

***BE WARNED***

Read: Mt 7:24-27 Text: 1 Co 4:14-17

1. Gospel warning
  - Wisdom/foolishness
  - A father's warning
2. Trust and obey
  - Copy
  - Trust
  - Obey
  - Turn

*And so: Live Jesus' way*

You've probably noticed that different people can live in very different ways.

In fact, it's one thing you can't help noticing when you get married. Other people looking in from the outside might think your lives look pretty much the same. Maybe you're both Aussies, you're both middle class, you both enjoy the footy, you might even share the same friends.

Maybe you even think your lives are pretty much the same yourself ... and then you get married. And living in each other's pockets, 24 hours a day, you realise there's thousands of differences in the way you do things. One of you likes to get up early, the other one likes to sleep in. One of you is neat and tidy, the other one leaves stuff lying everywhere. One of you is a scrooge, the other one doesn't know what saving is.

People can live life in very different ways.

And some of us mightn't have been here over the last couple of weeks as we've looked at the chapters before this one. But that's the point in these early chapters here too, just at a deeper level. People can live in very different ways. Some people are working at living the way God says is wise. Some people live in a way God says is foolish.

**Point 1**

And it means that the Bible comes with a warning if we're not living the wise way. We should change the way we live while we still can. It's a 'wrong way, go back' sign on the freeway of life. It's a 'don't swim, shark-infested water' sign. We ignore it at our peril.

Jesus came with the same warning when he was walking the earth. Think about the parable of the wise and foolish builders. The wise builder built his house on the rock, and when the storms came it was fine. The foolish builder built his house on the sand, and when the storms came, that was the end of it. And you start to wonder a bit about that parable when you hear that some of the houses built on the coast here in the past were actually built on the sand – there's no concrete underneath them at all. And they seem to be doing fine.

On the other hand, the council doesn't seem to let you do that anymore for some reason.

But did you notice the moral of Jesus' story? Jesus doesn't say, so build your house on a firm foundation and pin the frame to the concrete footings. He says that the person who's wise at building a life for themselves is the one who hears his words and puts them into practice. The moral of the story is to build your life on the Lord Jesus Christ. And where do we go to learn how to do that? We go to the Bible. The Bible is the manual we need to build wisely when it comes to life.

You might have noticed that the apostle Paul gives this warning the way a father warns his children. It's the kind of thing parents are doing all the time? You start to feel like the danger police. Don't lick the knife. Stay away from the spider. Leave the snake alone. Don't climb too high. And when the kids are a bit older - don't drink too much, stay away from drugs, don't drive too fast, you really don't want to hang around those people, or those places.

And Paul warns them as if they're his children because in a way they are. The thing is, Christians are all part of one big family. We're all brothers and sisters in Christ.

And in a sense, the person God used to bring us to faith is our spiritual parent. They're the one God used to bring us into this new life. And sometimes that's our earthly parents. Sometimes it's someone else. To the Galatians, Paul writes, 'My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, ... .'

And as the spiritual Father of the Christians in Corinth, Paul warns them about the direction they're heading and the way they're living their lives. They're being foolish instead of wise. They're not building their lives on the words of Jesus, but on the Greek wisdom of their day.

The question for us, though, is have we taken notice of this warning? Have we flashed past the 'wrong way, go back' sign on the freeway of life and not taken any notice? Are we wading out into shark infested water ignoring what's out there? Or are we hearing the gospel and changing the way we live because of what it says? What things need to change in our lives before it's too late?

## **Point 2**

And there's a couple of things that need to change that are basic to taking notice of the warning and beginning to live the wise way.

If we do turn onto a 6 lane freeway and suddenly see the 'wrong way, go back' sign ahead of us, the first thing we have to do is *trust* it. If we think it's a practical joke we'll just flash past and keep on going.

Another thing we have to do is *obey* it. We could trust it and still keep right on going –it's the early hours of the morning, no one's going to be on the road now anyway – or, maybe we think we're a pretty good driver, we can dodge the oncoming traffic.

And then one last thing we have to do is physically stop and *turn around* – pull over to the curb, watch out for oncoming traffic, and turn around.

And when it comes to wise living the way God sees it, we need to do the same things. Paul, here, says 'imitate me. I've done these things. I'm doing these things. You've seen it in my life. Copy me.'

In fact, if you read Acts 9 you read about when Paul did these things for the first time. Before that he was fighting against Jesus. He was persecuting Christians- ready to kill them. But on the road to Damascus he ran into his spiritual 'wrong way, go back' sign. And he had no choice but to do it.

And so, we need to *trust*. We need to trust God. We need to trust the Bible. And we need to trust Jesus as

our Lord and Saviour. This passage says that Timothy was that kind of person, faithful in the Lord.

Just think about how you trust people some times. We trust the trucky when he waves us past on the narrow road through the hills. We can't see past him. And we put our life in his hands, and the lives of everyone in the car, as we drive on past.

And we trust the farmer's directions when we're lost in the country. We go the way he tells us at the risk of getting even more hopelessly lost.

And we need to trust God too. When he says the best way through life is the way he's pointing, we need to trust him.

Another important thing to do is *obey*. We need to be willing to do what God says.

A visitor to Africa tells of the amazing experience he had of seeing thousands of sheep finding their way at dusk to watering troughs, plunging their heads into the cool water, and drinking their fill. Half a dozen shepherds followed along behind. After a while they walked off in different directions. One called to his sheep in a way that made no sense to the visitor. But hundreds of the sheep picked up their heads and headed out after him. Then another one did the same. And one by one each shepherd called his sheep to follow, until all the sheep were gone. The visitor writes that after that he understood the meaning of Jesus words, 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.'

In fact, you might know that song that says: 'Trust and obey, for there's no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.'

And finally, obeying Jesus means we stop, we turn around, and we head in the right direction. The Bible calls that 'repentance' – telling God that we're really sorry that we've been going the wrong way, asking him to forgive us, turning around, and going in the direction he points us.

A minister once wondered if his message was getting across. But one day he got a phone call from the thief who'd stolen the tape recorder out of the church. The thief was so conscience-stricken he wanted to give it back after he'd listened to the taped sermon that had been in it. The sermon had been on

repentance, and the thief became a living example of what that means. And we need to do the same thing when it comes to the basic direction of our lives.

And they're the basics of living God's way. This is the way of wisdom. Trust in Jesus. Obey him. Repent from our old way of life and head out in the new way that he points us.

I wonder if you've come to that point in your life? Is God pulling you up because you're hurtling in the wrong direction? Have you taken notice of God's warning sign, and done what he says – trust him, obey him, and turn around?

### **Conc**

Actually, someone emailed me the other day with something that sort of suits all of this. I've doctored it a bit, but it's headed, '*Everything I need to know about life I learned from Noah's Ark... .*'

1. Don't miss the boat.
2. Remember that we're all in same boat.
3. Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.
4. Don't listen to the critics; just get on with what needs to be done.
5. Build your future on high ground.
6. You don't need to be an expert, remember the Ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic by professionals.
7. You don't need to feel you get there overnight, the snails were on board with the cheetahs.
8. And finally, don't worry about the storm, when you're with God, there's always a rainbow waiting at the end.