

The Stone Kingdom

by G.W. North

Jesus' directness and purpose are central to his character, and believers are called to be transformed into precious stones, living as newborn babes, desiring the sincere milk of the word.

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Scripture: John 1:35

Topics: "Kingdom"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the directness of Jesus and how it sets him apart. He highlights the tendency of people to be more interested in worldly matters than in the eternal purpose of God. The preacher uses the example of John the Baptist pointing out Jesus as the Lamb of God, and how Jesus immediately engages with two disciples who start following him. Jesus simply asks them what they are seeking and invites them to come and see where he dwells. The preacher marvels at Jesus' economy of words and his ability to convey profound truths with simplicity.

Transcript

Let's turn to Scripture, shall we? Chris has reminded me, or made me aware of the fact that this is the fourth Thursday running I've been with you. Wow, that's nearly a record, isn't it? I hadn't realised that. And it's been a joy.

Let's turn, shall we, this morning, tonight, to the Gospel of John again. That's right, perhaps we'd better have some lights on. And in the first chapter.

One of the things that thrills my heart about our Lord Jesus, and I suppose you could almost start every sermon you preached on that note, something about the Lord Jesus that thrills you. One of the things that thrills you about the Lord is his absolute directness. Now, let every one of us here tonight realise this, that he's direct, absolutely direct.

Unlike the majority of us, he never went in for using words very much. To him, being an economist, he only just used everything for the particular purpose that he had, and language was one of that, one of those things. When you think that we're dealing with the eternal God, and he's been speaking to men through the millenniums, and we've only got a Bible as big as that, which you've got in your hand, that's absolutely fantastic.

I mean, when you can walk along a bookshop and see, say, Enid Blyton produced I don't know how many books for children, and somebody, Potter, did something else, and Dickens produced I don't know what, and even our beloved Wesley, there never seems to be any end to the things that he wrote, and all these kinds of things. And yet God, being an economist, God helped me, and yet in all his economy, absolutely simple and direct, in that, for instance, I might use a word because it would save me using a sentence, but God didn't ever do that. He used simple language right down to earth with us, because all he was concerned about was reaching men's spirits that were dead.

And that was very, very wonderful. And so direct is our Lord Jesus Christ. He comes right to the point.

Sometimes leaving us quite wondering whatever he's saying, really. Have you ever read through your Gospels and wondered what the Lord Jesus was talking about? And seeing that his statements and his actions were related to the eternal purpose of God, and that's why they fell so strangely on human ears, because of ourselves we are just taken up with the projects of men. If we're not careful, we'll find that most of us can say more about what happened on the Isle of Man a few days ago than what happened on the Isle of Patmos, or what happened on the cross.

Really, if you come to think it out. And here, then, is one of the tragedies of the lives that we live. But our Lord Jesus Christ, he was concerned to relate the eternal purpose of God to everybody.

For instance, in this first chapter of John's Gospel, we see this thing. Verse 35. The next day, after John stood and two of his disciples, and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he says, Behold the Lamb of God.

And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned and saw them following, and said unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, which is to say, being interpreted, Master, where dwellest thou? He said unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.

One of the two which heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We found the Messiah, which is being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus.

And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jonah. Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone. Now, I know that I have made reference to this section only the other week.

But I want to come back to it again, chiefly with reference this time to Peter. I don't know what you would have thought, perhaps you would have thought, if you had come to somebody, a man, as Jesus was on the earth, and all he said to you was, Your name is Simon, you are the son of Jonah, and thou shalt be called Cephas. The rest is put in for our information, which is by interpretation, a stone.

What would you have thought of somebody that talked to you like that? You would have wondered, if he was a Messiah, what he was Messiah of, wouldn't you? Really, I mean honestly, on a human level. No preamble, he just went directly to this man like that. And I expect Peter thought, what on earth is he talking about? And I don't, I can't really say I blame Peter for not saying anything.

This is one of the few places in scripture where Peter keeps his mouth shut. He's usually got it open. He's a great talker, Peter.

But when Jesus talks to that, he's left dumb. He can't say a word. What's it all about? And well may he ask.

And well may we ask. Go with me, keeping your finger there of course, into Luke's gospel. When we look into this second chapter of the gospel according to Luke, we find toward the end of the chapter the account of Jesus when he was twelve years of age, staying behind on the Passover in Jerusalem, sitting in the temple.

And verse 46, this is where Mary and Joseph find him. After three days they find Jesus in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

And when they saw him they were amazed. And his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? Wished ye not that I must be about my father's business? Now there was his statement when he was twelve years of age.

And your margin may give you a rendering which says, Jesus said, I must be in my father's house. About the things of father's house. Do you see that there? All right.

Now see then his directness of purpose. As soon as he is announced as the one that's going to bear away the sin of the world, the Lamb of God, he's going to baptize in the Holy Ghost and fire, and then they start to follow him the next day. This is the first thing he says after, you know, What seek you? What are you following me for? And they come home and they see where he lives.

And then Andrew goes and finds Peter. And as soon as he sees Peter, he's on it. There.

Straight away. You might say, Well, why did he say Peter was a stone? For this reason. That he had come to be about building his father's house.

First thing. You see, the absolute directness of purpose. Now I know this.

Every one of you in this room, including myself. This is God's great purpose with you. You've got to be brought into the stone kingdom.

You've got to be brought into the place where you are, like Peter, a stone. A stone. It's an amazing thing, how in the beginning of the Lord's life, and this is one of the wonders of the Bible, and the utter consistency of it all, this great truth of the stone comes out more and more.

The Lord Jesus Christ is absolutely connected with it. And he's, if you like, nearly obsessed, if you want to put it this way, in that his parents once thought he was mad anyway. They sought to restrain him.

He was getting beyond bounds of it. They wanted to lay a restraint on Jesus. If he'd have lived in days like today, he would have been under a psychiatrist, if they could have got him under a psychiatrist, of course.

They said, What's the matter with our son? He's gone all queer. He's left home. He's calling all men around him.

What will he do with his family? You know, all this sort of thing. This is the kind of idea that would have gone for Jesus, as sure as anything. Lots of people thought he was round the bend.

And the whole thing about the Lord is that he was totally possessed with this great thing. More and more. It got right into his system.

In the second chapter, for instance, you'll find this. He goes to, there's another Passover talked about in verse 13. He goes to Jerusalem.

He goes to the temple. He's always there, apparently. And he finds in the temple those that sell oxen and sheep and doves and the changers of money sitting.

And when he'd made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, sheep, the oxen, poured out the changers' money, overthrew the tables, and said unto them that sold us, Take these things hence. Make not my father's house and house of merchandise. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The seed of thine house hath eaten me up.

Then said the Jews unto him, What signs showest thou unto us, seeing that thou didst these things? Jesus answered and said to them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I'll reign. You see, he's got directness of purpose. And there's only one way of explaining Jesus Christ, in that he was our man on this earth.

We know it was our God made manifest. But he'd come only to do Father's will. That's all he was concerned about.

Nothing else mattered. He didn't care whether he lost friends, lost family, lost life, lost anything. He didn't care about anything else but just this.

He's taking up with the purposes of his Father on the earth. More and more, I want to be taken up with this great man, Christ Jesus. I really do.

And this is what he expected of Peter. As soon as Peter came, You're a stone, Peter. Left him speechless.

But you see, how true it was. Turn over with me a moment, into the book of the Revelation. Right in chapter 21, most of you probably will anticipate what I'm going to say, as you see the great city, the house, the temple city of God, in the new creation.

It says this. As he sees the city, he sees the foundations. And in the foundations, which were twelve stones, wonderful stones, verse 19, the first foundation was Jasper, the second Sapphire, the third a Chalcedony, the fourth an Emerald, the fifth Sardonyx, the sixth Sardius, the seventh Chrysalite, the eighth Beryl, the ninth a Topaz, the tenth a Chrysoprisus, the eleventh a Jason, the twelfth an Amethyst.

And in those were written the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Verse 14. There it is.

And so, Peter, you see, he was Jasper. Glory. The first foundational member, glory be to God, was Peter.

A precious stone. God. The Lord took him.

Amen. I'm going to build Father's house. That's God's purpose with you and I. And it will explain everything of Jesus' dealings with our lives.

Everything. You come to Him. He claims absolute sovereignty over you.

Absolute. You can't belong to Jesus unless you're prepared to let the Lord do anything with you. So, Lord, to you that He'll rename you and whatever He does, He'll make you what He says.

Praise God. This is tremendous. You do understand this, don't you? That when the Lord calls you something, He, in His heart, has made sure that you are that very thing.

And everything in life, He will use to that end. Do you believe that? Amen. And I hope you believe that the chief sculpting tool is called a cross.

I hope you believe that. That He's going to make you and I what He wants us to be. He's got everything in hand here.

Let's go back to John, chapter 1. And in this first chapter, he goes on from that verse 42, and in 43, the day following, after the Lord had had this meeting with Peter and said, now, you're a stone, He goes forth in the Galilee and He finds Philip and says unto him, follow me. Now, Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip finds Nathanael and saith unto him, We found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. That's the best way, isn't it? I mean, if you can sort of invite people to Jesus, better than going for a long theological argument about it, to try and establish something. You just come and see.

That's a marvellous thing, isn't it? All right. Jesus sees Nathanael coming to Him, saith unto him, Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile. Nathanael says unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou, I don't want you to get convinced just because I've exercised a gift of knowledge. Amen.

Lord, teach me that secret. Thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter you shall see heaven open, and angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.

When did Nathanael see that? When did Nathanael see that? You see, beloved, here is something tremendous. I love the Lord, and I love the way He shows us and is the key to Scripture. For you will remember that He's going way back now in the history of these people.

And He is talking about an occasion when Jacob ran away from home in fear of his life. And Esau was after him because he twisted Esau twice. The first time he'd stolen Esau's birthright.

The second time he stole the blessing. You see. And Esau was after his blood.

And I can't say that I really blame him. You know, looking at it quite on the natural side. But off goes Jacob, and he's being sent out finally to find a bride.

He's got to go back to the place of Abraham's nativity pretty well. He's got to go back to that family anyway. And he's got to find a bride.

And he's tired out, and he goes to sleep one night in the desert. And he brings a stone for a pillow, and he goes to sleep. It's a place called Luz.

And at night he has a dream. I think I might dream too if I had a stone for a pillow and a wilderness for a bed. I think I might.

That is, even if I got to sleep. He must have been really tired. And he dreamt that he saw a ladder set up from heaven to earth.

And he saw God at the top of it, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the ladder. He wakes up in the morning. He says, I surely God's in this place, and I didn't know it.

And he had yet to learn, of course, that God is everywhere. He was just an ignorant, natural man. That's all.

Although he'd been blessed, like so many of us were, by our parents a long time before we knew anything about it. We're still natural, and we've got to be dealt with by God, ourselves. And God comes to deal with him, and you know what happened.

And God promised him things, and he promised God things. And he raised up this pillow upon which he had been sleeping. It couldn't have been such a tremendous-sized thing.

And he poured oil on it, and he said, This is Bethel, the house of God. Now you see, the Lord has gone right back to that. Now notice the connection with stone.

He's on this great truth of stone. He's going to build this temple. He's going to see that this thing is absolutely right.

But you see, he said to Nathaniel, If you really are an Israelite indeed, and you know how that Jacob's name was changed to Israel. If you are a real Israelite, I'm going to tell you this much. He said, you're going to see the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.

When did that happen? Well, when Jesus, like Jacob, when his head was laid on a stone in the tomb, that's when the angels of God came. That's when they saw these great things. When Jesus was laid in a tomb, you remember, and the angels of God came down into the tomb, praised him.

And from that rocky bed, the Lord Jesus Christ rose. And how again that day when he ascended up, two angels came down. They said, you men of Israel, you men of Galilee, what are you standing gazing up into heaven for? This same Jesus is so gone, he's going to come again in like manner.

And he's there in his great resurrection. Praise the name of the Lord. And he's going to build his glorious temple.

That's what he's going to do. Each one of us has got to be changed by the Lord so that instead of being jelly or sand or mere ashy earth, we've got to be changed into the stone, the precious stone, not common stone. That's the thing.

We saw the foundations of the city were precious stones. The glorious city, this great temple city, beloved, is built of the precious, precious people of Jesus. They're precious because he is precious.

They've been made from his preciousness. Hallelujah. This is the thing that old Peter talks about.

Let's go, if you'll come with me, into 1 Peter. This is what makes Peter talk like he talks. He loves this great thing.

Peter never got away from what the Lord did and said to him that day, you know. And in this first epistle of Peter and the second chapter, this is how we read. He says, oh, let's start at verse 1. Wherefore, laying aside all malice, all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and evil speakings, because none of those are precious, they're rotten.

None of them are precious. You can't have anything in you but preciousness, brother, sister. And your speaking has so much more to do with it than you think, that reveals what's inside you and me.

What you say. Jesus talked out what he was, and in the end bled out what he was. That's wonderful.

That's where our redemption lies. That's why in the first chapter we're told that we've been redeemed, verse 19, with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb, without blemish and without spot. Oh, this is tremendous.

And in verse 22, you've purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit and to unfeigned love of the brethren. See, all these words that speak of genuineness, preciousness, unfeigned, hypocrisy, feigned, put on. All these kinds of things, beloved, God has dealt with.

And it says here that we've been purified with a love one another, with a pure heart, fervently. My word, when you get down to the heart of these stones. They've got a fire in their heart.

Purity at heart. Glory. We're gone.

Born again, verse 23. Oh, look at 24. All flesh is grass.

The glory is man's the flower of grass. Bless the name of the Lord. Now then, we're in the second chapter.

We're making the great approach. Laying aside all malice, all guile, all hypocrisy and envies, all evil speakings. Hallelujah.

As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby. If so be you've tasted that the Lord is gracious to whom coming is under a living stone. There he is.

The great chief cornerstone got up off the slab of rock in the tomb. Amen. Unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, chosen of God and precious.

You also as living stones are built up a spiritual house and holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Isn't that lovely? Verse 6. Wherefore, also as contained in the scripture, behold I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect precious. He that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

Unto you therefore which believe is the preciousness actually. That's the Greek of it. Is the preciousness.

Oh, bless the name of the Lord. I want to be a believer. I want to be a real believer.

To believe all his preciousness. The preciousness of his character, of his life. Oh, I want to be a precious stone.

Perhaps I born of mortal man like I am. It's too much to even expect to be a precious stone. I'm only rubbish of myself.

Over there where I've been staying these few days there's a marvellous quarry. It's a marvellous view. One of the views of Cove.

A glorious quarry there. Tremendous quarry. Great cliff face.

Wonderful stone. But you know wherever you get a quarry there's also a lot of rubbish. Great piles of old slack and muck.

That's no good. Thrown out during the course of quarrying. Don't want that.

And that's only, I don't know what it is. I don't even believe it's granite. I don't think they have any granite in Devon, do they? Perhaps they do.

Do they? In Dartmoor? Oh, all right. Yes, all right. I'm corrected.

But that's not Dartmoor. It's only Exvale up there. The whole tremendous thing though, beloved, is that I want to be precious.

God. Hallelujah. I want to be precious.

I want that about me which is indestructible because it has the preciousness of Jesus about me. That's what I believe, beloved. Do you believe that? You've got to have it.

Peter, he was the great foundation stone Jasper. Now, if you read through Revelation 21, you'll find that the greatest characteristic of the city is precisely that, Jasper. Jasper.

Jasper. Jasper. Jasper.

Jasper. Now, isn't it a marvellous thing? Now, isn't this a marvellous thing? Note it. If I asked you what was the most precious stone known to us today, you would say, oh, diamond isn't mentioned.

You see, the thing that men go for, God doesn't want. He's not included it. He's not included it.

Do you think? Did you notice that? You say, oh, rubies! I'm not included. See? Ah, even in that, God has shown us where his heart is. That he isn't aiming for what men aim for.

When they say, diamonds are forever. Are they? God has a heat that's even going to burn up diamonds. So my Bible tells me.

And the whole glorious truth, beloved, lies here. That we're going to be built into this. Oh, and how wonderful it is, beloved.

How wonderful it is. Are you being built into this temple? Are you a stone? Your name's a stone. Ah, it'd be wonderful if we were all renamed stones, wouldn't it? We might think we anticipated that which is coming.

And such a stone, beloved, that the glory of the Lord is going to shine through it. Amen. Catch the light, reflect the light.

Be moving in the glory of the Lord. This is why God is dealing with us like he's dealing with us. This is why Peter was dealt with as the Lord dealt with Peter.

To bring us there. And you and I, there's got to be something for God to build on. I don't know whether God's got anything to build on in your life and in my life, has he? I thought it was all built on Christ.

Yes, that's the chief foundation stone, but another stone's laid on top of the chief one. They've all got to be built on in their turn. Something's got to be laid on top of this stone and another one on top of that one and another one on top of that one.

Oh yeah. That's why you can't have these jelly babies. That's why God can't have sandy characters.

This is why we've got to be solid and real. This is why the scripture comes out with such verses as Be ye therefore steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. This is why it comes out with things like that.

Because this is what's got to happen to us. God's got to be able to put you down like that and know where he'll find you, if I may use that word. If I may use that expression.

You're laid. You're laid. Thank God it's not feathers he's dealing with, but stones.

A character built on solid, real, precious, glorious, partaking of the nature and character of the Lord Jesus Christ, immovable, always about his Father's business. That's it. First thing was on his lips, you see.

Look, take We'll come back a moment to John, but take the very fact of the temptations. He was led of the Spirit when he came out of Jordan into the wilderness to be tempted to the devil. What was the first thing the devil said to him? Take these stones and make them into bread.

Do you see the consistency of it all? Take these stones, he said. Turn them into bread. That's what he said to the Lord.

What really the Lord said to him? Yeah, I will do but not under your direction, Satan. Not these stones, anyway. Peter, you're my stone, come here.

There came a day when Jesus said to Peter, Give ye them to eat, Peter. Peter had to say, I can't. Because he'd never let Jesus get at him with the cross.

And when Jesus wanted to get on to the cross, he said, Jesus said, Oh yeah. You get behind me, Satan. So God takes a satanic and a satanically controlled and a satanically speaking man and makes him in the end to be a god man.

A godly man. And speaking the words of God. That's what he does.

Isn't that a marvelous thing? How the Lord can do this, you see. It was all stone in the wilderness. Do you remember? Took him up on a temple.

That was the stone building. Put yourself down hence. The Lord said, You see.

Or, further again, in the second chapter of the gospel according to John, where we were a little earlier. Remember at the end of the first chapter we saw how the Lord was connecting up with this stone episode where Jacob laid his head on the stone and rises up. He says, You're going to see the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.

That's a tremendous thing. And he was speaking of his resurrection. So you're not surprised that the next chapter starts off with and the third day.

This is the consistency of scripture. Once you have the key it's all plain. It's all so simple.

Mysteries become simple things that God wants us to see. And the third day there was this wedding. And what was he going to do at the wedding? Into the stone kingdom he was coming.

There were set six water pots of stone. There they were. They were there for the, you know, just after the man of the Jews.

He says, after the man of the Jews. We'll change those stones to after the man of Jesus. Alright.

You see. When they run out of wine along comes Marian. He says, son, or whatever it is, you know, they've got no wine.

Make them some wine, she would have liked to have said. And he would have said, I'm going to, but not under your suggestion any more than I've got stones in the bread under the devil's suggestion. I'm about father's business.

Glory to God, isn't it? Wonderful. It seems so marvellous. And so after Mary, who apparently didn't know one thing apparently, knew how to keep things in her heart.

And ponder them. That's one lovely thing that said about Mary. After she'd left him, he saying to the servants, now whatsoever he says unto you, you do it.

She thought, he can't be in a situation like this and do nothing. Blessed be the name of the Lord. I wish you had as much confidence in Jesus as that.

He can't be in this kind of situation and not do anything about it. But what he won't do is that your dictation, he won't do that. He says, fill the water pots up to the brim.

So, they did. They filled them up to the brim. And he gave a demonstration of what should come out of the stone.

What should come out of the stone? Wine. The best wine should come out of you, beloved. Now this is how I'll know whether you really are one of the precious stones.

Because out of you will become precious drink. What I drink from you will be precious. Ah, that's the best wine I've ever tasted.

Glory. Can I say that about you, brother and sister? Can you say that about me? Best wine I've ever tasted. Yeah.

So, that's what's got to happen. It's so overwhelming. He takes these stones.

There they are. And they fill them up with water. And he doesn't seem to do anything except say something.

They did it all. They did it all. He just spoke.

That's all. He'll speak, says Mary. You do.

She didn't put it like that, but that's what it was. He'll speak. You do it.

Glory be to God. You remember another case, he moved a lot in this stone position. Do you remember? Another position.

Another time when, uh, if somebody had been there, they only knew would have said the same thing. He'll speak. You do.

Know what occasion I'm talking about? Yeah, raising of Lazarus. Roll away the stone, he said. Glory be to God.

Roll away the stone, you see. He'll speak. You do.

Have you learned this lesson? Well, anyway, there are the six water jars filled with water. Pour out beer to the governor of the feast. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

It's absolutely right, beloved, you know. Is wine pouring out of you? You know, wine comes from fruit. Wine comes from fruit.

Hallelujah. You just don't want to believe, beloved, and don't let anyone of us get it into our hearts. But all we are, are these sort of wonderful, strong, strong, strong, strong people.

Um, you know, we are glittering, we are brilliant, we are tough, we are hard. We can support this, we can support that. Right at the center of us, right inside us, is there something which can be poured out all sweet? All lovely? Is there? What pours out of us? It's like that with the Lord.

He was strong, He was tough, He was precious, He was glorious. But oh, what poured out of Him? What really poured out of Him? You know, it says that out of your belly is going to flow rivers of water. You know that, don't you? That's what Scripture says.

That's right. But out of His mouth flowed wine. That's right, isn't it? Out of His mouth flowed wine.

And it's what comes out of your mouth that's important. What does flow out of that? I, I, I like this because you see, if we say well out of our belly is going to flow rivers of living water, well that's quite sort of, um, of the Spirit, this speaking of the Spirit. That's what Spirit is flowing out of you.

That's quite invisible and inaudible. It's the, it's a power that's reaching you, flowing through someone. It's the power of the Spirit.

It's the actual life of the Spirit. It's the life that's flowing out of you. But wine is what comes out of your mouth.

What came out of Jesus' mouth was the love of the ages. Yes. The matured fruit of eternity.

Jesus is the fruit. And Him crushed. You know, just about contracted to a span, to use the glorious words which I, I love to use, I must confess, when speaking about Jesus, because I don't know any better.

Our God contracted to a span incomprehensibly made man. But, but, but, uh, beyond the miracle of the incarnation, which is all that Wesley is drawing our attention to there on the surface, there is that which made the writers of the Philippians write these words. Let this mind be in you.

Which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God thought nothing to be grasped at to be equal with God. Made himself of no reputation. Ooh, my, everything who crushed up there like that.

Absolutely. The fruit of eternal life and living, living from all eternity, just contracted down to this, this being, this man, this, how are you going to describe him? Hmm? And it poured out of his mouth. And every precious droplet, see? Now Peter, Simon, Simon's going to be called to see this.

Right. How about there? Uh, we might have gone in for describing a stone crusher or something like that. Uh, we would have thought it was very good.

In fact, we could have put on half an hour on the television about it if we'd have been talking about it. But Jesus said, God bless you. Glory.

And he stands up on the day of Pentecost. Oh Peter, with water flowing from his belly and wine coming out of his mouth. That's right.

Ah. And he starts. Economy of words.

Absolutely right down to the truth. Pouring out. Oh.

Hallelujah. You know. Don't you? Isn't this a wonderful thing? And when the precious truth poured out of his mouth, lo and behold, all that the water was for was fulfilled.

For the Lord had said, catching him on the sea, he said, you follow me, I'm going to make you fishers of men. And three thousand fish he caught on the day of Pentecost. When the wine came out of his mouth.

Ah. Beloved. What is it that you're pouring into people's ears? Let's lay aside all malice, all guile, all hypocrisy, all evil speaking.

Do you make sure you only ever speak good of other people? Do you? If your motives are good, that's all you will do. And that's something that's right down in the heart. Are you sure? And am I sure that I don't use guile? Now Jacob was a man of guile.

Jacob was a man of subtlety. Look what God had to do with Jacob. He laid his head on a stone.

He said, this is the house of God. And he only laid his head on a stone. That's all he'd done.

He'd had a vision. May our Lord lead us into all the fullness of this, beloved. That we should be real stones in this temple, in this great building of God.

I want to go at least one step further. I don't know the times these have gone so quickly. In Ephesians, verse 19 of chapter 2. Now therefore, you're no more Jacob's because Jacob was a stranger and a foreigner.

You're no more strangers and foreigners, 19. But fellow citizens with the saints, who are of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner in whom all the building fitly frayed together groweth into a holy temple in the Lord in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. Amen.

Habitation of God through the Holy Spirit through our spirits. That's right. Amen.

We're all being built together. Is that right? Build it together. Fit it in.

That's lovely, isn't it? As long as you're a stone. You may think you're a pretty common stone. Don't worry about that.

Let God's comment freely be the only one. What you think of yourself isn't the important thing, and what other people think of you isn't the important thing either, because they may not have the right idea, they may not understand, they may not be able to rightly assess these positions. They don't know.

Not in the long run they don't. Amen. But God knows.

And when He's dealing with us beloved, let's just all love one another so that when God is doing these things, the only thing we can find in one another is love. Because we're to build up one another in love. Did you think that you could build in this temple of God? Build up one another.

You know, it's nice to think that God puts me in my position. Or you think that God's put you in your position. But if I can, I'm going to give a hand too.

For there's a word in the Bible, and I listen to it, we're workers together with God. That's right. We're workers together with God.

When did you last put your hand on a stone and try and help it into position? When did you last do it? Or when did you first do it? A worker together with God. Send a hand. I can remember that beam going up there.

People pushing it into position. Straining, pushing. I'm sure God put it there.

And I'm absolutely certain about that. That the whole glorious thing, beloved, is to be in this. Ever.

Position. Glory. Glory.

Glory. Glory. Marvellous.

Are you being built in? Now, this is God's direct purpose. The Lord Jesus speaks directly of it. So far as he's concerned, this was his great mission on earth.

Well, I thought his mission was to sort of die and shed his blood. Well, that was not an end in itself. It was a means to this end.

He shed the precious blood that the precious stones may come. Amen. It was a means to an end.

You must never think of Calvary as a terminus. Always a way through. I mean, we should always worship God because of it.

We shall always glory in God because of it. We shall always do that, because this was the point where sin, the great disqualifying factor, was dealt with. Amen.

That's right. But now, beloved, oh, he had one great purpose. He sat in the temple and said I must be in the things of my father's house.

Nobody understood a word of what he was talking about. Because, so far as he was concerned, that wasn't his father's house anymore. Not really.

They destroyed the ark centuries before this. There was no ark being put behind the veil in the days of Jesus Christ in the temple. It had been destroyed.

I mean, they went through all the powerful angels that there were telling them, but there was no mercy seat to sprinkle the blood on. Do you know that? I hope you do anyway. It had been destroyed centuries before.

It's all a paraphernalia, this business of animals, goats and sheep and ducks and all these things. Absolute facade. The high priest knew very well there was no mercy seat behind it.

Yet they went through it. That's why God ripped the veil to show it wasn't there. Everybody could see.

It wasn't only just to let us know that we could go in. It was to let everybody see that there was nothing there in that empty shell. Nothing at all.

They'd all been going through a pantomime. Good religious people singing their psalms, reading the Bible every Saturday or the equivalent of our Sunday sort of thing, but there was nothing there. No glory there never had been all the time Jesus was on the earth.

The glory of God was Him walking round. He brought the glory. We beheld His glory.

The glory is of the only begotten of the Father, you see. Bless the name of the Lord. You see.

I've got to be about the things of my Father's house. Amen. And so God wants us to see this precious thing.

And in the end He had the temple pushed over. Wasn't one stone left on another. Not one.

And in its place a stone eternal precious stone building of God to us that should believe. Love it. It's the preciousness.

We've got the preciousness. It's to us. Isn't that lovely? All the preciousness that was in Him.

Everything that made Him wonderful and precious and glorious come to us. This is lovely, isn't it? So that we could rejoice and live in the wonder of it all and let God deal with us and build us up. It doesn't matter if He has to knock some chips off here and there.

That's alright. But I mean if we've all laid aside hypocrisy and that, we've got to find a cover up. We don't want anything covered up.

We only want this thing dealt with. Amen. And rather than have anything to cover up or be ashamed of let the blood wash it away now.

It's precious that blood. All glory and everything gone. Everything that's trashy and earthly and fleshy and of this world building us up in this life as though there was anything in that.

Let that all go. Let's just live as the Lord wants us to live. I want this more and more and more.

I suggest we pray. Amen. Glory to God.

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