

The Cornerstone

1 Peter 2:4-8

Leader Discussion guide

Sermon Summary:

Jesus is the cornerstone. He is first, perfectly cut, the strongest, precious, costly, and living. Everything God is building in the world is built on Jesus. People can have two basic responses to Jesus the cornerstone: 1) build your life on him or 2) reject him by denying him or redefining him. Building your life on Jesus is a process of bringing your thinking, behavior, values, and ambitions in line with Him. Being connected to the cornerstone brings the blessings of being accepted by God and stability in life.

Illustrations Used:

- Abraham Lincoln
- God talking over Peter at the Mount of Transfiguration
- Other rocks come to the cornerstone and are set in place according to the cornerstone.
- When do you believe that an ice lake is solid?
- Jesus is not just a pill you take to get out of hell
- Build your house on the rock or sand parable

Comprehension Questions:

1. What is a cornerstone? How does Jesus fit these attributes?
2. In Matthew 17:1-5, what distinction was God making about Jesus compared to other prophets in the Old Testament? How is Jesus the fulfillment of the OT?
3. What responses are there to the cornerstone?
 - a. Build your life on Him – What is the difference between intellectual belief and faith belief? (ice illustration)
 - b. Reject him – What are the two types of rejection? What does it mean to redefine Jesus?
4. What are the two blessings Mark mentioned that we can have if we are connected to the cornerstone?

Application Questions:

1. Jesus is the cornerstone and everything God is building in the world is built on Jesus. What does this mean for our lives? Think about: things, people, personal character, what we spend our time on.
2. To believe in Jesus means to build your life on Him. This is costly. What are some things that God has removed or changed in your life as you built your life on Jesus since you have been a believer? How do you think about those changed or removed things?
3. Ask for someone to explain the get-out-of-hell pill illustration. People reject Jesus as cornerstone when they say, “I believe in Jesus,” but don’t do what he says (Luke 6:46). There are many in our culture today that hold to a form of Christianity that dramatically redefines Jesus. How can we help them see the true Jesus?
4. Are there areas of your life that you know need to be brought into alignment with Jesus the cornerstone but you have not allowed or pursued change?

Extended Outline:

Illus: Abraham Lincoln can be looked at from so many different angles.

App: Much more true of Jesus Christ. He is endlessly interesting. In this passage He is the Cornerstone.

1. Jesus is the cornerstone

- a. **Illus:** In ancient buildings, like the temple. The cornerstone was....
 - i. First – All the dimensions of the building would come off of that.
 - ii. Most perfectly cut stone – If cornerstone was true, house was true.
 - iii. The strongest stone – Any flaws would compromise the building.
 - iv. Precious/costly: a builder would spend a lot of time searching for, choosing, and then cutting the cornerstone.
- b. Jesus is the cornerstone
 - i. V4 – He is often rejected by men. But most importantly, in God the Father’s sight, Jesus is “chosen and precious.”
 1. First – V20 – His mission was foreknown. Col. 1:17-18.
 2. Perfect – 1:19 – He lived a perfect life.
 3. Strongest – He is the same, yesterday, today and forever.
 - ii. **App:** Everything God is building in the world, is built on Jesus.
 - iii. **Illus: Matthew 17:1-5** - “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to HIM.”
 1. This is not another teacher, on par with Moses and Elijah. The fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets.
- c. The most important question: what are you doing with Jesus Christ?

2. Responses to the cornerstone – we see 2 basic responses in this passage.

- a. Build your life on him.
 - i. V4 – “Come to him.” V6b, 7 – “Believe.”
 1. **Illus:** The other rocks come to the cornerstone, and are set in place along the lines of, according to the cornerstone.
 2. **App:** To believe in Jesus, is to build your life on Him.
 - ii. **Illus:** On ice, when do know you believe it is solid? When you shift the center of your gravity onto the ice.
 1. **App:** To believe in Jesus is to shift the center of your gravity to Jesus. To make him the cornerstone of your life.
 - iii. **App:** What is giving shape to your life? What is your foundation?
 1. Growth is a process of bringing your life – your thinking, your behavior, your values and ambitions -- in line with Him.
- b. Or reject him. V4. At least 2 ways of rejecting him:
 - i. Deny him.
 1. In verse 7 Peter quotes Psalm 118. He quoted this same verse in Acts Acts 4:11, when he rebuked those who rejected Jesus by crucifying Him.
 2. **App:** So many say they believe in God, but don’t need to listen to Jesus. Acts 4:12: “There is salvation in no one else.”
 - ii. Redefine him.

1. Jesus comes as Lord, King, God, Teacher, Treasure – Cornerstone. To come to Him, we receive Him for who He is.
 - a. **Illus:** Not just a pill you take to get out of hell.
2. We reject him as cornerstone when we say, “I believe in Jesus,” but don’t do what he says (Luke 6:46).
- c. **Illus:** Matt. 7:24-27 - Both hear Jesus’ words. The one who does them, is on the solid foundation. Those who don’t, are building on sand.
 - i. V27 – Great will be the fall of those who reject him.

3. The blessing of being connected to the cornerstone.

- a. Acceptance by God.
 - i. V5 – If you have come to Him, you are a spiritual house (temple), holy priesthood, and you are offering spiritual sacrifices.
 1. **Exp:** In the OT, the temple, priesthood, and sacrifices were all crucial in order to experience acceptance by God. God is holy. The sacrificial/priestly system was put in place to teach the people that it is not an easy thing to draw near to God.
 - ii. All of those things were pointing forward to Jesus.
 1. He gave his own life, once for all, as a sacrifice for our sins. As he was crucified, the giant curtain in the Temple that divided people from the presence of God, was torn in two.
 - iii. **App:** When we come to Him, He makes us acceptable to God.
 - iv. **Look at V5:**
 1. We are living stones in a spiritual house. Not on the outside wishing we could go inside the temple. We are the temple itself. God’s presence is in and among us.
 2. We are a holy priesthood –We can enter into the presence of God because of Jesus.
 3. We can offer “spiritual sacrifices” acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ.
 - v. **App:** You don’t have to earn your way in. You don’t have to get everything perfect. You do have to be connected to Him.
- b. Stability
 - i. Peter is writing to people who are living very unstable lives. 1:1 - Dispersion. Exiles. 2:11 - Sojourners. But if you are connected to Christ, your life, your future, your soul, is rock solid stable.
 - ii. **App:** Opposition (even violent opposition) to Christ doesn’t undermine God or His plan.
 1. V7 – “The stone that the builders rejected [they killed Jesus] has become the cornerstone.” In fact, their rejection was instrumental in Jesus’ accomplishing salvation.
 2. V8 – “They stumble **because** they disobey” – they are responsible for their rejection of Christ. But their rejection didn’t take God by surprise. “as they were destined to do.”
 - a. Acts 4:27-28 – Their evil was a part of God’s plan.
 3. Opposition to Christ doesn’t threaten his stability or ours.
 - iii. If you are connected to Christ, you are secure.
 1. V6 – “whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

2. V7 – “honor is for you who believe.” –
 - a. **App:** You may be slandered. You may experience great loss. But the cornerstone will hold up
- iv. **Illus:** Butte Valley High school – had a brand new high school built. Then the entire building was condemned. Crushing for the town.
 1. **App:** Some of you have felt this at a much more personal level. You invested trust in a person or an institution. Built much of your life around them. And then you were betrayed.
- v. **App:** Jesus will not fail you.
 1. **Deuteronomy 32:4** – “The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.”
 2. **Isaiah 26:4** – “Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock.”