

**The Living Cornerstone, Jesus**  
**1 Peter 2:4-8**

**IMP:** In the Connect today you saw our Phase One Regathering Document. If you have any questions, contact an elder.

Peter is writing to exiles who have been persecuted away from their homeland.

He has been encouraging his readers to “*grow up into salvation*” (2:2).

“*If indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good,*” you will:

- Put away all malice
- And deceit
- And hypocrisy
- And envy
- And slander
- Long for the pure spiritual milk

In this text, Peter provides us with a template for sanctification: putting off and putting on like soiled garments.

*Ephesians 4:22-24 - put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, <sup>23</sup> and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, <sup>24</sup> and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*

Once saved, we daily put off the old self and put on the new self. We do so because we are saved and “*long’ to grow up into salvation*” and it is by this endeavor that we know that we saved.

We are like David and Israel in the valley of Elah, fighting in territory that is redeemed by God but presently occupied by the enemy. After David killed Goliath, Israel routed the Philistines. The war has been won by Jesus at Calvary, but the battle rages for the practical supremacy of Jesus in our lives.

Peter now turns from an agricultural metaphor to an architectural metaphor and also from speaking to them as individuals to speaking to them corporately. We may all grow at a different pace but we all have only one source and strength in that growth: “Jesus is the only living Cornerstone for all of you.”

The text is too large for one sermon. This evening we are only going to focus on Jesus as the Cornerstone.

It is in this text that Peter offers the basis on which the four preceding exhortations rest. These exhortations were:

- (1) be holy (1:13- 16),
- (2) be fearing (1:17-21),
- (3) be loving (1:22-25), and
- (4) be consuming the Word (2:1-3).

These four qualities grow out of our relationship to God. Our lives are founded in and grounded on a quality of source that determines the fruit. What is that source?

*As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, <sup>5</sup> you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup> For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."<sup>7</sup> So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,"<sup>8</sup> and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.*

41 - "As you come to him" = *proserxomai* = imperfect, plural

- You all
- Come and continue coming

The power we need to put off the old man and put on the new man is Christ's and ours as we are in relationship to him. He is the head and we are the body.

It is not a life that we produce on our own merit or in our own ability but a life that God produces in us by the Holy Spirit as the Holy Spirit conforms us to the image of Jesus.

ILL – \* Gen 15 - God does not seal the covenant with Abraham but with Jesus because Abraham can't keep the covenant.

- 1 Chron 17 - God does not allow David to build a house for him because David can't build an eternal house. Instead, God builds a house for David.

*John 15:4-5 - Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. <sup>5</sup> I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*

This same verb form is in

Hebrews 4:16 - *Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Hebrews 7:25 - *Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.*

He, in Peter's use of "him" is the source and sustainer, the wellspring of life.

But who is this 'him' and is that of any importance in the context of Peter's audience?

*4b - a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious,*

The first thing Peter says about Jesus gives his readers some sense of experiential relationship with Jesus. He, like them, is "*rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious.*"

*"rejected" = apodokimazo = to repudiate, disavow after close examination.*

The Jews didn't reject Jesus without forethought. They had known

Matthew 26:55 - *At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me.*

Matthew 26:3-4 - *Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, <sup>4</sup> and plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him.*

Romans 1:25, 28-29a - *"...they exchanged the truth about God for a lie...they did not see fit to acknowledge God...they were filled with all manner of unrighteousness"*

This answers the question, "Who is Jesus to people?" But "Who is Jesus to God?"

**First: Jesus is God's Cornerstone** – *"Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone..."*. 6

Zion is a hill in Israel, like Mount Moriah or the Mount of Olives, but mentioned 152 times in the OT and used as a synonym for Jerusalem (Ps 137:1; 147:12). In modern Jerusalem, Zion is in the Armenian quarter of the city.

2 Samuel 5 – David conquered a Jebusite fortress there and renamed it the City of David and ever since, Zion has been equated with Jerusalem.

It is David's city, Jerusalem and the capitol of the OT Promised Land.

The idea that Jesus is a striking and stumbling stone is rooted in Isaiah

Isaiah 8:14 – (prophecy of the coming Assyrian invasion) – *“he will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. <sup>15</sup> And many shall stumble on it. They shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken.”*

Matthew 16:18 – *And I tell you, you are Peter, (petros = piece of rock) and on this rock (Peter’s confession) I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

Matthew 21:42-44 (Mk & Lk also) - Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: *“The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’? I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. <sup>44</sup> And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.*

Acts 4:11-12 - *This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”*

How can Peter so confidently say that? Because Jesus himself said,

Matthew 7:24-27 - *Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. <sup>26</sup> And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. <sup>27</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”*

1 Corinthians 10:4 – ... they (Israel) drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.

Ephesians 2:20-22 – (the church is) *built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, <sup>21</sup> in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup> In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.*

But perhaps, the most famous prophecy concerning Jesus as a stone is found in Daniel 2 –

In Daniel 2, Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar’s dream.

Daniel 2:31-35 - *You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening. <sup>32</sup> The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, <sup>33</sup> its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. <sup>34</sup> As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. <sup>35</sup> Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.*

- Head of Gold = Babylonians
- Chest & arms of silver = Medo-Persians
- Middle & thighs of bronze = Greece
- Legs of iron & clay = Romans
- Stone = Jesus

Is it any wonder that Jesus, and not Adam or Abraham or Moses or Joseph or David is the real hero of the Bible? Jesus alone is the Cornerstone of all God is doing in the world.

To the Romans and the Jews, Jesus died a criminal. To you and me, he died a Savior. To the Romans and Jews, the cross was an ugly ending that Jesus deserved. To you and me, the cross is a beautiful beginning that we don't deserve.

Jesus is the "living cornerstone" (4 & 6). And to God, he is both chosen and precious.

*Chosen = eklektos = picked out* (as in Jesus choosing the disciples) **OR**

1 Peter 1:1 = *eklektos = "who are chosen"*

Peter uses the same word for his readers as he does for Jesus. Does this also make their exile, like the cross, a horrible and potentially ruinous thing, beautiful and redemptive? It does.

In his cross, Jesus has trodden the same path as Peter's readers. But what God did in the cross, he will do in their lives also.

Of course, the application for us is glorious.

Rather than being destined for ugly exile, we are "*a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession...*" (2:9).

### **Conclusion:**

Simply put, is there any way to combat Jesus? No. Is there any way to overcome his plan? No.

Is there any way to stop the unstoppable? No. Jesus is king of the last kingdom. No wonder *“whoever believes in him will not be put to shame”* (2:6). You are *“living stones are being built up as a spiritual house”* (2:5), *“chosen and precious”* in God’s sight.