

# Third Sunday after Pentecost

## WHO PUT THE “REAL” IN REAL ESTATE?

Matthew 7:21-29

Third Sunday after Pentecost

Analysis by Marcus Felde

21“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. 22On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?’ 23Then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers.’

24Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. 25The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. 26And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell – and great was its fall!”

28Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, 29for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

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## DIAGNOSIS: THE OLD EVIL FAUX

**Initial Diagnosis (External Problem)** : *“Recent Carpet and*

*Paint!"*

Sometimes, don't you see something that looks structurally weak—a spindle on a staircase, or something like that—and grab and shake it to see if it is strong, knowing full well there is a chance that your test will break it?

Jesus seems to test almost everyone he runs into in that way. Here, he shakes the "Lord, Lord" of some putative followers of his, and, sure enough, there is nothing to it. Empty words. Then he shakes out the "Look what we did in your name!" of some other adherents, and lo!—what they are doing is as meaningless as the hollow confessions. Jesus is not an easy customer to please. (Consider him pickier than J.D. Power & Associates. Have we here J.C. Power? And are we the associates?)

**Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) :** *"Nicely Decorated . . . Notice the Extras!!"*

Not only is it not "enough" (on Jesus' clipboard) to be a good talker—even doing the right things isn't enough sometimes. Prophecy? Cast out demons in his name? I mean, come on, what does he want? Great effort, great show. Not. Jesus wants a righteousness that is not entirely described within this pericope. Read the rest of Matthew for more on this. Briefly, no righteousness that flows out of anger or desire or pride comes up to snuff.

**Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) :** *"Great View of Beach!!! er, Ocean"*

There is a reason Jesus walks and talks one giant "test pattern." He is trying to save the world from the Old Evil Faux. Whatever is false will not (choose your metaphor) get invited to the banquet, survive the wind, or hold the wine. "This is for your own good," our mothers always said, when they were hurting us. And the shaking Jesus administers, the fear he inspires with his authoritative denunciations, divisions, and demarcations, is for the world's good. So that we will not be shaken to pieces,

in the end.

## **PROGNOSIS: THIS OLD HOUSE**

**Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution)** : *“Solid Foundation, Stick-built”*

Simplest thing a carpenter ever did—put two pieces of wood together. And on those two pieces, a carpenter did the hardest thing anyone ever did: Give his masterpiece, his dreamhouse, to someone who was unworthy to live in it. Jesus himself—teaching, calling, rebuking, exhorting, living, dying, and rising—built this house to which we have been given the keys—a habitat for all humanity. I once heard a father say, of the house he built for his daughter’s family, that he put three nails where only two were needed. You could pick up that house with a magnet, he proudly declared. Aye, Jesus did that, and more, for the refugees from the wind-blown beach house.

**Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution)** : *“Walk Just About Anywhere”*

By faith, we stand inside this amazing house and look out the windows at the violent storm, and we are at peace. That’s what a house is for anyway, right? It is our peace in the world. Amazingly, for all the harsh, judgmental rhetoric that Jesus directs at rival righteousnesses in Matthew (read David Rhoades’ article on the types of righteousness, some years ago in CTM), when Jesus speaks of the righteousness that flows from mercy, he is positively sweet: Come to me, sit in the bay window with me, and take a break. Have a glass of wine. I am with you here, always. He taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

**Final Prognosis (External Solution)** : *Vocation, Vocation, Vocation*

Unspoken in this passage, but not absent from Matthew, is the calling of those who enjoy the peace that is theirs in this

abode. We live in the midst of a stormy world, and the shelter that we enjoy is one all people need. We have our peaceful domicile, true, but our vocation—our calling—is to the whole world, that all might live at peace.