

“Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.” Words from Jesus in today’s Gospel. And these words were spoken by Him who is not only the Son of God, but who was also a carpenter. Jesus knew something about building things the right way. He knew that in order to build a solid structure, there needed to be a strong base, a good foundation. Otherwise, the entire structure would eventually collapse into ruins.

And Jesus uses this imagery for His disciples, and for all of us today, to show us that our spiritual lives need to be built on a solid foundation as well. Our spiritual lives, our lives in and with God, need to be built on rock and not on sand. So, how do we know if we’re building on a strong foundation or building on one that is shaky at best? Well, Jesus tells us the answer to that question too.

We know that we are constructing our lives on a rock foundation if we are listening to His words and acting on them. If we are seeking out God’s commands and His will in our lives, and following them with utmost care and obedience. This obedience must extend to all of God’s commands, though, and all Truth that He has revealed to us, even when it’s difficult or makes us uncomfortable. We can’t pick and choose which of the teachings of Christ and of His Church we will follow. Every time we ignore or willfully dissent from the Truth, our foundation is greatly weakened. And if we continue on this path, our foundation is bound to collapse.

God, though, doesn’t want this for any of us. Instead, He wants to give us His wisdom and grace so that we may strive to follow His teachings to the fullest, and thus, continue to build on a strong foundation. And if we realize that the foundation under us is weak and shaky, He gives us the chance to rebuild. Regardless of our past, regardless of our sinful history, and regardless of how many times we have fallen, God is there to help us rebuild, and this time, to rebuild with Him as our foundation.

I just finished a book the other day that provides a real life example of this. The book is called, “Unplanned” and was written by a young lady named Abby Johnson. The book describes how Abby went from a volunteer with Planned Parenthood to a director of one of their clinics in Texas, to where she is today, someone devote to God and to the Pro-Life movement. Abby’s story is powerful, in part, because she joined Planned Parenthood with good intentions, hoping to help women and make a positive difference in the world. She thought this was what Planned Parenthood was all about, and thought that what she was doing was okay in God’s sight as well. However, over time, she began to notice that the foundation she was building on was one of sand, and not the rock foundation that God provides. And eventually, as it always does, that foundation of sand, that foundation of lies, collapsed completely.

Inspired in part by the example of some faithful Christians and the 40 Days for Life prayer campaign, Abby had finally realized her errors, and knew that God was leading her to something much better. She has since been able to hear Christ’s words in her life and is putting them into practice. She is rebuilding her life, with God’s help, on the rock foundation of God’s truth. In fact, this Easter, Abby and her husband will both be received into the Catholic Church.

Abby’s story provides hope for all of us, that we, too, can rebuild. It encourages us as we see the power of God’s mercy and love. We can have confidence that our loving Father wants nothing more to embrace His children and help them build their lives on solid ground. Whether we consider our sins great or small, we know that, as St. Paul tells us, we have all sinned. We all need God’s mercy and grace. We all need to shore up our foundation. And as we know, Lent begins this week. A perfect opportunity to take the words of Jesus, put them into practice, and start the rebuilding process.