

20220925 1Peter 2:1-12 The Building Block That Was Rejected Became the Cornerstone of a Whole New World

2 Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, ² as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.⁴ Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."⁷ Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient,

*"The stone which the builders rejected
Has become the chief cornerstone,"*

⁸ and

*"A stone of stumbling
And a rock of offense."*

They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.⁹ But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. ¹¹ Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, ¹² having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Today we look at the first few verses of 1 Peter chapter two and we'll see that Jesus Christ, The Messiah, was the cornerstone that was rejected. He became THE CORNERSTONE of a whole new world, the Church. Before we dive into that, let's review a bit of what we studied on Wednesday night.

We looked at Peter's instruction on how we should love one another. When we get a hold of what that all means, it changes how we deal with one another and the greater world around us. We also must remember that we are only able to love as we are supposed to love through the power of the Holy Spirit. That is available to every believer.

V.1 Chapter two, verse one starts with the word “therefore”. That tells us that whatever we are now going to be told is based on what was communicated in the passage right before that. You may remember that chapter one clarified who we are in Christ, and it outlined the godly response in our lives that comes with that identity in Christ.

V.2 Peter then tells us to long for spiritual milk. He’s not saying that these guys are young and immature in the Lord. He is not talking about the basic ideas of Christianity versus the deeper truths of Christianity. This isn’t a comparison of the “milk and the meat of the Word”. He’s talking about milk, and how you long for it and desire it. We are to deeply desire God’s word like a baby loves his mother’s milk. This last week I weaned a calf. I took it off of its mother, and it is desperately looking for a way out of the corral to get back to that milk. THAT’S what our pursuit of God’s Word is to look like. You might be thinking, “Well I don’t really desire the Bible like that”. One way to gain an appetite for the Word is to just begin studying it. It’s like that little calf that started nursing on its mother in the minutes after it was born. It developed a taste for that milk and prefers it over any other food. When you study the Bible, it makes you even hungrier for the word.

The more you study the Word, the more you’ll desire of God’s Word. I’ve never felt as hungry for the Word of God as I have become since I became a pastor. I gain such satisfaction each week as I make two deep dives into portions of scripture. If you ask God to put a desire within you, He’ll do that. We all get our dose of the Word differently. I take these few verses each time I teach, and I think on it, pray on it. Sandy takes huge sections of the Bible and works her way through them verse by verse over weeks or months. I take what I’m going to talk about on Wednesday night or Sunday morning, and I first read it and pull it apart sentence by sentence, trying to understand what God is saying to us. I then think about it as I mow the lawn or drive somewhere in my car. I pray for God to give me illustrations. As I do some mindless task, often clarity comes to the passage. I think of the perfect insight or illustration of something I believe the Word is saying.

You will have to find the way that you best ingest God’s Word. Some learn by reading, but others stumble over words, or struggle with the text to understand what it is saying. Some learn by listening. And some can’t learn by reading or listening, and they need a teacher to lead them through a passage. That’s okay. That’s why God gives us pastors and teachers. The Bible says that they are a gift to the Church. You can now read the Bible in dozens of translations or on your smart phone you can have it read to you in different voices. Many Sundays after I come home and have a nap, I get up and watch or listen to a sermon on my computer. That’s how I feed on God’s Word. The main thing is

that you must find a way to consume the Word of God regularly, even daily. Read it. Listen to it. Be taught by teachers. Just get it in any way that you can. It is milk that you should be desperate to take in.

V.3 We are doing this because we've each tasted the grace of the Lord.

V.4-6 Peter then talks about stones. He talks about Jesus as a living stone, and we too are being used as living stones being built up into a magnificent temple. In times of old, God said, *"And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them"*. (Exodus 25:8) There is STILL a special place where God dwells, and that is IN YOU AND ME. God no longer manifests His presence to us in some physical place, instead He manifests His presence in each of us. His Holy Spirit lives and dwells within you and me. He does not dwell in this building at the Grove. I've heard people say, "Wow, God really showed up today". God shows up EVERY TIME WE'RE TOGETHER, but sometimes we're just to distracted to sense His presence in and around us. When we come together as believers, we are the building where He shows up, because He is in us.

Isaiah prophesied, "Behold I lay in Zion a stone, a cornerstone". So, what exactly is a cornerstone?

Historically, the cornerstone was the most important part of any building. The total weight of an edifice rested on this particular stone, which, if removed, would collapse the whole structure. The cornerstone was also the key to keeping the walls straight. The builders would take sightings along the edges of this part of the building. If the cornerstone was set properly, the stonemasons could be assured that all the other corners of the building would be at the appropriate angles as well. Thus, the cornerstone became a symbol for that which held life together.¹

Without a cornerstone, a good foundation, our lives will fall apart. Everything in your life and mine needs to line up with Jesus. He is the Cornerstone of each of us individually and of the Church.

V.7 Peter also has some negative things to say about the Cornerstone. He describes the Cornerstone as a Stone of Stumbling and a Rock of Offense. What does this mean? It means that people stumble over this Stone because they're rebellious to God and disobedient to His Word. Many find the fact that they are sinful and need a savior as something offensive. Peter was quoting Isaiah 28:16.

¹ <https://www.backtothebible.org/post/building-on-the-cornerstone>

¹⁶ *Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:*

*"Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation,
A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation;*

v.5 These verses describe how this spiritual house will be put together. Peter says in verse five that with the Solid Cornerstone laid, we are the stones that are put together to make up that spiritual house. We are the building blocks of the Church. We are connected together. And, do you know how stones in ancient walls were put together? They were fashioned in a quarry so that they would fit together with strength. Before the stones were ever taken and placed into the wall by the stone mason, they were beaten, chiseled, and shaped so that they would fit together beautifully.

Those difficult conditions we go through in life are shaping us into the image of Jesus, the Chief Cornerstone. The trials we go through are preparing us to be the right dimension and size we need to be to fit into the wall properly. Peter says that we're being built up to BE A HOLY PRIESTHOOD. What is it that a priest did? A priest is a go-between between God and His people. A priest was there to make the sacrifice of the animal and to put it on the altar. This passage is saying that WE (ALL BELIEVERS) ARE THE PRIESTS who now offers spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God in Jesus. We each have direct access to the Father. Paul tells us, ⁵ *For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,* ⁶ *who gave Himself a ransom for all*". (1 Timothy 2:5, 6a) If we are all priests, then what is the work of our priesthood.

Peter was talking to readers who were very familiar with a priest making animal sacrifices and such. So, what are the spiritual sacrifices that we're supposed to be making? Paul tells us in Romans chapter twelve.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:1-2 NKJV)*

This is what is holy and acceptable. It is our spiritual worship. You and I are the sacrifice ourselves on the altar. When we "present our bodies as a living sacrifice", we are saying, "Here am Lord, use me as YOU will and not as I will". I often offer myself to the Lord each morning, singing the old hymn in my mind, "Take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to Thee". Offer yourself DAILY as a sacrifice to live for Him and to live for His glory. That is you giving up your rights to live for yourself and please yourself. It is offering yourself daily to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. THAT is what we're to do and it is

“acceptable”. This done daily, over and over. We have to do it daily because we keep taking things back and we keep crawling back up onto the throne of our lives.

v.7-v.8 He says this is an honorable thing for those who believe. But for those who do not believe, it is a stone of offense, and they reject the thought of patterning their lives after Him.

In the story of the wicked tenants in Matthew chapter 21, Jesus recited Psalm 118:22.

He told a parable of wicked servants who were working a land owner’s field. At harvest time, the land owner sent messengers and employees to receive the owner’s share of the harvest. Each time he sent an employee to collect, the tenants would beat him up and send him off. Finally, the landowner decided to send his own son to bring in his portion of the harvest.

³⁷ Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ ³⁸ But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.’ ³⁹ So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. ⁴⁰ “Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?” ⁴¹ They said to Him, “He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.”

⁴² Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:

***‘The stone which the builders rejected
Has become the chief cornerstone.
This was the LORD’s doing,
And it is marvelous in our eyes’?***

⁴³ “Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. ⁴⁴ And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.” ⁴⁵ Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them. ⁴⁶ But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet. (Matthew 21:37-46 NKJV)

Jesus is saying that God would put the “land” (the Kingdom) into the hands of other tenants. Jesus is saying that the Gentiles would now work the Kingdom and produce the fruit. The other message here is that when we encounter this Rock one of two things can happen. The one that falls on this stone, will be broken in pieces and THAT is a good

kind of brokenness. That is you and me when we come to the end of ourselves and commit our lives to the Cornerstone and we let the Father chisel us to conform to the image of the Cornerstone. Brokenness comes in recognizing that I'm a sinner and that He is a Savior. That brokenness is sweet to God. It is described as the "narrow way". Those that reject the Stone will be broken as well, but not in a good way, but instead in judgment.

V.11-12

He then urges (Greek is more like "I beg you") us to abstain from fleshly desires that make **war against our soul**. That is our flesh. We are not at home right now. Peter calls us sojourners. We're travelers that are exiles. We are not at home right now. When we turn on the news and see that all of this chaos is going on, we **MUST REMEMBER THAT THIS WORLD IS NOT OUR HOME. IT IS UNDER THE TEMPORARY DOMINION OF SATAN AND WE DON'T BELONG HERE.**

Don't get angry. Just be the salt and light that you're supposed to be. That's why I don't watch network news. It will destroy the shalom in my heart. God's principles are not going to be accepted in this world. That's why we refer to those that die as having gone home. That's exactly what's going on. He tells us to **ABSTAIN** from the passions of **YOUR FLESH**. That battle increases the more I submit to my sinful passions, so he says abstain from them. As I close, I want to remind you that there is a threat to your Christian walk, and the threat is you. Satan may sometimes attack us, but we give him a huge target.

v.12 Peter says "keep your conduct right so the world will see your good works. Live in a way that honors the Lord. That's when we don't act like the world acts. Ask God to continue to mold you, fashion you, and make you wonderful living stone, measured and fitted to the Cornerstone which is Jesus. That's a choice.

Let us pray.