

EXEGETICAL PAPER: LUKE 6:46-49

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A Paper

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION.....	1
BACKGROUND.....	1
AUTHORSHIP.....	1-2
PURPOSE.....	2-3
DATING.....	4
LITERARY CONTEXT.....	4-5
EXEGESIS: Luke 6:46-49.....	5-18
TEXTUAL ANALYSIS.....	5-7
LEXICAL ANALYSIS.....	7-11
SYNTACTICAL ANALYSIS.....	11-14
STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS.....	14-17
APPLICATION.....	17-19
THEOLOGICAL APPLICATION.....	17-19
CONCLUSION.....	19-20
APPENDICES.....	21-23
APPENDIX 1: Sentence Flow Outline in Greek.....	21
APPENDIX 2: Exegetical Outline in English.....	22
APPENDIX 3: Sermon Brief.....	23
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	24

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### **Introduction**

Jesus is one of the greatest teachers of all time. Not only were his words challenging on some many levels, but they communicated to people regardless of age, ethnicity, or status. One of his most effective teaching methods was using parables. The Gospel of Luke records many of Jesus' parables, and it does so in successive order. In one of Luke's pericope's, Jesus gives an example of two men who build their houses on different foundations. He purpose – to help them understand what it means to hear his words and apply them. In the parable, Jesus focuses on three crucial aspects of why we ought to not only hear and understand the teachings of Jesus, but also to put his words into action. Hearing Jesus' words and not acting upon them is futile. In the end you build for yourself a shallow foundation and when the storms of life shatter against you, your house will surely fall.

### **Background: Luke 6:46-49**

#### **Authorship**

The authorship of the Gospel of Luke is never mentioned in the book itself. Actually, the name Luke is only referred three times (Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:11; Phm. 1:24); each time in reference to a friend and associate of Paul. Therefore the Gospel can only be accurately described as an anonymous Gospel. The title of the Gospel (KATA LOUKAN) implies that the

author is indeed Luke though it was added decades later.<sup>1</sup> The early church is consistent in crediting Luke as the author. Marcion had confirmed Luke as the author as early as 135 A.D. Tradition carried forward and it was accepted in the Muratorian Canon in 180 A.D. and church father Irenaeus attributed his authorship in 180 A.D.<sup>2</sup>

There are however subtle hints that lead many scholars to rest the authorship on Luke. There are many “we” passages in Acts (16:10-17; 20:5-21; 27:1-28:16).<sup>3</sup> The author, as we see in Luke 1, “Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you”, is a scholar and is dedicated to transmitting the whole truth. Others will point to Luke’s use of medical terminology as evidence to his authorship.<sup>4</sup> One thing is clear though, the authorship of the Gospel is not critical to our understanding of the message in Luke.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of Luke/Acts is stated in the first paragraph of the Gospel of Luke. As there were many accounts of the things surrounding the Gospel message, Luke had decided to compile his own findings. We see that he “carefully investigated everything from the beginning”

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<sup>1</sup> Joel. B. Green, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 21.

<sup>2</sup> Kenneth L. Barker, Kohlenberger III, John R, *Luke*, Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary: New Testament, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 206.

<sup>3</sup> Martin, John A, *Luke*, ed. J. F. Walvoord, Zuck, R. B. & Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1985).

<sup>4</sup> C.S. & InterVarsity Press Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament (Luke)* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993).

(Luke 1:3) and he wrote them in an “orderly account” for Theophilus in order that he might “know the certainty of the things” he has been taught (Luke 1:4). And from the beginning Luke records start from the angelic pronouncement of the birth of John to Zechariah and Elizabeth to the end of the book of Acts where Paul preaches at Rome under guard.

It is evident that Luke is a careful historian and evangelist that want to communicate his message clearly. His message is one intended for a Gentile audience. In many instances, the author explains several things that would be obvious to a Jewish crowd (i.e. Luke 1:26; 22:1; 24:13).<sup>5</sup> The main theme of Luke’s Gospel is the “nature of Jesus’ messiahship and mission” by witness of the Holy Spirit.<sup>6</sup> According to Conzelmann, Luke has a tri-fold scheme in interpreting the history of salvation: prophets, Jesus, and the Church.<sup>7</sup> Within the story of the Gospel of Luke, it focuses on salvation through Jesus. Green presupposes that the purpose of Luke-Acts as a two-volume work was to build a stronger Christian movement by two factors: 1) “Ensuring them in their interpretation and experience of the redemptive purpose and faithfulness of God and by 2) calling them to continued faithfulness and witness in God’s salvific project.”<sup>8</sup> The bulk of Luke is focused around the ministry and teachings of Jesus. Early on in his ministry he proclaims the Good News in Nazareth and Capernaum (4:14-15; 16-30). He is always instructive in his teachings (6:20-26ff) and continually has the kingdom of God in the forefront of his

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<sup>5</sup> Jaimeson. Fausset, Fausset, A.R., Brown, A.R., Brown, D, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testament* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1997).

<sup>6</sup> Earl. E. Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke* (Eugene: Winf and Stock Publishers, 1983), 10.

<sup>7</sup> H. Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke* (London: HarperCollins, 1960), 149.

<sup>8</sup> Joel. B. Green, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The*

ministry (17:20ff). The Gospel of Luke, therefore, is a Gospel written as a narrative that focuses on Jesus as the messiah as Son of Man.

4

### Dating

The dating of Luke must have been written before the book of Acts. The first verse of Acts states, "In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven." (Acts 1:1-2) This leads the readers to believe that 1) The writing of Luke was before Acts, and 2) Acts was written after Jesus had completed his ministry on earth. The focus should be on Paul's imprisonment and the dates that surround it. Acts 28:30 recounts Paul's two-year imprisonment in Rome, which historians believe to be around 60 A.D. And because there was no record in the book of Acts of Paul's death, it would be safe to assume that Luke wrote the Gospel of Luke just before that.<sup>9</sup>

### Literary Context

We find our periscope (Luke 6:46-49) at the tail end of Jesus' instructions to his disciples. Jesus had finished calling his twelve disciples (Luke 6:12-16) and he goes down and sees a great number of people along with his disciples. He has compassion on them and cured their evil spirits (1:18) and while he was healing them he looked at his disciples and begins to teach a series of beatitudes. There is a series of blessings and woes and then Jesus begins a new beginning. In verse 27 he begins the lesson by saying, "But I tell you who hear me" suggesting a

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*Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 22.

<sup>9</sup> Kenneth L. Barker, Kohlenberger III, John R, *Luke*, Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary:

higher command, those that truly want to follow Christ. This phrase put the exegetical passage of Luke 6:46-49 into context as an appropriate bookend. Actually, Jesus' sermon (Sermon on the Plain) begins in Luke 6:20 and continues all the way till verse 49. The Sermon on the Plain follows a unique teaching structure. First it begins with an admonition - Love your enemies (27); Do not judge (37); Second Luke illustrates or gives a parable to the first principle - "Can a blind man lead a blind man?" (39); "I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice" (47); Third he gives a rebuttal - "You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye" (42); "But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like..." (49); Lastly Luke concludes the lesson - "Then your reward will be great" (35); "Then you will see clearly" (42); "For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks" (45); "It collapsed and its destruction was complete" (49). This is the pattern that Luke follows in teaching the Sermon on the Plain. The lesson even flows into the next passage of Scripture as Luke demonstrates a Roman Centurion putting his faith into action and the consequences of putting his words into practice in Luke 7. Luke 6:46-49 concludes the teaching lesson of the Sermon on the Plain and chapter 7 introduces two stories of faith.

### Exegesis: Luke 6:46-49

<sup>46</sup> Ti, de, me kalei/te\ ku,rie ku,rie( kai. ouv poiei/te a] le,gwÈ <sup>47</sup> Pa/j o` evrco,menoj pro,j me kai. avkou,wn mou tw/n lo,gwn kai. poiw/n avtou,j( u` podei,xw u` mi/n ti,ni evsti.n o[moioj\ <sup>48</sup> o[moio,j evstin avnqrw,pw | oivkodomou/nti oivki,an o]j e;skayen kai. evba,qunen kai. e;qhken qeme,lion evpi. th.n pe,tran\ plhmmu,rhj de. genome,nhj prose,rhxen o` potamo.j th/| oivki,a | evkei,nh | ( kai. ouvki;scusen saleu/sai avth.n dia. to. kalw/j oivkodomh/sqai avth,nÅ <sup>49</sup> o` de. avkou,saj kai. mh. poihsaj o[moio,j evstin avnqrw,pw | oivkodomh,santi oivki,an evpi. th.n gh/n

cwri.j qemeli,ou( h- | prose,rhxe n o` potamo,j( kai. euvqu.j sune,pesen kai. evge,neto to.  
r` h/gma th/j oivki,aj evkei,nhj me,gaÅ

### Textual Analysis

<sup>46</sup> Ti, de, me kalei/te\ ku,rie ku,rie( kai. ouv poiei/te a] le,gwÈ

*But why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?*

The New American Standard version and the New International version both leave out the initial coordinating conjunction. They simply translate it, "Why do you call me "Lord, Lord," and do not what I say?" The American Standard Version translates the *de*, as "And" rendering the sentence "And why do you call me" whereas the New King James versions adds "But" and also making the verb *poiei/te* substantival "do the things". The reader would have to disregard the *de*, in their translation if they wanted to begin with just a question. We will have to analyze the implications in the section of lexical analysis.

6

<sup>47</sup> Pa/j o` evrco,menoj pro,j me kai. avkou,wn mou tw/n lo,gwn  
kai. poiw/n autou,j( u` podei,xw u` mi/n ti,ni evsti.n o[moioj\

*Everyone who comes to me and hears my words  
and does them, I will show you whom he is like:*

No English version is exactly identical in translating this verse. The New International Version reverses the word order to read, "I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice". The New American Standard, English Standard and New King James versions are all quite similar though not exact. The Traduction Oecumenique de la Bible (1998) suggests that there is a paragraph break at verse 47.

<sup>48</sup> o[moio,j evstin avnqrw,pw | oivkodomou/nti oivki,an o]j e;skayen kai.

evba,qunen kai. e;qhken qeme,lion evpi. th.n pe,tran\ plhmmu,rhj de.  
genome,nhj prose,rhxe n o` potamo.j th/| oivki,a| evkei,nh|( kai. ouvk i;scusen  
saleu/sai auvth.n dia. to. kalw/j oivkodomh/sqai auvth,nÅ

*He is like a man building a house, who dug and went deep and laid a foundation on the rock.  
And when the flood arose, the stream burst against that house and could not shake it, because  
it had been built well.*

dia. to. kalw/j oivkodomh/sqai auvth,n is one of the text critical matters in question. Papyri 75 indicate that this is the most probably reading of the manuscript supported by the Church Fathers. There has also been another translation of qeme,lion evpi. th.n pe,tran Family 1 and 13 of the group of Greek manuscripts (K. Lake and W. H. Ferrar) has translated this text as teqemeli,wto ga`r epi. th`n petran. However there is no a strong consensus on this particular translation. The additional ga`r would not make a significant difference in the translation and meaning. There are additional notes found in the textual critical matter. Merk (1984) and Traduction Oecumenique de la Bible have added paragraph breaks in verse 28.

7

<sup>49</sup> o` de. avkou,saj kai. mh. poihsaj o[moio,j evstin avnqrw,pw| oivkodomh,santi oivki,an evpi. th.n gh/n cwri.j qemeli,ou( h-| prose,rhxe n o` potamo,j( kai. euvqu.j sune,pesen kai. evge,neto to. r`h/gma th/j oivki,aj evkei,nhj me,gaÅ

*But the one who has heard and not acted is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation; the stream burst against it, and immediately it collapsed and the destruction of that house was great.*

There are no major differences in the various English translations of this verse aside from word choice. Westcott and Hort (1881) offers that there is a sub-paragraph break in verse 49. A paragraph break is suggested by Apostoliki Diakonia (1988), Nestle-Aland (1993), Merk

(1984), and the New Revised Standard Version (1990). Die Bibel nach der Übersetzung Martin Luthers (1984) views verse 49 as a major section heading or break.

### Lexical Analysis

**ku,rie ku,rie:** Jesus begins this pericope with asking a question, “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say? (46) He asks the disciples a question in which it is implied that they call him ku,rie ku,rie. The word *Lord* is translated by Walter Bauer's Griechisch as “one who is in a position of authority, lord, master”.<sup>10</sup> The Greek word for Lord (ku,rie) appears 119 times in the New Testament, 34 times in Matthew, once in Mark, 27 times in Luke, and 39 times in John. However, the doubling of ku,rie is found only 4 times. There is two times in the passage Jesus teaches about self-deception; that not everyone who says to him “Lord, Lord” will enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 7:21-23). Interestingly enough, Matt. 7:21-23 occurs just before the parallel text of Luke 6:46-49, but we shall address this note later. The other place the string ku,rie ku,rie occurs in the Greek text is in Matthew 25:11 in the parable of the Ten Bridesmaids. In each of the verses, the phrase is used in a parable where Jesus is teaching about the kingdom of God. And in each parable there is a contrast between those who are actively doing and waiting for the kingdom of God and those who are not ready for it to come. Matthew 7:21 addresses those who perform works but in the end Jesus says that he never knew them. Matthew 25 illustrates five foolish virgins that did not wait and prepare

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<sup>10</sup> BibleWorks 6.0 (BDAG) Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, Third Edition, University of Chicago, 2000.

for the coming of the bridegroom and were left out. Luke 6:46 uses the phrase *ku,rie ku,rie* as the introduction of the parable. Jesus says, "Why do you call me *ku,rie ku,rie* and do not what I say?" The lexical meanings are all congruent in these verses. *ku,rie* means lord, or master. This is not a word that should be overlooked. It actually plays an important, if not determinative, role in the verse's theological framework. The "lord" is commonly used in Greek manuscripts and texts, in Scripture and outside of Scripture. It had a vast spectrum of meanings – as one having authority, divinity, 'sir', or great teacher. Witherington notes that during the reign of Nero over the Roman Empire, he was occasionally referred to as *kyrios*.<sup>11</sup> *Kyrios* in the Synoptics have referred to one that has the "ability and the right to exercise authority and power"<sup>12</sup> In Matthew 9:38 the term lord refers to one that has authority over the harvest. It denotes complete sovereignty over something. Another definition is "one who owns and controls property, including especially servants and slaves, with important supplementary semantic components of high status and respect"<sup>13</sup> It is the title that brings the most weight to the command of Jesus. He asks a question, "Why do you call me Lord, Lord...?" (46). It implies that they want to commit their allegiance. They respect him in one way or another; it is rooted in the designation of "Lord". Jesus asks, "Why do you admit that I am to be respected and honored...that I am Lord and yet refuse to do what I say?" The theological application is

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<sup>11</sup> Witherington III, B, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*, ed. Joel B. Green, McKnight, Scot., Marshall, Howard., (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 484.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 489.

<sup>13</sup> J. P. Louw, Nida, E. A, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on*

grounded in the severity of this simple, but weighty title *ku,rie ku,rie*.

**oivkodomou/nti**: Foundations are crucial to any structure. Nobody can control the weather of life's circumstances, but they can be prepared for it when it comes. Ironically, the One who can control everything (including the storm) gives a parable about building a house on solid foundation. *oivkodomou/nti* comes from the root word "*oivkodome,w*" meaning "to construct a building, *build*".<sup>14</sup> The form is only used 11 times in the Gospel of Luke and used only 38 times in the New Testament. Every time a form of the word *oivkodome,w* is used it is in reference to a permanent action – whether to something physical or spiritual. Building something requires time, effort, and investment. In Luke 14:28 Jesus teaches the disciples about counting the cost. It is similar to this text in the way that both men built their houses. It was an investment.

**qeme,lion**: This word *qeme,lion* is very closely related to the previous word *oivkodomou/nti*. For a building is set upon a foundation. *qeme,lion* is translated as "the supporting base for a structure, *foundation*".<sup>15</sup> Paul, in Romans 15:20 refer to the foundation as Christ. For Paul, Christ was the foundation of the church (1 Cor. 3:11).<sup>16</sup> The word "foundation"

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*Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Society, 1996), 57.

<sup>14</sup> *oivkodome,w* BibleWorks 6.0 (BDAG) Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, Third Edition, University of Chicago, 2000.

<sup>15</sup> *qeme,lion* BibleWorks 6.0 (BDAG) Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, Third Edition, University of Chicago, 2000.

<sup>16</sup> J. D. Douglas, *New International Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 360.

is used 14 times in the New Testament. It is only found 3 times in the Gospel of Luke – twice found in the current pericope, the other time in Jesus’ parable of the cost of discipleship in Luke 14:29, “Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him”. There has also have been allusions of this *foundation* as a spiritual grounding. Louw and Nida define θεμελιόω as, “To provide a firm basis for belief or practice—‘to provide a basis for, to provide a foundation for, to cause to be steadfast in.”<sup>17</sup>

**pe,tran:** There are only 14 occurrences of this form of the word. 3 of them are in reference to our pericope or its parallel in Matthew 7:24-25. However, in Luke 6:48, pe,tran is clearly defined as a “Bedrock or massive rock formations, **rock** as distinguished from stones”<sup>18</sup> In reference to the passage in Luke, it is a solid foundation in which to build a house. There are allusions referred elsewhere in the New Testament. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus says to Peter, “I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.” 1 Cor. 10:4 refers to the rock as Christ. It is an important word that allows for interpretive understanding later in the exegesis.

11

### Syntactical Analysis

<sup>46</sup> Ti, de, me kalei/te\ ku,rie ku,rie( kai. ouv poiei/te a] le,gwÈ

The pericope begins with an interrogative pronoun (Ti). It begins the question, “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord’ and do not do what I say?” The interrogative asks a rhetorical question

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<sup>17</sup> J. P. Louw, Nida, E. A, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Society, 1996), 31.

<sup>18</sup> pe,tran. BibleWorks 6.0 (BDAG) *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, Third Edition, University of Chicago, 2000.

and expects no response. According to Wallace, a rhetorical question “does not ask a question of fact, but of obligation. It is supremely a question of ‘oughtness’”.<sup>19</sup> There is no question of that statement in this passage. Jesus does not expect an answer from his disciples because just after he poses the question he begins in a parable.

There are three verbs that make up this one sentence: *kalei/te*, *poiei/te*, and *le,gw* – all of which are present in tense, active in voice, and indicative in mood. The first verb is *kalei/te* translated to mean “you call”. It is a transitive, simple, active verb in which the calling is done in reference to me – being Jesus. I would argue that the present tense use of *kalei/te* is meant to be taken as a customary present. There seems to be repeated action due to the context of the verse. Jesus and the disciples are not in a dialogue and thus Jesus would have to be addressing something that has happened in the past. It conveys a meaning of repetition. The disciples continue to call Jesus “Lord, Lord”. The same analysis can be applied to the next verb *poiei/te*. It is a habitual present that express repeated action on the part of the disciples. The last verb of the sentence (*le,gw*) is a present, active, indicative verb. The best description is that the verb is progressive in nature. The author suggests that the command of Jesus “saying” at that moment in time is meant for right then.

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12

<sup>47</sup> Πα/j ο` evrco,menoj pro,j me kai. avkou,wn mou tw/n lo,gwn  
kai. poiw/n avtou,j( u` podei,xw u` mi/n ti,ni evsti.n o[moioj\

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<sup>19</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 467.

Verse 47 begins with an independent participle that acts as a substantival phrase (Pa/j o` evrco,menoj). This idea can be seen as a gnomic and continual idea “those who continually comes”. John 3:16 has the same concept, “pa/j o` pisteu,wn” due to the present participle. Luke begins with those who come but follows the substantival participle with two more participles: 1) those who hear (avkou,wn). It is important to note that avkou,wn here is followed by a genitive. Jesus is urging his audience to listen and to obey;<sup>20</sup> and 2) those who do (poiw/n). There’s a three part concept ingrained in this verse: come, hear, and the act of doing. The pronoun “them” (auctou,j) refers to the object of the sentence – “me and my words” (mou tw/n lo,gwn). It is an interesting passage because it begins with a dependent clause. It sets us the lesson as a conditional statement; sort of like an “If – then” statement. It falls perfectly in the structure of how Jesus is about to present his parable. He says, “If you do these things, then I will show you what will happen”. The future tense of him showing them (u` podei,xw) is put there to build anticipation in the audience. The word evsti.n is coupled with the evsti.n in following verse.

<sup>48</sup> o[moio,j evstin avnqrw,pw | oivkodomou/nti oivki,an o]j e;skayen kai. evba,qunen kai. e;qhken qeme,lion evpi. th.n pe,tran\ plhmmu,rhj de. genome,nhj prose,rhxen o` potamo.j th/ | oivki,a | evkei,nh | ( kai. ouvki;scusen saleu/sai aucth.n dia. to. kalw/j oivkodomh/sqai aucth,n

The direct quote begins with the mirror phrase left off in verse 27 (o[moio,j evstin).

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 133. Wallace categorizes this particular phrase avkou,wn mou as a genitive distinction of sharing. It labeled as a verb of sharing or partaking and verbs with a partitive genitive idea.

The phrase is in reference to “Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them” (Pa/j o` evrco,menoj pro,j me kai. avkou,wn mou tw/n lo,gwn kai. poiw/n auvtou,j). The parable starts with a man who is (oivkodomou/nti oivki,an). Because the participle in question oivkodomou/nti does not have an article and is in the predicated position, we translate this word as a predicate participle. It describes the action of the continuous action of avnqrw,pw. Following the participle, describing the man building a house, there are three verbs that characterized his actions – dug, went deep, and placed. Each verb is translated as aorist in tense, active in voice, and indicative in mood. The fact that the verbs are aorist allows a bit of interpretive method to be done. These aorist forms are known as constative-punctiliar. There is no emphasis on the beginning, progress, nor the end of the action, it just focuses on the action as a whole. The man in the parable simply completes these actions in order. He digs, goes down deep, and then places his foundation.

Luke starts an independent clause with the coordinating conjunction de.. The conjunction moves the parable along and adds conflict. Then Luke uses an aorist, middle, participle paired with the main verb prose,rhxen . The participle functions as a transitional act. Jesus, in his parable, says that the floods instantly came and instantly shattered the house. There is a sense of simultaneous action due to the way the participle is used. At the end of the verse Luke reminds the reader of the initial reason why the house had not been destroyed. He uses a perfect, passive, infinitive (oivkodomh/sqai) as a causal infinitive. The way a causal

infinitive functions is that it “looks back to the ground or reason”.<sup>21</sup> The causal infinitive just reinforces the “because” (dia.) in verse 48.

14

<sup>49</sup> ο` de. avkou,saj kai. mh. poihsaj o[moio,j evstin avnqrw,pw | oivkodomh,santi oivki,an evpi. th.n gh/n cwri.j qemeli,ou( h- | prose,rh xen o` potamo,j( kai. euvqu.j sune,pesen kai. evge,neto to. r`h/gma th/j oivki,aj evkei,nhj me,gaÅ

Luke begins verse 49 with a disjunctive conjunction (de) to indicate to the reader that there is about to be a dividing idea in the following section. The two participles (avkou,saj) and (poihsaj) are both used substantivally to indicate to the reader that there is a man “who has heard” and “not acted”. They are used in an adverbial conditional sense. Keep in mind this is a parable that Jesus is teaching through. The man has not yet performed the action, it is a matter if he will do it. Then we have the same phrase (o[moio,j evstin avnqrw,pw) as verses 47 and 48 in reference to what the man is like. The verse is translated, *“But the one who has heard and not acted is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation; the stream burst against it, and immediately it collapsed and the destruction of that house was great.”* Once the flood rises against the house the results are catastrophic. Luke uses the same word (prose,rh xen) for both men’s houses interestingly enough. But the man who had no foundation, he suffered greatly. His house “euvqu.j sune,pesen”. These could possibly be characterized as dramatic aorists. The reason being is because they occur in the present situation and there is an underlying dramatics to the parable.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 596.

We move on now to the structural development of the passage.

### Structural Analysis

The first thing we notice about this particular pericope is that it concludes a series of parables in the context of Jesus' teaching. It is the last parable before Luke moves to a narrative that gives the readers an example. Our first task is to understand the nature of the parable and see if there are any structural idiosyncrasies within this pericope. Snodgrass says that, "The primary focus of the parables is the coming of the kingdom of God and the resulting discipleship that is required."<sup>22</sup> There is no doubt that Jesus is teaching about the cost of discipleship in the following passage.

15

There is a parallel text in Matthew 7:21-27. It only occurs in Matthew and not in the Gospel of Mark or John. In Matthew the parallel text reads, "Pa/j ou=n o[stij avkou,ei mou tou.j lo,gouj tou,touj kai. poiei/ auvtou,j( o` moiwqh,setai avndri. froni,mw| ( o[stij ww|kodo,mhsen auvtou/ th.n oivki,an evpi. th.n pe,tran\ kai. kate,bh h` broch. kai. h=lqon oi` potamoi. kai. e;pneusan oi` a;nemoi kai. prose,pesan th/| oivki,a| evkei,nh| ( kai. ouvke;pesen( teqemeli,wto ga.r evpi. th.n pe,tranÅ kai. pa/j o` avkou,wn mou tou.j lo,gouj tou,touj kai. mh. poiw/n auvtou.j o` moiwqh,setai avndri. mwrw/| ( o[stij ww|kodo,mhsen auvtou/ th.n oivki,an evpi.

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<sup>22</sup> Witherington III, B, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*, ed. Joel B. Green, McKnight, Scot., Marshall, Howard., (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 599.

th.n a;mmon\ kai. kate,bh h` broch. kai. h=lqon oi` potamoi. kai. e;pneusan oi`  
a;nemoi kai. prose,koyan th/| oivki,a| evkei,nh| ( kai. e;pesen kai. h=n h` ptw/sij  
aувth/j mega,lh"Å " *Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them,  
may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the  
floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it  
had been founded on the rock. Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on  
them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods  
came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell-- and great was its fall."*

16

In Matthew has the pericope in the same order to emphasis its message. Just before the  
pericope (in Matthew), Jesus explains that the gate that leads to life is small and narrow (7:13-  
14). He then warns people about false prophets and that people can recognize them by their  
fruit (6:15-20). Just before the parallel pericope, Jesus speaks of those who prophesy and drive  
out demons in his name but in the end he does not know them (7:21-23). And just after the  
pericope of the builders, Jesus himself heals a man with leprosy; and the key line in that  
narrative is "But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a  
testimony to them" (8:1-4). Matthew stresses the importance of believing and putting your  
faith into action. Luke's pericope is the same way. The focus is putting your faith into action.

16

The passage in question is full of structural nuances that should be noted. In verse  
46, the reader follows the verbs to catch the main theological application. They come in the  
form of two-part question: "Why do you call?" and "Why do you not do what I say?" The  
question is pointed to Jesus' disciples (present and future). As the reader continues to follow  
the verbs there they find a set of three verbs that a disciple ought to take: comes to Jesus,

hears his words, and does them. Jesus will then show *ti,ni evsti.n* (whom he is) – whoever comes to Jesus, hears his words, and does them.

The first man builds his house and does three things (drawn out by the aorist verbs): he dug (*e;skayen*), went deep (*evba,qunen*), and placed a foundation (*e;qhken qeme,lion*); all connected by a coordinating conjunction. And as the flood came and burst against the house, it did not have the power to shake it because it had been built well. Not only is there horizontal movement within the verse due to the verbs but there is also horizontal movement. The first man continually moves downward – he digs, and the text even says that he *evba,qunen* and kept pushing down. Then, in the passage, it says that the flood arose (*genome,nhj*); they came up. Now the movement is upwards, the rain kept going higher and higher until it became a stream. However, the house was strong enough to withstand the stream. Jesus throws a big contrastive *o` de.* in the parable. Jesus says, “You can do it this way or you can do it like this...” And then continues with his parable. *o` de. avkou,saj kai. mh. poihsaj* contrasts verse 47 where it says *Pa/j o` evrco,menoj pro,j me kai. avkou,wn mou tw/n lo,gwn kai. poiw/n auvtou,j*. It’s interesting to note that the second group has heard but the indictment is that they have *mh. poihsaj* (not acted). Verse 49 continues the same way verse 48 started: *o` de. avkou,saj kai. mh. poihsaj o[moio,j evstin avnqrw,pw | oivkodomh,santi oivki,an*. Both men build a house, however the second guy does not dig deep, instead he builds upon the ground (without a foundation). The same flood as the first man comes and the text says that his house “immediately collapsed”. But Jesus does

not end with the collapsing of the house, but he says that “and the destruction of that house was great”. The power that was not able to shake the first house completely destroyed the house of the second. The structure of the parable is meant to be seen as a contrastive parallel. Both men built houses, the storms both beat upon their houses...but the results were completely different.

## **Application**

### **Theological Analysis**

**Lord:** The framework of the pericope is based off of the question in verse 46 “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,” and do not do what I say?” It is a rhetorical question as we have uncovered. Jesus is talking to the disciples that have already been calling him Lord. There is weight behind calling Jesus “Lord” and it begs the question “Why do you call him Lord without doing what he says?” If Jesus is truly Lord of your life then do you submit to his authority? The question does not just come from random teachers of the law, but Jesus himself. It is a weighty question that demands serious introspection. Up to this point in Luke, Jesus has done a lot of teaching: he taught people in Capernaum (4:31); he preached in the synagogues of Judea (4:44); he taught a crowd by the Lake of Gennesaret (5:1); he taught Simon a lesson of faith (5:4-11); Jesus teaches about the coming kingdom (5:33-39); he gives the beatitudes and the woes (6:20-26); loving others (6:27-36); and criticizing others (6:37-42). Surely there were a lot of things taught by Jesus up to this point, so Jesus poses the question again, “Why do you call him Lord if you do not do what he has said?” Again, the main thrust of the passage is not

merely belief or hearing him because in 49 the man hears Jesus but still his house is destroyed. The lesson being taught is one of action.

**Building Deep:** In the parable that Jesus tells about the two men who built houses, there is a big difference between the two of them – action. Verse 47 says, “Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them I will show you whom he is like” and he proceeds to tell us what this man does. The first man builds his house by digging deep and placed a foundation on the rock. Apparently the first man heard what Jesus said and *poiw/n* (does) it. Jesus’ words were to 1) dig deep and 2) place your foundation on something sturdy – like a rock. In contrast, the second man who heard but does *not* act built his house 1) on the ground; and 2) without foundation. He did heed the words of Christ and did not dig deep first and his house was not built on a solid foundation. The consequences of not listening to Jesus were that the house of the second man *immediately* collapsed and the destruction was great. How has Jesus instructed his disciples to live? How can we root our *houses* deep? In Ephesians 4:11-13, Paul lists out the different gifts of the believers so that they may be “built up”. But the main point of his message is in verse 14 that says, “Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming”. The Disciples of Christ are to be rooted and grounded deep so that when the storms come, they are not tossed here and there. Secondly, a disciple is to build their house on a solid foundation. According to the New Bible Commentary, to “build on the rock” simply means to obey what God commands in His Word.”<sup>23</sup> Historically th.n pe, tran has been

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<sup>23</sup> W. W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary: An Exposition of the New*

referred to Jesus. It could be concluded as Jesus because of the article, but the lexical word never refers to it being Jesus; just a solid foundation. The solid foundation in this case is the teachings of Christ (verse 46).

**The Flood and the River:** Each man in the parable both experienced the storm. Just because the man built on a solid foundation did not exempt him from the storm. The same storm that completely destroyed a man's house arose and shattered against the first man's house. We live in an odd time in Church life because of some strange doctrine that has infiltrated our teaching. Many people want to think that just because they do the will of God their lives will be pain-free and spared from heartache and despair. In this parable, the storm comes for both the first man and the second man. Jesus doesn't promise us that just because we put our faith into action that the storm won't hit us. However, he does say that *when* the storms come, if we have securely built our house deep and on solid foundation, the storms of life will not have the power to shake it because it had been built well.

### Conclusion

In Luke's pericope, Jesus concludes a long lesson by a final parable. The parable challenges the hearers on several levels: one of submission to Jesus as "Lord; not only hearing the words of Jesus but also putting his words into action; and one of security. Jesus calls out to all disciples, "build your foundation deep in my words and do what I say because it will fare well for you in the future". By hearing Jesus' words and putting them into action we are like a wise

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*Testament Comprising the Entire 'BE' Series* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1996), Luke 6:20.

man that has built his foundation deep on the rock so that when the storms of life smash against us, we will not be destroyed.

### Appendix 1: Sentence Flow Outline in Greek

**Luke 6:46-49** <sup>46</sup> Ti, de, me kalei/te\ ku,rie ku,rie( kai. ouv poiei/te a] le,gwÈ <sup>47</sup> Pa/j o` evrco,menoj pro,j me kai. avkou,wn mou tw/n lo,gwn kai. poiw/n auvtou,j( u` podei,xw u` mi/n ti,ni evsti.n o[moioj\ <sup>48</sup> o[moio,j evstin avnqrw,pw| oivkodomou/nti oivki,an o]j e;skayen kai. evba,qunen kai. e;qhken qeme,lion evpi. th.n pe,tran\ plhmmu,rhj de. genome,nhj prose,rh xen o` potamo.j th/| oivki,a| evkei,nh|( kai. ouv k i;scusen saleu/sai auvth.n dia. to. kalw/j oivkodomh/sqai auvth,nÅ <sup>49</sup> o` de. avkou,saj kai. mh. poih,saj o[moio,j evstin avnqrw,pw| oivkodomh,santi oivki,an evpi. th.n gh/n cwri.j qemeli,ou( h-| prose,rh xen o` potamo,j( kai. euvqu.j sune,pesen kai. evge,neto to. r` h/gma th/j oivki,aj evkei,nhj me,gaÅ

- Ti, de, me kalei/te\ ku,rie ku,rie
- kai. ouv poiei/te a] le,gwÈ
  - Pa/j o` evrco,menoj pro,j me kai. avkou,wn mou tw/n lo,gwn kai. poiw/n auvtou,j( u` podei,xw u` mi/n ti,ni evsti.n o[moioj
    - o[moio,j evstin avnqrw,pw| oivkodomou/nti oivki,an o]j e;skayen kai. evba,qunen kai. e;qhken qeme,lion evpi. th.n pe,tran\ plhmmu,rhj
      - de. genome,nhj prose,rh xen o` potamo.j th/| oivki,a| evkei,nh|( kai. ouv k i;scusen saleu/sai auvth.n dia. to. kalw/j oivkodomh/sqai auvth,nÅ
  - o` de. avkou,saj kai. mh. poih,saj
    - o[moio,j evstin avnqrw,pw| oivkodomh,santi oivki,an evpi. th.n gh/n cwri.j qemeli,ou
      - h-| prose,rh xen o` potamo,j( kai. euvqu.j sune,pesen kai. evge,neto to. r` h/gma th/j oivki,aj evkei,nhj me,gaÅ

## Appendix 2: Exegetical Outline in English

By hearing Jesus' words and putting them into action we are like a wise man that has built his foundation deep on the rock so that when the storms of life smash against us, we will not be destroyed.

- We call Jesus "Lord"
- We do what Jesus says.
  - Like a man building a house, who dug deep and placed the foundation on the rock
    - Storms came and shattered against the house but did not have the power to shake it
- But who has heard and not acted
  - Like a man who built upon the ground without a foundation
    - Storms came and shattered against it and the house immediately collapsed and the destruction was great.

### Appendix 3: Sermon Brief

The first major point in Luke 6:46-49 is a question Jesus asks of his followers – “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord’ and do not do what I say?” (46) Intrinsic within his question are two implied actions on behalf of the follower – calling Jesus “Lord” and doing what Jesus says. The first implied action of calling Jesus “Lord” is crucial in interpretation and application. Calling Jesus “Lord” is different from calling him “Teacher” or “Sir”. If we are to call Jesus “Lord” we should understand what that entitles. If Jesus is Lord, then he is due all honor and respect. The Lord is our light and salvation (Ps. 27:1). As disciples we follow after Jesus as our Lord. The second sub point is found in doing what Jesus says. His question begs the reader to answer it. The following parable comes out of this question of doing. How do we call Jesus “Lord” yet refuse to do what he asks of us? This is applicable in our day in age. How many times have we heard the voice of Jesus and still refuse to move? Most of the time we immediately think that it is stopping a sin; not doing something. As much as that is the case, Jesus’ teachings extend much further. He teaches about grace, justice, love for your enemies and for your neighbors. Our allegiance to our Lord is justified in our doing what he says. However, Jesus is not calling us to obey him as a slave obeys a master, he calls us to obey him as friends (John 15:15). If we would only sit down and contemplate what Jesus has asked of us and seriously evaluate our lives. Have we been calling him “Lord” but refuse to do what he says?

The second major point in this pericope is focused around the actions of the first man. Jesus begins with a man who comes to him, hears his words, and does them. In contrast, the second man hears Jesus’ words but did not act on it. The point is that the man heard the word of Jesus – which was apparently to dig deep – and he acted on it. The actions lead to him building the house on a solid foundation. The parable is straightforward in nature – who do you want to be? Which consequence would you rather have? Like the first man we also should hear Jesus’ words and act upon it. We also should root our house down deep and place our house on a solid foundation. How do we dig deep? One way would be for us to understand what Jesus says – what does he say about life? What does he say about relationships? How does he treat others? We can’t act upon his word if we don’t know what it is. But this doesn’t stop at reading the bible, it moves forward and we are to ground ourselves in his word. And once we’ve grounded ourselves in Christ then our foundation is set. So when the storms of life rage against us and shatter against who we are...our house will not collapse.

The third major point is a very peculiar one. I have rarely heard people mention this point. Although the first man heard Jesus' words and put them into practice, it did not exempt him from the storm. It was the same storm that later destroyed another man's house. In the passage, the process by which the storm came is identical on both cases. Both men built their houses, the storms came, and then there was a result. What can we learn from this? Well I think that even though we hear Jesus' words and put his words into action, the storms of life don't pass us by. But the advantage to those who put his words into action are spared from destruction. When things look grim – when our health fades, when it seems like we can't pay rent, when our friends pass away...we remember in Jesus' promises and we hold on to that faith, that security that we find in his word. So when the storms slowly begin to fade and a glint of sunshine peaks through the clouds, we look at our life and we see that it is still there – because we've built on a firm foundation.

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