

Meditations on Sand



Introduction: As children, many of us had an opportunity to go to the beach and build something with the sand. Since sand is so easy to form, even the youngest person could quickly build their own “special creation.”

Yet for the very same reason that sand is easy to form into something intricate and beautiful, it is just as easy for a wave to come in, wash over the sand, and leave nothing but a lump in the sand as a monument for all our efforts. After three of four more waves, all the evidence that we were there and had built something is gone completely.

The principle of water’s affect on sand to remove all traces of human effort and toil is a powerful illustration. For it is how time works on all man’s

efforts in the material realm.

When we sing: *“time is filled with swift transition, naught of earth unmoved can stand, build your hopes on things eternal, hold to God’s unchanging hand,” “Where the roses never fade” “Sweet is the promise I will not forget thee” “Beyond this land of parting, losing and leaving,” “As the life of a flower as a breath or a sigh”*

we can all make melody with the understanding that our lives are truly only built on sand. When read in Scripture: *“All flesh is like grass, And all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, And the flower falls off, But the word of the Lord abides forever,”* (1Pet. 1:24-25),

When we see an old barn, near collapse, we should remember that it was once newly painted with a family using it for their hopes and dreams. Now the family is gone and the barn sits in collapse and soon rots away, just like the sand castle we built when the waves crashed over it.

During this pandemic, we are learning how transient even the normal elements of our lives “under the sun” can become. What was considered normal, fixed and certain, has been dashed to the ground just like the wave crashing over our sand castle.

Grocery store shelves, many jobs, sports, entertainment, freedom to leave our home, freedom to worship, freedom to go to the store, and even the lives of those we know and love have been revealed as being far more fragile and sandlike than we might have thought just a few short weeks ago.

We are only a few weeks into this, and we can already see that if it continues much longer, many of the things we now have, could be lost to us. There could still be a great depression, there could still be a second, third or more waves of this. This is a great time to reflect on the transient nature of life *“under the sun.”* All we are building here is only destined to be burned. (2Pet 3:10-13).

Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. 2 Pet 3:11-13

This is the perfect time to reflect on whether our entire life will end up like that sand castle. We are building a legacy and memories, hoping to lay up treasure in heaven and be a vessel unto honor. Yet Jesus used the ability of sand to quickly move and rearrange to describe the difference between those who build their lives on His words (as building on the rock) or in ignoring them (as building their lives on sand).

*“Therefore **whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:** 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. **everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:** 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”* (Mt. 7:24-27).

Sand is easy to work with. If we are only going to use sand for a foundation, we can complete the work very quickly and cheaply. Yet sand and water become so fluid that it would not take long for all the time and effort we put into such a foundation to be completely washed away, leaving everything we built upon it to fall into ruin. That is the exact point Jesus was making. If we only use our own human wisdom and other human traditions, to build our spiritual lives upon, it makes for a much easier and quicker completion.

Yet when the time of storm comes, either at our death, or at the Lord’s second coming, all human wisdom and traditions will be swept away, and everything we built upon it will also fall into ruin.

Far better to “ask, seek and knock,” taking that extra effort to “search the Scriptures daily,” to be certain we are truly building our lives on the solid rock of Jesus’ words. (Mt. 7:7-8; Acts 17:11).

Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth. 2Tim. 2:15

Though the figure changes, the application doesn’t. Just like sand, “every plant that my heavenly Father did not plant will be rooted up.” (Mt. 15:8-14; Gal. 1:9)

God warns us that even the memory of our existence “under the sun” will slowly be washed away like waves washing over a sand castle.

“There is no remembrance of former things, nor will there be any remembrance of things that are to come by those who will come after.” (Eccl. 1:11).

While my life and my memories mean everything to me, I can pass only a few of them to my children. When I am gone, my own memories leave this earth forever. How many times have we longed to ask our mother or father after they have passed from this earth about memories that are now gone forever?

While we pass some of our most cherished memories to our children, it is unlikely they will pass them on to their own children. Soon even my name, which represents all that I am, will not even be remembered anymore. Test this upon yourself. We know the names of our mother and father and their memories, at least the ones overlapping ours, are still in our hearts. Even with our grandparents, we share a few overlapping memories. Yet after that, we are unable to share their memories. Even their names are soon forgotten. If we try, some can name their great or great-great grandparents name, but beyond that, even their names are forgotten. This illustrates how long the years, passing live waves of the sands of our lives, soon wipes from the earth all traces of us. Our name and our memories will pass from this earth forever. Within three to four generations, our lives are just like that sand castle, it is as if we were never here. Only God will remember us and all those who have lived before us.

It is good to be humbled as we are and will continue to be in this pestilence and plague. As things we thought were permanent are slowly stripped away, we are brought face to face with some powerful realities.

Since God is the only one who will remember me after my life passes from this earth, what memories am I working so hard to build with Him? Will God remember our lives with memories of faithful service and sacrifice for him? Will we live so that they are memories designed to reveal our unwavering faith and commitment? Are they memories of friendship, devotion and genuine worship? Centuries later, God still remembered Abraham: *“But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, The descendants of Abraham My friend.” (Isa. 41:8).*

God never forgets His friends. Those who live like Abraham with an unwavering faith and trust leading to full obedience at all times will also be remembered. It is not difficult to become friends with Jesus and through Him, with God. *“You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.” (Jn. 15:14).* All who are now in living faithfully in Zion have this promise:

But Zion said, “The Lord has forsaken me, And my Lord has forgotten me.” 15 “Can a woman forget her nursing child, And not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, Yet I will not forget you. 16 See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me. (Isa. 49:14-16)

Conclusion: God has a book, filled with the names of those who have lived before us as it will be for those who live after us. It is called “the book of life,” or “the Lamb’s book of life.” (Phil 4:3; Rev. 20:12). It is also called “a book of remembrance.” A book where God records those who are His, those who will become His jewels, and those He will spare on the last day.

Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, And the Lord listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the Lord And who meditate on His name. 17 “They shall be Mine,” says the Lord of hosts, “On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them As a man spares his own son who serves him.” (Mal. 3:16-18)

He has promised that all who faithfully serve Him have come to Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem. (Heb. 12:11). Because we are now in Zion, God has promised, **“I will never forget you.”**

After the sands of time have washed away all evidence of our existence, when even our bones have returned to dust, God has promised, the memories of faithful service and sacrifice that we share with Him will never be forgotten. He has written our name in a book, and on the final day, both the names, and all the memories they represent will live on for all eternity.

Is your name written in the lamb’s book of life?