

A TALE OF TWO HOMES

On Monday we moved our daughter into her apartment where she will be living during this second year of university. After spending a couple of hours unpacking, we decided to give ourselves a break and drive up to her university to pick up her parking pass for the year. When we got there, my daughter messaged one of her friends from the previous year to see if she happened to be somewhere on campus. Sure enough, she was, and when they met up, they immediately gave each other a huge hug.

The two girls talked for several minutes while Nadine and I sat on some chairs to try and comfort our tired and aching bodies. One of the things Coral asked her friend about was how she liked the place where she was living. Her friend's response was, "Well it is a home!" Her friend's words did not come across as a ringing endorsement of her first week in her new place. From what this friend shared, her landlord did no cleaning whatsoever before she moved in. One of the toilets had a leak, there was no hot water and apparently the water tank needs to be replaced. I seem to remember from some conversations I had with Coral last year that this particular landlord had promised this girl and her roommates that renovations and upgrades would be made before they moved in. Based on her comment, I question if the landlord completed any of this work. At the time when Coral's friend was looking at this place, they wanted my daughter to join in on the lease with them. I am glad that she didn't after hearing what her friend had to say.

This girl's experience with her landlord is completely opposite from what my daughter has experienced with hers. After the previous tenants moved out, our landlord shampooed all the carpets and made sure everything was clean and in proper order. He even put new furniture into my daughter's room and told her she could put up whatever pictures she wanted because this was now her place. I called this landlord last week with a few questions I had before Coral moved in and he was so helpful. When we moved in on Monday, we had the chance to ask some of the other girls living there about the landlord. They all had so many good things to say about him and their experiences living there. It was interesting driving home Monday night to think of the contrasts between these two landlords in how they handled their properties and tenants.

As I contemplated my mid-week message on Tuesday morning, I started off with another idea from last week but struggled with finding the right passage to match it. It was then that God placed on my heart these two landlords and what Jesus had to say about two other homeowners. At the end of His famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told a parable about two men who experienced the same storm and high winds after their houses were built. The man who built his house on solid rock discovered his home was able to withstand this intense storm. The other man who built his home on sand saw it collapse as a result of this storm. The lesson Jesus was teaching in comparing the houses and choices these two men made was to emphasize the importance of listening to His teachings and taking the next step by applying them to one's life.

Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. But anyone who hears my teaching and ignores it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. (Matthew 7: 24,26).

While it seemed at first glance that these two men shared a lot in common, the structural or spiritual differences between them were seen in their willingness to follow Jesus' teachings. This difference may be hard to spot at first in people who hear Jesus' truths, but it will be obvious who has obeyed them when seeing storms arise in people's lives. The example I provided earlier contrasting the two landlords raised the question of one's character and how we may treat others. The example Jesus provided with the two builders raised the question of our spiritual character and our tendency of applying Jesus' teachings to our life or not. Hopefully these examples get us reflecting upon how well we have been listening to God's word and applying it to our character, behavior, and attitudes.

Let's make sure we are following Jesus' advice here by not only listening to His Word but obeying it in our lives. By so doing, we will be building a solid foundation of faith to sustain us through life's storms and be blessed by God in so many other ways.

Keep safe and God bless,

Pastor Dean