



*Written by  
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## **The Parable of “The Wise and Foolish Builders”**

**Scripture:** Matthew 7: 24-27

**Dramatic Category:** “Fractured Parable”

### **What is a “Fractured Parable”?**

A “Fractured Parable” is a contemporary, humorous re-telling of one of the parables of Jesus. The Narrator, who may, or may not be involved in the action, tells the parable. As the parable is told, the mimes portray the action, occasionally using props and suggested costume pieces. The mimes generally wear black slacks, black turtleneck shirts or black and white striped shirts with black suspenders, and white gloves to accent their hand motions. They do not need to wear the traditional “white-face” of the mime genre. These “Fractured Parables” do not require any specific set.

**Topic:** Lives built on the foundation of obedience to the Word of God, will survive the “storms” of life.

**Performance Time:** 5 minutes

**Number of Players:** 6 players (*men or women*)

### **Objective:**

To show the fate of those who choose to build their lives on the truth of God, or the empty philosophies of the world.

### **Synopsis:**

The “Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders” is the concluding metaphor of “The Sermon on the Mount.” In it, Jesus summarizes His world-shaking sermon with the idea that those who will “build their lives” on His teaching and obey the unchanging Word of God, will live lives of stability, security, and hope; but, those who choose any foundation other than the “Word of God,” will experience the shifting, insecure, collapsible lives of those who would build on sand.

**The Cast:**

- Narrator 1: *(a serious, straight man)*
- Narrator 2: *(a comic)*
- A foolish house: *(who is “built” by the foolish builder)*
- A foolish man: *(who acts like a fool, carelessly building his house on the sand)*
- A Wise House: *(who is “built” by the wise builder)*
- A Wise Man: *(who is meticulous, building his house with great concern)*

**NOTE:**

The houses must “come alive” with facial expressions, body postures, etc. The builders must embody wisdom and folly as they build. The building is random; they hammer arms up to make roofs, open eyes to make windows, paint the sides of the bodies, etc.

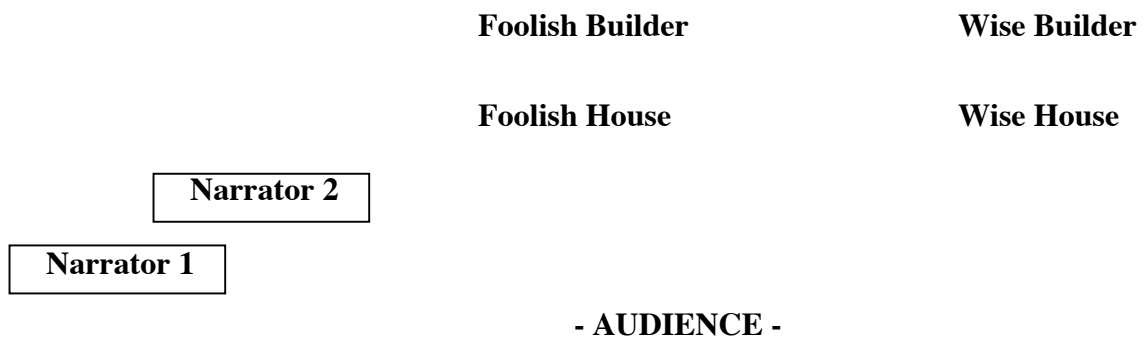
**Props:**

- 15-20 squirt guns or spray bottles\*
- 2 black folders (with the Narrators’ scripts inside)
- A squirt gun for Narrator 2

*\*(Strategically give the squirt guns to people throughout the audience. On the words, “and the rain came down,” those people stand up and spray over the heads of those seated near them, as though it were raining down on them. After that line, the rain birds quickly sit down, as though they were trying to be un-noticed.)*

**Staging Arrangement:**

The various characters in this mime line up across the stage in the configuration sketched out below. When they are not “on,” they turn their backs to the audience. If possible, raise the Narrators up on a box or a platform so they look down on the action, but can be clearly seen by the audience.



**NOTE:**

This skit is a narrated mime; this technique requires that the action described by the Narrator be acted out in pantomime by “mimes” who perform simultaneously while the story is being told. The attention of the audience is on both the Narrator and the mime action. Block the action of the mimes so that they illustrate the events being described by the Narrator. Facial expression and interaction between the Narrator and the mimes is suggested to add comedy and energy to the performance. The characters respond to what the Narrator says. The action is almost constant.

## The Script

- Narrator 1:** Jesus tells a parable about two builders. One wise builder...
- Narrator 2:** And one foolish builder.
- Narrator 1:** In Matthew, chapter 7
- Narrator 2:** verses 24 through 27.
- Narrator 1:** “Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine  
*(The wise builder and wise house begin to move onto the stage.)*
- Narrator 2:** what words?  
*(Narrator 1 waves to the players to stop. They sigh and stand in place, half-way onto the stage.)*
- Narrator 1:** The words of Jesus  
*(answering Narrator 2)*
- Narrator 2:** That’s a lot of words...any words in particular?
- Narrator 1:** The words in His most famous sermon.
- Narrator 2:** Oh....*(confused)* Which one was that?
- Narrator 1:** The “Sermon on the Mount.”
- Narrator 2:** Oh...
- Narrator 1:** Can we go on now?
- Narrator 2:** *(realizing that the players are waiting.)* Oh, sure. *(looking in their direction.)*  
Sorry.
- Narrator 1:** Let’s start over.  
*(The players back up and prepare to enter the stage again.)*  
“Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine...
- Narrator 2:** You mean the “blessed” sermon?  
*(He looks to Narrator 1 for an answer.)*
- Narrator 1:** The what?  
*(Narrator 1 waves to the players to stop again. The players look rather disgruntled and hold their pose.)*

**Narrator 2:** You know, “blessed are those who are persecuted...” yeah, right! There’s a good time, something to look forward to...

*(Narrator 2 waves out to the audience as though he were blessing them)*

**Bless you, go be persecuted!**

**Narrator 1:** The “Beatitudes” are Jesus’ opening words for the “Sermon on the Mount.”  
*(preaching to Narrator 2)*

**The entire sermon contradicts popular values, both then and now.**

**Jesus turns human reality upside-down. He shows us how to see with God’s eyes.**

**Narrator 2:** Right, like “turn the other cheek,” and “love your enemies,” and giving in secret so you don’t get any credit for it, and not worrying ‘cause the birds don’t worry, and not judging people! What’s up with that? ... and squeezing through a narrow gate, and...

*(His listing of the topics of the “Sermon on the Mount” is interrupted by the players themselves.)*

**Players:** Can we start now?

**Narrator 2:** *(answering the players)*

**I just wanted to “set the stage” ha...get it, “set the stage” for this parable. That’s what Jesus means when he says, “These words of mine.”**

**Narrator 1:** *(speaking to Narrator 2)* Can we start now?

**Narrator 2:** *(justifying himself to Narrator 1)*

**This parable sums up the whole “Sermon on the Mount,” you know.**

**Narrator 1:** **We know that now, *(satirically)* Thank you!**

*(motioning to the players to back up and get ready to enter the stage again)*

**Narrator 2:** *(As the players are backing up, Narrator 2 continues his statement.)*

**The concluding sentence, the one that wraps it all up!**

**The point! Finit, el ultimo idea, the end.**

**Narrator 1:** *(cutting Narrator 2 off)* All right! They get it. It’s the parable that says it all. Can we tell it to these fine folks, now, please?

**Narrator 2:** Sure.

**Narrator 1:** **Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine...**

*(The players freeze for a moment to see if Narrator 2 is really going to continue.)*

**Narrator 2:** **And puts them into practice.**

*(The wise builder brings his house out. He stomps on the ground in front of his house and looks satisfied that it is solid rock. He begins to build his house during the following exchange between the Narrators. The house is extremely animated and stands strong, smiling confidently at the builder.)*

**Narrator 1:** **is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.**

**Narrator 2:** *(putting down his script and departing from the story)*  
**The “rock of ages,” the “solid rock.”**

**Narrator 1:** *(picking up on the rock image)*  
**“The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer.**  
*(triumphantly)* **My God is my rock, in whom I take refuge.**

**Narrator 2:** *(continuing the banter)*  
**Oh Lord, my rock and my redeemer!**

**Narrator 1:** *(with inspiration)*  
**Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.**

**Wise Builder:** *(interrupting the exchange)* **Psssst!** *(Waving them to go on.)*

**Narrator 2:** *(noticing the wise builder)* **Right....The wise man kept building his house...**

**Narrator 1:** **On the rock.**

**Narrator 2:** *(very dramatically)* **Then, the rain came down,**

*(Narrator 2 takes out his squirt gun and shoots the wise house and the wise builder with water for just a moment.)*

*(The rain birds in the audience stand up, rotate like rain birds, and spray water over the heads of their neighbors. They quickly sit down, innocently looking around.)*

*(The wise builder notices the rain, opens the door of his house and steps inside. This is done by using the arms as a roof and sitting squarely in front of the feet of his house, as though he were “inside.”)*

**Narrator 1:** **the streams rose,**

*(The wise builder looks outside, and is un-effected. The house smiles.*

**Narrator 2:** **and the winds blew and beat against that house;**

**Narrator 1:** **yet it did not fall**

*(The wise builder picks up his remote and starts to watch T.V.)*

**Narrator 2:** **because it had its foundation on the rock.**

**Narrator 1:** **But,**

**Narrator 2:** **everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice**

**Narrator 1:** **is like a foolish man**

*(The foolish builder brings his house out haphazardly; the house slouches and has an obvious “attitude.” The foolish man picks up an imaginary handful of sand, sifts it through his hands and seems pleased.)*

**Narrator 2:** **who built his house**

**Narrator 1:** **on sand.**

*(Narrator 2 breaks the rhythm of the parable to “chat” with Narrator 1; meanwhile, the foolish builder continues to build very poorly. The arms of the house keep falling in on him; the posture of the house denotes collapse, etc.)*

**Narrator 2:** **Did you know that the sand around the sea of Galilee was up to ten feet deep? It was hard as a rock in the hot summer, and some people were actually dumb enough to build on it. They were just too lazy to dig down until they hit bedrock. Were they ever surprised when the rainy season came and their houses collapsed. Do you think Jesus knew that sand was like counterfeit rock?**

**Narrator 1:** **Jesus knows everything, including how this parable ends. I think these people would like to know, too!**

**Narrator 2:** **Oh...right, (to the foolish builder, who is bored.) Sorry!**

**Narrator 1:** **The rain came down;**

*(Narrator 2 takes out his squirt gun and shoots the foolish house and the foolish builder with water for just a moment.)*

*(The rain birds do their job out in the audience again.)*

*(The foolish house looks terrified. The foolish builder panics.)*

**Narrator 2:** **the streams rose,**  
*(The foolish house lifts its feet up one at a time, like a cat on wet carpet.)*

**Narrator 1:**        **and the winds blew and beat against that house,**  
*(The foolish builder tries to enter his house, but both of them sway too much.)*

**Narrator 2:**        **and it fell with a great crash.**  
*(The foolish house falls on the foolish builder.)*

**Narrator 1:**        **Bang!**

**Narrator 2:**        **Boom!**

**Narrator 1:**        **Thud!**

*(The wise builder looks out of his house; picks up the phone and calls for help as he surveys the damage next door.)*

*(The Narrators shake their heads at the fate of the foolish man. The houses and the builders freeze during the summary exchange by the Narrators.)*

**Narrator 1:**        **And so ends “The Sermon on the Mount.”**

**Narrator 2:**        **With a picture of two builders**

**Narrator 1:**        **But they’re not building houses.**

**Narrator 2:**        **They’re building lives.**

**Narrator 1:**        **The “wise” live on the rock-solid foundation of the “Word of God.”**

**Narrator 2:**        **The “foolish” live on the shifting sands of popular philosophy.**

**Narrator 1:**        **But, the “rains” of life come to both.**

**Narrator 2:**        **The storms of trouble beat against both houses.**

**Narrator 1:**        **Those who “Hear these words of Jesus and put them into practice,”**

**Narrator 2:**        **Survive the storms of this life, and enjoy the calm weather of the next life.**

**Narrator 1:**        **But, those who ignore His words will sink when trouble comes.**

**Narrator 2:**        **Sink until they hit bottom in this life, and sink even lower in the life to come.**

## **The End**

*(Houses, builders, and Narrators exit as the Pastor steps forward.)*