

Being Built Up as Living Stones

by Bob Hoekstra

Jesus Christ is the living stone, and believers are being built up as living stones to form a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to serve the King and live out the Word of God.

Duration: 59:30

Scripture: Isaiah 28:16, Romans 12:1, Colossians 2:6

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Holy Priesthood"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of continually coming to Jesus as the cornerstone of our faith, highlighting the process of being built up as living stones in God's spiritual house. It explores the concept of believers being a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, and the assurance that those who believe in Him will not be put to shame.

Transcript

Lord, I thank you for this very precious congregation, the leadership team here, the servants of God that abound in every direction you look, the hungry hearts, the eager countenances that want to draw near to the living God. Lord, thank you for those songs of praise and worship. Thank you for receiving them.

You deserve every one of them and more. And we thank you now that you're willing by your spirit, through your word, to speak to us. Lord, we realize we can only live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

We want to meekly receive the implanted word which is able to save our souls. So Lord, we pray you would pour out your spirit in a fresh way this day, enlightening our path, transforming our hearts, making of us what you want us to be, that we might please and serve you fruitfully in these days so near to your return. For what you will do by faith, we say thank you, Lord, in Jesus' name.

Amen. Our study out of 1 Peter chapter 2 is entitled Being Built Up as Living Stones. Being built up as living stones.

Every word in the title comes right out of the very terms used here in 1 Peter chapter 2 verses 4 through 6. Coming to him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men but chosen by God and precious, 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. Therefore, it is also contained in the scripture, quote, behold I lay

in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on him will by no means be put to shame. When our ministry team passed on to me a note of an invitation by your dear pastor to come here and minister the word and of course sign Calvary Chapel cornerstone and leadership, cornerstone, I must tell you immediately my mind went to this passage.

Great word to have in your church's name, one of the great positions and ministries that Jesus holds in the lives of all who are in his church, the body of Christ. He's the chief cornerstone and interestingly enough I had been in recent days just spending some extra time praying and thinking in these verses. They are three of my favorites here in First Peter chapter two, three of my favorites and though I've taught on them in many contexts of teaching through the word and teaching in seminars, this is the first time we've ever just took those three and just concentrated on them through a whole message, and I must say God blessed my heart through the preparation and time of prayer in the word and the sharing of it in the earlier service.

This is a phenomenal passage of scripture. It's from one of our strategic sections, a little piece of a six-part seminar on the church, how Jesus builds it. You had some evening studies recently I would say what could fall under the heading of the church, how man tries to build it, and don't send a man to do God's job.

The church, how Jesus builds it, and in there is being equipped for ministry some sections of scripture, and this is a great one, on being built up as living stones. This is a study concerning how all of us can be transformed, that is our lives increasingly changed by the Lord, and equipped by the Lord for a life unto Him and Christian service throughout our days. Really you could say it's a study about how priests get equipped by the Lord.

You might say, wait a minute, priest, I'm not a priest. Well, I don't want to argue with you, dear saint, if anyone thought of that response, but I'll tell you this, oh yes you are a priest. Oh yes you are.

This is one of the great passages in the scripture that teach the priesthood of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. It's one of the most radical, liberating, encouraging truths in all of the Word of God. Well, let's look at the parts and pieces of it.

Verse four, Jesus as a living stone. If you're not familiar with the scripture in this passage, that phrase living stone might sound kind of strange. Yeah, stone used in the Bible, you know, solid, durable, strong, immovable, but you don't think of living when you think of a stone.

Oh, but we do in this case, because this is describing Jesus, and He's a living stone. Verse four says, coming to Him as to a living stone. Stones, solid, strong, big stone, immovable.

God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, infinite. He is a stone that is reliable. You can count on Him.

He's always there. He's mighty. He's protection.

He's reliable. He, as the scripture describes Him elsewhere, is the rock of our salvation. You know, we need a rock to stand on.

This whole world, as the old hymn said, is sinking sand. All else is sinking sand. On Christ the solid rock I stand.

All else is sinking sand. In fact, the scriptures describe us being rescued out of the miry pit. It's a slippery world.

It's a dangerous world. It's a treacherous world, all the way from from concepts and ideas to armies and those engaged in them. It's a treacherous world, and we are not in ourselves automatically a rock.

You know, we like to be thought of as a rock. You know, you're just a rock of solidarity, but we aren't always, are we? We're not innately so, but Jesus is. He's the rock of our salvation.

He's a stone without dimension to stand on, and to hide in, and to count on. One thing about stones, they're not here today and gone tomorrow. There's a durability there, and of course the Lord Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

He was reliable back then. He is today. He will be tomorrow.

He's a stone, a spiritual stone, but a stone can leave the thought of not living, not sensitive, relational, responsive. Jesus is a living stone. What a difference.

He has life. He's vibrant. He's gentle.

He's patient. He's compassionate. He's loving.

He hears our plea. He answers our cry. He's a living stone, and here's the great thing.

He's life-giving. He's life-giving. People sometimes challenge one another, you know, and say, get a life.

Well, yeah, but where do you go? Usually they mean, you know, get a grip on yourself. Well, that's a pretty flimsy place to grip, you know, but not when it comes to Jesus. He's a life-giving rock.

He poured out his life for us, and he loves to share his life day by day with us, coming to him as to a living stone, and then he's described a little more in this verse four, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious. The Lord Jesus Christ, if there ever was a person who ever walked on this planet, that should have immediately been accepted by everyone. He had nothing but goodwill toward them.

He loved the world so much, he died on the cross for their sins. The Father loved the world so much, he let his dearly beloved, only begotten Son, uniquely begotten Son, die upon that cross for our sins. If ever there was a good man, it was Jesus.

In fact, the scriptures teach none is good but God alone, and he was God, and he is God. If there ever was a person on this planet that everyone should have gladly received, it was this living stone. He wanted to be the rock of their salvation, give them life eternal that would mature if they sought him to life abundant.

Rejected though indeed by men, the religious leaders of Jesus' day, they were given the responsibility to search the scriptures, teach the scriptures, especially know the Messiah, what he would be like, what he would say, what he would do, and then point him out when he came, you know, like John the Baptist did. John the Baptist was not a part of the establishment of those in Israel, given that responsibility. He was a man sent from God, but he wasn't a part of the establishment.

The establishment was into themselves, their own position. They felt threatened by Jesus. They should have been running to him saying to everyone else, here he is, and they could cite passages that he

fulfilled into the hundreds.

Instead, in their selfish religiosity, their pompous self-righteousness, they plotted together to lie about him and murder him. And John the Baptist, living on honey and critters out in the wilderness, he said at Jesus' baptism, when Jesus publicly announced his Messiahship, identified in a baptism of repentance with sinful men, he said, there, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. A remnant, a small percentage, a low number of folks accepted him, but he was rejected by men generally, repudiated by the religious leadership and generally the religious nation.

The Gentiles, when the gospel went out to them, some believed, many did not. The world actually, he came to his own, his own received him not. Today, how many, hearing the name of the Lord Jesus and the teaching of who he is and what he did, bow down, the self-centered heart of the sons of Adam, and say, Lord Jesus be my Lord and Savior.

It's a remnant. Generally, there has been a rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Rejected indeed by man.

But hey, what do people know? This one, we're told, was chosen by God and precious. God the Father sent his Son, his only begotten Son, his eternal Son, who was born of a virgin to start his history here as a man on earth. He gave his precious Son.

He was dear to him. Jesus said, or the Father said to Jesus when he was baptized, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. You know, it was sad that he was rejected indeed by man, but here's something that overrules that.

But chosen by God and precious. When God chooses someone for a mission, oh, if they trust in him, that mission is going to be accomplished by him. And though the world may toss us aside as they tossed Jesus aside in the sight of God, that was his precious Son, his treasured, dearly beloved Son, and he loves us.

Like his own dear children. This living stone rejected by man, chosen by God and precious, chosen to be the Savior of the world, chosen to become the foundation, the chief cornerstone of the church. So Jesus is described as a living stone.

But in verse 5, the same terminology is going to be used, but the subject is going to be us. Look at verse 5. You also as living stones. Same term.

Living stones applied to Jesus innately. This just catches his character. But the same term is used of us in what way? That which God wants to develop us more and more into.

You also as living stones are being built up. It's a process. This process could be called a process of transformation into Christ's likeness.

Christ is the living stone. But the Lord wants to develop us as living stones. Coming to him as to a living stone, verse 5, you also as living stones are being built up.

It's a lifelong process and is to be going on day by day. The Lord himself developing his children, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, to be made more and more like himself. See, the Lord Jesus is a living stone.

He's a rock, solid, durable, unchangeable, immovable in his purpose, in his character, in his will, in his ways. And the Lord wants to make us like that. To take away the uncertainty of our convictions, to take

away a wishy-washy kind of a mind and just anchor us in the things of God and the ways of God and enable us to persevere and be strong in the Lord and the power of his might.

He wants to make us more and more like Christ in that respect. Christ is innately like that. He always was and always is and always shall be.

God wants to make us more and more like the Lord himself. Coming to him as to a living stone, you also as living stones are being built up. Being built up.

It's not a snap, there it goes, zap, it's done. Something like that happens at new birth. We were sinners dead in trespasses and sins.

We call upon the name of the Lord and we are raised to newness of life. It's already happened in a moment of time. Now we're talking about what's left, the rest of the way home to glory.

Everyone is here on this earth. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to the knowledge of truth. This is the time to hear the gospel, learn of the Lord, and be birthed by faith into the family of God.

And for everyone who responds to the gospel and trusts in the Lord Jesus and finds salvation and forgiveness of sins by grace through faith, Ephesians 2.8, for those, what's left? Day by day, ongoing transformation, being built up, developed by the Lord to be more and more like his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Coming to him as to a living stone, verse 5, you also as living stones are being built up. And then it's elaborated on what God wants to build living stones into.

See, this kind of picks up the language and analogy of the tabernacle in the wilderness with the people of Israel, then eventually the temple that Solomon built. God dwelt in those dwelling places, shined forth his Shekinah glory, his heavenly, glorious majesty and presence, and the Holy of Holies. Now, the Lord is building a new kind of temple, and here it's called a spiritual house.

You are being built up a spiritual house. Could be translated household, you know, the family of God. But it also could be translated a spiritual temple.

And this is also spoken of in Ephesians 2, 19 through 21, where the people of God are the temple of the living God. He dwells in each of our hearts individually, and he resides among us collectively. That's what the Lord wants to build us up to.

First, make each of us more like living stones, more alive, more like a solid, persevering, reliable testimony. This is what the Lord wants to do. And make us compassionate and tender toward people, and loving people, and responsive to people, and ministering life to people.

In the name of the Lord, the life that the Lord offers to those who believe in him. So the Lord is wanting to build a spiritual house, household, or temple. And we are the stones for the building.

The temple of God on earth now is not some big cathedral man would build. That's just a place for people to gather or not. But it's the people of God.

We're the living stones for a spiritual temple. Spiritual temple. Not only contrasting it with a physical temple, a material temple, but connecting it to that which makes us spiritual.

What makes people spiritual? It's the work of the Holy Spirit. There cannot be true spirituality without the work of the Holy Spirit. People use this word a lot in our culture.

They even say of football teams, oh that player, he's their spiritual leader. And you find out, you know, he's as carnal, and full of cussing, and swearing, and indulgence as everyone in the world. And you say, that's not spiritual.

That's not spiritual. That's carnal. Spiritual doesn't just mean emotional, or a psychological pep talk or something.

Spirituality ultimately is related to God. God is Spirit. And His Holy Spirit is given to us to reveal to us the Lord God Almighty, and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

God is building a spiritual house. So it takes people who are born again, you know, that actually have life. Romans 5 makes it clear, all of the sons of Adam and Eve, and daughters of Adam and Eve, were dead in trespasses and sins.

That's where we started out. Having human existence, yes, but not spiritual life. And the life is in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So to be a part of this spiritual house, household of God, people have to be born into it. New life from above. Born again.

Just like people are born physically into a physical family, the scriptures teach we must be born spiritually into a spiritual family. How? By faith. Trusting the Lord Jesus to wash away our sins and give us new life from above.

So born of the Spirit, these living stones. That's how you enter into that category of living stones. And then be led by the Spirit in light of the Word.

Empowered by the Spirit to live out the Word. These are all required, but they're all available in the Lord Himself. He wants to make us not a religious people.

The world is filled with religions. There are all kinds of brands, and shapes, and sizes, but they all have this in common if they're a human religion. It's about what man is trying to do to earn heaven above and life hereafter.

There is one distinct, unique message that is unlike all of the rest of the millions, really, of false gods and false philosophies, false religions in the history of man. And that is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The message of the Lord is unique.

It's not a religious message of what man will try to do to make it to heaven. It's about God sending forth His Son from heaven to reach us down here on earth below and make it a free gift. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. This is what it takes to be a part of this spiritual house. Hey, that's not hard to qualify for.

It's not like you have to build ten pyramids to heaven. It's not like you have to crawl on your knees from here to Bombay, India. It's not like you have to swim the greatest ocean or climb the highest mountain.

You just fall on your knees and say, Lord Jesus, forgive me, a sinner. That's all truth. We are sinners.

The Lord Jesus provides forgiveness to all who humbly call upon His name. This is a good deal. I don't know how long you've been saved.

The Lord saved my soul the last week of 1965. Boy, I fought against the gospel for years. I grew up in a godly home.

My wonderful father was a great preacher. He was an evangelist. He preached in prisons and out.

He was on radio. I heard the gospel at home. I heard it when I went to meetings.

Then we'd get in the car and turn on the radio, and there it was again. Dad, man, there's no way to get away from this. Well, what a jerk I was.

Why do you want to get away from this? It's the only good news on the entire planet. And it is good news. God taking upon Himself the consequences of our sin.

What is that? That's what you call love. Love. And God is love.

What a wonderful message this is in the Scriptures. What a wonderful grace. What a wonderful mercy.

What a wonderful Savior. And you qualify for being in His household by believing in Him, a spiritual house. Lord, by Your Holy Spirit, thank You for sending new life from above.

Now, the Lord wants to make us a holy priesthood. You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood. Wow, who's He talking to here? Well, there's the word right in the start of verse 5. You.

That's pretty clear, isn't it? And though in English, you can be used, you say the word, and it can be one person or ten people, you know, you, individual. Or you, that group of folks. In the language of the Scripture first written, there are singular forms and plural forms.

This is definitely plural. Even if no one had ever read Greek, you can find out by going through this. Look at verse 9. But you, plural again.

Believers in Christ, children of God, are a chosen generation. Okay, we're not talking about an individual. We're talking about a whole generation, a people, a nation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.

We're talking about this great group of people called the church, the body of Christ, disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, followers of the Lord Jesus. The Lord wants to make of us a holy priesthood. This and verse 9 I just read are two of the places where this great teaching is found in Scripture, that every follower of the Lord is a priest unto God.

The priesthood of all believers, it could be summarized as. See verse 9? A royal priesthood. A priest serving a king, born into the family of a king, royal priesthood.

You know, in the religions of the world, there's typically this elite group, this in-group, that know the mysteries and know the secret information and have that favored position with God. Hey, they're the priests. Well, the biblical message is so radically, again, unlike human religion.

In the family of God, everyone's a priest. If you're in the family, you're a royal priesthood, a holy nation. The whole group has these same descriptions.

Wow, me, a priest, I don't know if I've gone through the right training and schooling at all. Oh no, that isn't how it happens. It happens by relationship, and it develops by growing in the relationship.

A holy priesthood. What do priests do? How do you describe a priest? Well, in a very biblical summary, you could say, priests go to God on behalf of people, and then they turn and go to people on behalf of God. And Jesus is our great example.

He is the high priest forever. You want to know what priests do? Look at the Lord Jesus Christ. He came to earth on behalf of the Father, and now in heaven, He ever lives to make intercession for us.

Meanwhile, by His Spirit, He gets the message out through us to people all over the world. Those are the two directions that priests minister. They go to God for people.

They pray, they intercede. Oh Lord, have mercy on this nation. Oh Lord, bless our church.

Lord, help my family. Lord, touch that neighbor that is so close to giving their heart and life to Christ. That's a priestly ministry.

Every Christian is to be doing that, can be doing that. It's our calling. It's how God describes us.

But we not only go to God for man, we go to man for God. We share with our children about the Lord Jesus Christ. We share with our neighbors about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hopefully, we testify of and even look for opportunities to speak of the Lord and His good grace and good news at our job. We're priests. Many people may not know that.

In fact, some might even laugh if they heard of it. You're a priest? You're kidding. Yeah, I was born into it.

Born again. And I'm in training. And part of my instructions are coming to Him as to a living stone.

You also, as living stones, are being built up a holy priesthood. God is developing me as one of His priests. Not that we have to tell everybody that, but we can tell one another that for sure this is the truth.

And there'll be those along the way who will be absolutely intrigued, absolutely flabbergasted to learn that they can be priests of God too. How could that be? Well, just come to Christ, the great high priest. He'll start using you.

He'll start building you up in that. And you'll be going to God for people in prayer. You'll be going to people for God in testimony and witness.

But it's a holy priesthood that He's after. Purity. Lives set apart to God.

Lives that aren't here for our own private agenda and personal gain. We just want to do what Jesus did. Please the Heavenly Father.

A holy priesthood. And that fits because we are to offer up, next phrase, spiritual sacrifices. The priests of old offered up animal sacrifices.

These were but pictures. Book of Hebrews makes it so clear. The blood of bulls and goats cannot wash away the sins of man, but they could give a message every time there was a sacrifice.

There's no forgiveness apart from the shedding of blood. And the wages of sin is death. There has to be a dying.

Of course, those were all pictures of what the Lord Jesus Christ, the ultimate sacrifice lamb, who would take away the sin of the world. To offer up spiritual sacrifices. You had a dear brother here contending for the faith, warning about carnal sacrifices being offered in the churches.

You know, humanism. Humanistic psychobabble. The Lord wants us to offer up spiritual sacrifices.

How do you do that? Well, enter into the things we're called to by the leading of the Spirit and the empowering of the Spirit. God alone is innately spiritual. His heart, His mind, His character is what He has for us to grow in.

Offer up spiritual sacrifices. Prayer. We're not just saying our prayers.

We're to be Spirit-led. Scripture says, pray at all times in the Spirit. That is, led by and empowered by the Spirit.

Prayer is not casual. It's warfare. Have you noticed that when you get serious about praying, all the obstacles to it? It's like everything else comes into your mind.

Yeah, someone's bombarding you. There are too many other things interfering. Then you finally get down to quiet and concentration, and next thing you know, your mind wandered off two continents away.

And you lasso that back in by calling on the name of the Lord. Lord, help me to concentrate here on you. And you fall asleep on your arms.

You know, like, thud. Now, if we weren't talking to God about eternal things, if we were just talking to a person about trivial temporal things, that's much easier, isn't it? I mean, I can call up a friend and talk to him an hour just like that. Turn that heavenward and talk to God for an hour.

Hey, this is battle. This is battle. But there are spiritual sacrifices.

It necessitates the work of the Holy Spirit. So, Lord, by your Spirit, guide me in prayer. Focus my mind in prayer.

Sustain my strength in prayer. Another sacrifice that we offer to God. Worship.

It takes the Holy Spirit to truly worship. God is Spirit. They that worship Him must worship in Spirit and in truth.

Worship together is not just a matter of learning the words, learning the melody, trying to stay on key, and trying to stay at the same beat or cadence as everyone else. It certainly is ultimately helpful to one another not to be singing chaotically, you know, at our own rate, in our own words, in our own melody. But you can get all of that right instead of not being worshipping.

Why? Because it's a spiritual sacrifice. It takes the work of the Holy Spirit. God, by His Spirit, must reveal to us through the Word the majesty of God.

That's when our heart wants to sing, oh, how great thou art. And by the Spirit, the revealing of who the Lord is and the response that is appropriate and right to His glory. That's part of our sacrifices we offer to God.

And then service, you know, good deeds, kindness, helping out at church, taking meals to sick neighbors, you know, just service. When that is done in the name of the Lord Jesus, prayerfully by the enabling of the Holy Spirit, that's a sacrifice to God that priests give, and it glorifies God and touches other lives. You remember the most comprehensive sacrifice to offer? Remember Romans 12, 1 and 2? I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God.

The sacrifice of our life lived from the altar of God, for the will of God, and the glory of God. Those are spiritual sacrifices that affect all of our lives. It's what priests offer unto God.

It's what God wants to teach us to do. And you know, it's not about are we able to offer an acceptable sacrifice. Hey, who are we? No one can come before the Lord on their own merit.

No one can serve the Lord by their own ideas and energy. Look how our service unto God is acceptable. Verse 5 at the end.

Spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Our service unto the Lord as priests of the Most High God. It's acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

It's pleasing to God when it's offered in the name of his Son by the work of his Spirit. It's approved by God that way. It hinges on the righteousness of Christ, the worthiness of Christ, and us just day by day trusting in him.

What a calling. This is available to all of us. Husbands, wives, children, young, old, those who formerly were religious, those who formerly were irreligious and worldly like me.

It's available to all of us. And you know why it works? Because of verse 6. Therefore, it is also contained in the scripture. Quote, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on him will by no means be put to shame.

Verses 4 and 5 are really built on verse 6. All of these realities spoken of in verses 4 and 5, they hinge on what was written before in the Old Testament, quoted here in verse 6. What is that? Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on him will by no means be put to shame. That kind of summarized quote from the Old Testament, therefore it is also contained in the scripture, is sort of a bringing together of Isaiah 28, 16, if you want to look at that sometime, and Psalm 118, verse 22. That truth, that's what makes all of this work.

It's something God does, and He uses His Son to do it. Oh, how could that not be effective if people would just believe what the Lord said about it? The work of God, all involving His Son, how could that not be successful and effective if people just trust in the Lord for it? Behold, I lay in Zion. This is God the Father speaking.

He's laying like you would lay a foundation in Zion. That's a term to refer to Jerusalem, where Mount Zion was. Also, to refer to His people.

I lay in Zion, God the Father laid in Jerusalem, this elect one, this chosen one, this chief cornerstone, His own dear Son. He did that by His death on the cross and His resurrection over sin and death. In that, the Father was laying this foundation in the person and work of His Son in Zion, in Jerusalem, for His people, among His people, and this one He was setting in place there was a chief cornerstone.

Chief cornerstone. The piece of the building that supports the whole thing, it's the first part of the whole thing, everything else is connected to it, the chief cornerstone upon which the building is built and its lines and dimensions and ways are determined. That's the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Father laid Him in Zion, set Him as the chief cornerstone for His church, the body of Christ, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame. Everyone who believes that work and that message and that way of the Lord, they will not be put to shame. If we trust the Lord to do these things that we're reading about today in our lives, we will not be put to shame on it.

There will not be people saying as the years go by, ah see, I told you that would never work. They're wrong, God is right. In your own life, have there been things that you have tried to stand on, a foundation, a philosophy, an opinion, a purpose, a direction in life, and you gave yourself to it and it ended up a shameful mess? I think we all have.

I know I have, and all of us are more like each other than we could ever be different. We share in common these maladies and these lacks and these needs. Oh, how many things.

The humanism that dear brother Roger was warning about as referred to the previous meetings, the humanism in the churches, you know, the psychological humanistic self-help, self-hope, man's a centerpiece, he's going to make it work and all that. I used to sell packages of books and records for hundreds of dollars in a briefcase, you know, and when I explained what was in there, it was amazing to me, the people that wanted to buy that, and I thought, boy, this is, you know, it was kind of like, you know, think and grow rich, and as the men think of Swizzy, well, I'm thinking I'm a millionaire, you know. Well, here it comes.

By the way, quite a distortion of the scriptures, actually. Have you not believed in things that have proven embarrassing and shameful because there was no substantial reality to them? This is the unique exception to all of that, and he who believes on him, the chief cornerstone, will by no means be put to shame. We trust in the Lord to lead us this path, do these things in our lives, he will do it.

He's reliable. He's a rock, but he'll be helping us in understanding in our foibles and weaknesses all along the way because he's a living stone. There's no cornerstone like the Lord Jesus Christ.

He who believes on him, that is, initially for salvation and day by day for all of the other issues of life, will by no means be put to shame. They will not be confounded. They will not be embarrassed.

The Old Testament quote, the word there is, they shall not make haste. To put it in the common vernacular, they will not end up in a panic, running around frantic all the time. Why? Because they have this living stone, the Lord Jesus, the chief cornerstone at work in their lives.

For just a couple of minutes, our last consideration in this passage, really it's asking a question that drives to the heart of this passage. When is this process of being built up, when is that actually taking place in our lives? When is it occurring? You know, this is not an automatic thing. It's not happening every day automatically and at a 24-hour rate and pace.

Can't you think in your own Christian life of times when this process seemed to be stalled out? Have you not had friends and loved ones who've been born again through faith in Christ, but these things aren't really taking place in their lives? When does the Bible teach us? When is this process actually happening? And you know what? The answer to that is right in these verses, and it's so simple you could run right past it and miss it, and hear all these wonderful things and think, man, there's a lot of things I need to get doing. Oh, there's something that always precedes that, undergirds that doing, and it's that which really causes this process to sustain and take place. And it's found right in the first verse we looked at, verse 4. In fact, it's found in the first three words of the first verse.

You see it? Coming to Him. That's when it takes place. Let's keep the parts of the sentence together.

Coming to Him, verse 4, verse 5, same sentence, you also are being built up. Coming to Him, you are being built up. That's when it takes place.

Coming to Him, that's our option every day in everything we do every day. You might say, wait a minute. That's what I did to get saved.

That's too simple. The whole thing can't hinge on that. That's what I did to get saved.

Yeah, well, you know what? Colossians 2, 6, as you received Christ Jesus, so walk in Him. Do you know where to live the Christian life the very same way we first entered it? How do we enter the family of God? Coming to Jesus. Lord Jesus, here I am, sinner.

Here I am. I need your salvation, I need your forgiveness, I need your new life. Everyone comes into the family of God only one way, through Jesus Christ who is the door, who is the way.

Jesus said, no man comes to the Father but by me. That truth is just applied here to day-by-day living. When you and I are coming to Jesus, He is building us up to be all these things.

How do you do that? Well, take the fundamental elements of the Christian life, the Word of God. When we come to the Bible, come to Him. Don't just come to the Bible and, you know, look at your through the Bible reading program and panic, you know, oh no, I'm falling behind, I got to speed up today.

You know, and okay, a little time, speed reading commences, you know. I'm caught up. Check, now get about what I need to do, you know.

That's not the purpose of the Bible. The Bible is there for the Lord to speak to us. So when we're doing Bible reading, we must come to Him.

Okay, Lord, Bible open, heart open, need to hear from you. By your Holy Spirit, teach me, touch me, change me, Lord help me. Let it be a meeting with Him.

Coming to Him, you are being built up. In worship, let it not just be songs and music and words that we even like and say amen to, but let it be the expression of our heart. Lord, I'm singing this song to you.

Whoever is or isn't listening, it's not the point, Lord. I'm singing this song to you, and I'm loving these words that are just saying how great you are. Coming to Him in prayer.

It's not, we don't say our prayers, we pray. Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep. What's that other word? What's that other word? You know, I mean, that's fine with children to start to

teach them to think about God and speak to Him, but that's not a place to stay.

In prayer, what's the heart of prayer? Come to Him. Lord, I've heard some things from you through your word. I've got things I've got to say, Lord.

You know, I've got to, and it might be praise, it might be thanksgiving, it might be help I've blown it, it might be I'm desperate. It's coming to Him in service. Lord, I'm taking this track next door in your name.

Counting on you being with me to give the words, praying it'll have impact of salvation in that heart. Coming to Him. And when we're needy, Lord, I'm desperate.

Here's a need, there's a need, there's another. Lord, I'm taking these to you. I'm not just listing impossibilities, I'm asking you, Lord, help me, help me.

With our hopes, oh, vision, possibility of service. Oh, Lord, oh, it's not just action and doing, it's saying, Lord, apart from you, I can do nothing, but I do believe that abiding in you, I can bear much fruit by your work in me. So, Lord, bless this outreach, bless this vision, bless this direction.

And then, of course, always independence. Lord, I'm coming to you today. I want to live this day counting on you.

Listen, one thing about this, it's totally portable. You can do it anytime, anyplace, and nobody even knows you're doing it. Well, I know this country has gone insane on this separation of church and state.

You know what it really is, actually? It's let's kick God out of society. Well, you can do this no matter what the agenda, wherever you are. You can be right there at your keyboard at work, and by the time you hit return and pick up a piece of paper, you can be saying, Lord, Lord, Lord, do we need you here? Just come to him, come to him, come to him.

So, in conclusion, to reap the benefits of these blessed realities, let's just increasingly, daily, habitually be coming to him, because coming to him as to a living stone, you also as living stones are being built up. Let's pray together. Lord, right now, we want to come to you.

Thank you for your word. Thank you for your Holy Spirit. We want to pour out our heart's love toward you, our confession of need, inadequacy, failure, apart from you, and thank you for this great calling to make us more and more like you.

Lord, make us more and more living stones, solid, persevering, faithful, but loving, kind, sensitive, compassionate, vibrant with your life. Lord, thank you for this wonderful church fellowship here. May the presence and blessing of your Spirit just abide upon them, and may they continue to be a congregation, individually and collectively, that just keeps coming to you, day by day, step by step, issue by issue.

Lord, build them up, this spiritual house, this holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices. Through Jesus we pray, Amen. God bless you.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/QIUrfxpW74.mp4>

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