



**May 29, 2022**

The Seventh Week of Easter

**Matthew 7:21-29 NRSV**

<sup>21</sup>"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. <sup>22</sup>On 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?' <sup>23</sup>Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers.' <sup>24</sup>"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. <sup>25</sup>The 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. <sup>26</sup>And 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. <sup>27</sup>The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell — and great was its fall!" <sup>28</sup>Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, <sup>29</sup>for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

**Bible Conversation**

What captivates you about this text?

What bothers you about this text?

What questions arise in your mind about this text?

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## **Reflection** by Pastor Rob Zahn

This has been a crappy week. The reason I use the word 'crappy' is because that is about as far as I can appropriately go in this medium, but you catch my point. To say this has been a 'crappy' week doesn't quite cut it, does it? It was way, way worse.

I am writing this only two days after yet another school shooting where, at this moment, the number of fatalities has climbed to 21.

21 people dead...most of them just kids...at a school...and sadly this isn't the only example of tragedy, loss, grief, confusion, turmoil, and helplessness in the world at this moment...there is more:

Ukraine  
Monkey Pox  
Economy  
The shootings in Buffalo  
Political Climate  
Suicide  
Divorce  
Racism  
Incurable Illnesses  
Climate Change and Pollution  
...and the list goes on...

...but another shooting at a school? Really?

I have to say as a pastor, a spiritual leader, I am tired. I am weary. My guess is you are, too. Specifically, I am tired and weary of words, prayers, speeches, special services, and social media memes. When will we get it? When will we start to understand that building the Kingdom of Heaven, the world that God intends, is not entirely the result of prayer. It is the result of actions, choices, engagement, relationships, conversations, debates, listening, learning, giving up a little of the norm for the sake of...well, for the sake of the world God intends.

This text talks about the Kingdom of Heaven and that it 'belongs' to those who 'do' something. Often, we think of the Kingdom of Heaven as that place we go to next, you know, after we die. But that isn't this. This text is specifically talking about the world that God intends in the here and now, the one we are to work towards, the one we are to build.

That Kingdom isn't here yet.

Jesus is clear. Words won't usher in this Kingdom. Saying "Lord, Lord" doesn't quite cut it. We actually have to do something. I don't have the answers on what we should do. My area of expertise is theology, bible, history, and language. I can't exactly give an answer concerning the what. However, I can tell you what our faith tells us in these moments. If we are to take Jesus seriously, then we have to acknowledge that words aren't enough. We are called to do something.

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