

Mining Rock for Gold  
Matthew 7:24-27  
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The opening line in an Associated Press article this past week read: “America’s vaunted can-do spirit is badly frayed.” The article- found quoted in several places- went on to suggest that everything from the Gulf oil spill to the war in Afghanistan, from lost jobs to soaring budget deficits, plunging stock markets amid worries about Europe’s economy, the immigration hullabaloo in Arizona and beyond... all of it happening all at once has us on edge. On top of all that- there’s that botched Israeli naval commando raid in the Mediterranean, the sinking of a South Korean warship by a North Korea torpedo, and the increasing likelihood of a nuclear-armed Iran... no wonder everybody’s a bit edgy these days. What’s a person to do?

First of all, these days have brought back into sharp focus that there are limits to what we can do on our own; technology isn’t the answer to every issue, and most of us agree that the politicians are having a hard time getting us much of anywhere. Some things defy solution, and the smartest among us can’t figure the best way out. Sometimes, we have to find somewhere safe to stand before we can move ahead... whether personally, or as a culture. Stormy weather comes and goes, yet some things seem to endure through it all... and the Bible seems to be one of those things. At the end of his Sermon on the Mount- three chapters of some of the Bible’s best-known and most-beloved teachings, Jesus concluded with these words about wise and foolish builders: [\(Matthew 7:24-28\)](#).

I can no more fix the gulf oil leak than any of you, or predict what will happen Monday with the stock market; all you and I can control are our own choices. What I can suggest is that you and I can make every effort to build our lives on solid rock, and then we'll find ourselves in a much better place to deal with whatever stormy uncertainty comes our way. Using biblical principles to guide our decisions, or base our convictions, or shape our values will anchor us to something much more substantive than the shifting sands of public opinion or yesterday's I-Pad technology; you'll begin to realize that the Bible truly is the window through which we tie onto the living God who is bigger than all that put together.

The question inevitably comes... what biblical principles do I study? Where do I turn in this bewildering collection of ancient writings of sometimes contradictory wisdom to find what I need? I don't understand it, and don't even know where to begin!

Let me suggest to you that making the decision to build a lifestyle on the rock that is scripture is the place to begin; like any surveyor, you need to begin poking around to see what you can find.

Central City is an old mining town located not far from where I once lived in Colorado. As we drove into the mountains toward Central City along Highway 6, we'd often see people out panning for gold. They gather some gravel from the bottom of Clear Creek, and swish it around, looking for some flecks of gold. I know some found some, but it usually wasn't much; it was there, but hard to take to the bank.

Sometimes we approach the Bible like that... casually panning for insight, and hoping some words of wisdom will wash off the page at us. We'll close our eyes, pray, open the book, and read what's on the page in front of us, and hope its God's word meant

for us. Sometimes we discover gold- most of the time, not so much... or else it's really just so much fool's gold emerging out of someone else's agenda.

When you push further up Clear Creek Canyon toward Central City, you'd begin to find old mine shafts- lots of them. They bring to mind some of my growing-up days in Colorado Springs. As a young man, I used to hang out some in Cripple Creek. Back in 1890, a rancher by the name of Bob Womack stumbled onto some nuggets- and the gold rush was on. All the easy gold was quickly snatched up, and eventually 500 shafts were dug- mostly by hand- in the Cripple Creek region, yielding \$500,000,000 worth of gold at time when gold was \$35/ounce. These days, all that's left beside casinos mining a different kind of loot is the Molly Kathleen mine- and most of their revenue comes from taking tourists 1000 feet underground- as far down an old mining shaft as the Empire State Building is high.

What's the point? The point is that you and I can build our lives on the rock that is biblical wisdom, but we need to drill down to find the mother lodes of wisdom and insight that await us. The Word of God is there, but the shiny stuff you pick up above ground is nothing compared to what's deeper down... and it has the power to change your life and propel you into things you've never dreamed possible.

The question is- will you give it a try or not? At you going to drill down, or just pan for gold when you feel like it? Why not check out the Bible for yourself, and see what you can find? Every Sunday this summer, we're going to do a little trivia quiz just before worship that will allow you to test your own knowledge of the Bible in a variety of ways. All summer long, we're going to be pushing deeper around here, drilling into

texts familiar to many of us. Bible studies based on those texts are happening all around the church- join one.

I'm going to conclude with a different sort of finish... and I invite you to join in on the greatest story ever told. (show video describing the Bible as a blockbuster opening) After all, summer is the time for blockbuster releases- so far, it's "Iron Man 2" and "Shrek 3" and "Prince of Persia"... why not check the Bible out for yourself? Nobody is going to preach at you, and you'll have a chance in a smaller group setting to ask questions; facilitators are being trained, and many of the groups will be meeting in someone's home. You don't have to attend every week if you have to be out of town, but I encourage you to make it a priority. As with so many things, what you get out of something is linked directly to what you put into it. You can sign up for a group out in the lobby area this week and next.

What are you going to build your life on this summer... shifting, oil-stained sand- or hard rock that holds more wealth than you can imagine? It's up to you.