will be yours alone
(Romans 6:23; John 5:40).

(Romans 6:23) For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

(John 5:40) And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

5. Yes, “*the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: **BUT THE WORD OF OUR GOD SHALL STAND FOREVER!**”*

As our God is the Lord Jehovah who changes not, so his word changes not. It is immutable. The word here spoken of refers to **God’s eternal purpose of grace in predestination** (Isaiah 14:24, 26, 27, 46:9-13).

(Isaiah 14:24-27) The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, *so* shall

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it stand: (25) That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders. (26) This *is* the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this *is* the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. (27) For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul *it*? and his hand *is* stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

(Isaiah 46:9-13) Remember the former things of old: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else; I *am* God, and *there is* none like me, (10) Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not *yet* done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: (11) Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken *it*, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed *it*, I will also do it. (12) Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that *are* far from righteousness: (13) I bring near my

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righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.

- Explain Predestination (Ephesians 1:11; Romans 8:29).
- Explain Providence (Romans 8:28, 11:36).

The Word here spoken of by Isaiah certainly refers to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Word of God (John 1:1-3; 1 John 1:1-3; Psalm 102:24-27).

(John 1:1-3) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (2) The same was in the beginning with God. (3) All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

(1 John 1:1-3) That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (2) (For the life was manifested, and we have

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seen *it*, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) (3) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). He changes not.

- His Person never Changes.
- His Purpose never Changes.
- His Power never Changes.
- His Promises never Change.

The Apostle Peter tells us that the Word spoken of in our text is the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

(1 Peter 1:23-25) Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.

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(24) For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: (25) But the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

- This word is the declaration of redemption accomplished by Christ (1 Corinthians 15:3).
- This word is the means by which sinners are born again and granted faith in Christ (James 1:18; Romans 10:17).
- This word reveals and assures us of the promises of God to sinners in Christ.
 - Forgiveness (Isaiah 1:18).
 - Rest (Matthew 11:28).
 - Acceptance (John 3:36).
 - Preservation (John 10:28).
 - Salvation (Mark 15:16).

APPLICATION

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He who builds his house upon the sand of human fragility shall perish with his house. He who builds his house upon the foundation, Christ Jesus, as he is revealed in his Word, shall live forever (Matthew 7:24-29).

(Matthew 7:24-29) Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: (25) And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. (26) And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: (27) And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. (28) And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: (29) For he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as

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the scribes.

Trust Christ and his Word and you will never be disappointed in the object of your trust.

1. Let the Word of God be precious to us (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
 2. Let Christ, of whom the Word speaks, be the singular Object of our faith, hope, and love.
 3. Let us embrace the promises of God, being assured of their fulfilment (2 Timothy 1:12).
 4. Let every sinner tremble at the threatenings of God, knowing that they shall be executed.
- We live in a world where all things are temporal.
 - We are going to a world where all things are eternal.
 - What we are here we will be forever in that eternal world.
 - Blessed is that person who can truthfully say, “I trust Christ.”
 - Where will you spend eternity?

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Illustration: *The Robins' Egg Shells*

Amen.