

My hometown is built on the confluence of Rush Creek and the Root River. The banks of both the Creek and the River were sandy. It was great for building things like sandcastles and sandforts.

My friends and I used to spend many a day building our forts on those banks. These were forts that you could actually go into – they were very large to us.

We would spend hours digging out huge holes. We would cut small branches from the poplar trees for a roof. We would make signs to make sure the girls knew they were not welcome. They were great forts.

We built fort after fort after fort. Why so many? Well, we would spend several days making our fort, and it would be perfect. Then one night – it always happened – one night the rains would fall in SE MN.

For those who do not know, the average rainfall in Fargo is just under 20 inches a year. The average rainfall in my hometown was over 30 inches a year – and it all seemed to fall on our forts made out of sand down by the banks of Rush Creek.

After a while we quit building our forts. I guess we got tired of losing the battle.

How are the forts doing that you are building?

- The financial forts built to assure that we can pay our bills and have those things we need as we journey through these years?
 - The relationship forts we build so that we can have people to share this life with?
 - The work forts we build so that we can have something to do that has purpose and meaning?
 - The spiritual forts we build so that the big questions of why we are here and what happens to us after we die can have some type of answer?
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Jesus warned us that we can build our lives on sand. And Jesus said that is not a good thing.

I can agree with Jesus that building fort after fort on sandy soil eventually comes to a bad end. Maybe you have had some experiences with poor building choices as well.

The Bible names God as a Rock for those who come to him in trust. Three quick reasons why people of faith see God as their Rock.

1. Our Rock is permanent.

Last summer I had Noah and Claire get these rocks for me from the top of mountains at Glacier National Park. Scientists tell us that these rocks are 1.4 billion years old.

Our Rock – our Lord – was there when this rock was at the bottom of the ocean; literally. 1.4 billion years later God was still there when Noah and Claire picked up these rocks. And you know what? God cares far more for more Noah – age 8; and for Claire – age 6, then God cares for these old rocks.

Our Lord is permanent. He will hold us longer than any rock that has ever existed.

2. Our Rock provides protection.

Learn a lesson tonight from the rock badger. These animals live in rocky areas of South Africa. When a predator comes to attack, they run into a hole in the rock. The vulture or eagle must sweep down on them before they get into the rocks.

The rock badgers know where their security lies. If they venture away from the rock they are vulnerable. Your security is also a Rock – the Rock of ages.

3. Our Rock is powerful.

A story about relying on someone powerful. I really like this story: listen well.

A father watched out the kitchen window as his 7 year old son played in the backyard. The child was trying to move some rocks to make room for a game he wanted to play.

There was one very big rock that was giving his little boy a great deal of trouble. The father watched his son trying to move the rock. Each time the little boy rolled it over a little, he would lose his strength, and the rock would fall back. Then it rolled over and pinched one of his little fingers.

The father walked out to his tearful son and said, "Why didn't you use all the strength you had?" The little boy cried, "I did dad, I did." The father responded, "No son; you did not ask your Dad to help you." The father reached down, and together he and his son removed the rock.

David prayed these words long ago. We pray them tonight as the end of this message: *"I love you, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my rock in whom I take refuge."* [Psalm 18:1-2]