

The stone which the builders refused (Quality Good)

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- [0 : 00] In dependence upon the Lord for all needed help, I venture to draw your prayerful attention to Psalm 118.
- We read verses 22 to 25 inclusive. Psalm 118 verses 22, 23, 24, 25.
- The stone which the builders refused has become the headstone of the corner.
- Father, this is the Lord's doing. It is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made.
- We will rejoice and be glad in it. Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord.
- [1 : 20] O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. This Old Testament scripture is oft quoted, as you will know, in the New Testament.
- We find it in the Gospel of Matthew and Mark. We find it in the Acts of the Apostles.
- We find it in the Epistle to the Ephesians. And as we read this evening in the first epistle of Peter.
- The stone which the builders refused has become the headstone of the corner.
- We need, as in all things with the word of God, a right understanding, the Spirit's teaching of this word, the headstone.
- [2 : 45] It is not the top stone of a building. It is the cornerstone, the chief cornerstone upon which the whole building itself rests.
- It is referred to as the chief cornerstone. We are also reminded that when the dear Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, entered into Jerusalem, where they stood by their branches in the way and cried out, Hosanna!
- Hosanna meaning, save, we pray. And that is found particularly in these verses, verse 25, Save now I beseech thee.
- The cornerstone of the building bears the whole weight of that building.
- Its standing is dependent on that one sure, solid foundation. God's people are not built on a church.
- [4 : 20] When the Lord said, thou art Peter, but upon this rock, not on you Peter, not as the Roman Catholic declares.
- Oh, Peter's not the cornerstone. Peter's not the foundation. He said, thou art Peter, but upon this rock myself, that I will build the church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.
- The foundation then is Jesus Christ himself, and all that he is, all that he has done.
- Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, Christ Jesus the Lord.
- Wisdom, I've read, devised it. Justice ordered it, instituted it. Love gave it, and power provided it.

[5 : 44] May the Lord direct our meditation to him who is the only foundation, the only hope of every true believer in Jesus Christ, and viewing it, and viewing by the grace of God, we're called by that grace, viewing that we are built on that one foundation, Jesus Christ the Lord, where we may break forth in the language of the text, this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.

in what way is Christ the foundation of the church? view it, who he is, what he has done.

This foundation is none other than Jesus himself, the eternal Son of God.

Wonderful. God the Father has ordained it. All has tried this foundation.

Devils have sought to overthrow it. Men have denied it. Sinners stumble at it. But my friend, no devil, no world, no evil will ever overthrow this foundation, nor those who are built on this foundation.

[7 : 45] Their hope are none other than Jesus Christ himself. But in what way whilst we acknowledge the eternity of the Son of God, that he is God, but how, in what way, can he be the foundation of a church, of those whom the Father has chosen the Son has loved, and the Spirit makes it known, how can it be?

Because of the covenant ordered in all things and sure, because of the purpose of heaven, because of the provision of the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world, because there's one appointed to bear away the sin of this people, the one upon which all would fall the punishment that justice will view satisfied.

and so, my friend, this is this one foundation, a sure foundation.

I was very struck in my meditation on this word this evening, that how early in the preaching of the gospel after the day of Pentecost, Christ.

This was made known by the apostle Peter. You will remember how that Peter and John had gone to the temple together at the ninth hour, and there was a man lame from his birth, and how that Peter and John, used by God, by the power of Christ, restored him, and the lame man stood up, walked, and went with him, leaping, and praising God into the house of God.

[10 : 15] And the people were amazed at such a sight. And of course, Peter then acknowledged that it was through the Lord Jesus Christ, as he says here, he denied the Holy One, and the just and desired of murderers to be granted unto you, killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are his witnesses.

And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know.

Yea, the faith which is by him, hath given this man perfect soundness in the sight of you all. Following this preaching, there was opposition stirred up, particularly by the priests, the captain of the temple, the Sadducees that came upon Peter and John, laid their hands upon them, kept them in charge in charge the following day, and brought them before the council, and asked them, by what power have he done this?

Peter, and remember, this is the man that was the coward, standing by the fire, as they led Jesus away to crucify him.

this is the man that was afraid, this is the man that denied his Lord, this is the man for whom Christ prayed, that thy faith fail not, this is the man restored, this is the man raised up, this is the man by the grace of God, that is made strong in faith, clear and bold in setting forth the truth.

[12 : 21] And he said, if we this day be examined of the deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole, he says, be it known unto you all and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God hath raised from the dead, that by even by him doth this man, stand whole here before you.

Now, what followed that? This is the stone. This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders and which has become the head of the corner, that is the chief corner stone.

Neither is the salvation in the other, there's none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

beloved beloved friend, dear hearers tonight, do you start now to find a little coming in if I may put it that way?

Is this dear Jesus made so precious to you, so needful? what hope have you of heaven?

[14 : 05] Are you building on the sand? Are you building on your good works? Are you building on a denominational name? My friend, all else will fail.

As we've just quoted that scripture, neither is there salvation in any other. there's none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

And now are you closed in, I put it clearly, closed in to that one name, that one hope of salvation of your soul?

Remember what the scripture says of this stone was rejected by men, hated and despised by men, set at naught, as we've read by you builders.

But oh my friend, the poor sinners, taught by the Spirit, shown their sin, led to their lost condition, oh where shall they flee, to whom can they go, what is their hope, what can they rest upon?

[15 : 18] Ah blessed be God, I see by faith a cross, I see by him, by that faith, by the Holy Spirit, him, that came to this earth, the Son of God, the God man, the Lamb of God, to bear away the sin of the people, to bear the punishment instead, to endure the wrath of heaven, to satisfy divine justice, that that gate of heaven should be opened, that this one foundation shall be laid, that it be Christ himself, all that he is, all that he's done, all the fullness that is in Christ, this one foundation, my dear friend, sinner you are, lost as you are by nature, far off as you may be, even now, oh but may God call you by grace, and you're fleeing from the wrath to come, but I say, here is the only way, here is this saviour of sinners, here is that precious blood that was shed upon that cross, here is this glorious gospel that is to be proclaimed to the end of time, that this man receiveth sinners, oh friend,

I say, what a foundation, oh it will never be overthrown, and do you think, that any poor sinner building or built, they don't build themselves, they are built on that one foundation, are they going to perish?

Never, never, so then, as I say here, in that, when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and I mark that they perceived that they were unlearned, ignorant men, and they perceived that they had been with Jesus.

My friend, this is the stone, I'm so poor a preacher, I wish I could set it forth in the beauty, the majesty, glory, I just touch upon it, I see a world crumbling away, I see all manner of evil as coming on the face of the earth as never before, I see all going, I see churches collapsing, and that is outwardly, but I see a people not with an everlasting love, I see a people called by divine grace, I see a people in answer to the prayer of the dear saviour, father, father, I will that these also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, I see that this people, though they may pass and will through much tribulation, that they are on that one foundation, they boast of nothing else, nothing else, all that they confess,

I'm a sinner, if ever a sinner deserved hell, it's this poor sinner, Lord, but oh, match this grace, oh, this precious Christ, oh, I rest upon him, I cast myself upon him, you often hear me quote those lines, you've just sung them, they're so dear to me, more than ever in my life, nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling, my hope says one is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness, I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name, on Christ, the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand, my friend, this is the only sure foundation, you have to bear with me, my mind cannot quote scripture as clearly as it used to, so I ensure a clear quoting of the scripture that I read or turn to it to revive my memory that the scripture is quoted accurately, but my mind now goes to a word in the first epistle to the Corinthians and I think it's the third chapter which speaks of this foundation,

[20 : 11] I quoted it in part where we read that other foundation can no man lay that that which is laid, which is Christ, Jesus Christ, now if any man build on this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest, the day, that solemn day when time shall be no more, shall declare it, and it shall be revealed by fire, my friend, only a holy ghost religion will stand this, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is, we read how that if any man's work abide which he has built thereon, he shall receive a reward, stone, why, it is the, as the word here says, gold, silver, and precious stones, that is the truth as it is in Christ, the doctrine surely believed among us, the faith upon the word of

God itself, that will abide that great day of judgment, all else will be burned away, oh my friend, what a consuming, but if even there, I believe this, that if there is the work of grace though a person may be led astray, if God has begun that work they will be saved even though by fire, that I must leave, I go carefully there, but I know this, only that which is of the Holy Ghost, real religion is going to stand, be found right, is resting on that one, on what Christ has done, now I named the finished work of Christ, I named the blood of Christ, I speak of redemption by that blood, I speak of this so great salvation, but I also name to you tonight the resurrection of Jesus

Christ, you see this is inseparable because of the apostle writing again in that same epistle that I have just quoted from, if Christ be not risen then your face is vain, you are yet in your sin, even though, and I say this very reverently, even though he suffered as he did on the cross in all the agony and shame, but there not only the hand of man, but there he suffered the wrath of heaven for our sin, there the payment was paid, that price was done, then how can I be sure that it is, how can I know that justice of God is separate, how as I view the justice and holiness of God in the Garden of Eden driving out the man and that separation, how can I be sure that there's a way back?

Blessed be God, blessed be God, it's through this dear Jesus, it is, he's a living Christ, a living Christ, a precious Christ, so my friend, this is the sure foundation, Christ living, this same Jesus that we tried to preach from not long ago.

My mind then journeyed on in meditation and to the scripture in the Ephesians of which we read together, and you who were sometime afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

[24 : 21] He were or do I have to say you are still afar off.

The Lord, the Holy Spirit convince you, lead you to himself, put in your heart that cry for mercy, that coming to the Saviour, he was sometime far off, made nigh by the blood of Christ, that he is our peace.

And through that blood on Calvary's cross has broken down the middle wall of partition between us, that is primarily between the Jew and the Gentile, but also as I believe set before us in the scripture, the petition between us and a holy God, that that petition, as I view, the cherubim with flaming sword guarding the way to the tree of life, that there was no breaking through that unless that barrier is broken down, and that barrier is broken down by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, because those swords flaming of red have fallen on another, that other was Jesus Christ in the room and place of poor sinners, and so that the gate of heaven is open, the door of mercy is open, oh my friend it's wonderful, this is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes, my Jesus has done all things well, we tried to speak from it not long ago, and I believe it's tarried with some of you, it gathered so in the prayer meeting, my dear friend how good it is, so let us come now a little further to these that are saved by the grace of God redeemed by that precious blood, and so we read now therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,

Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone, what is their text? The stone which the builders refused, that was the Jew, he came unto his own, and his own received him not, poor sinners, by the grace of God, yes, brought to the saving knowledge of the Savior, the stone which the builders refused has become the headstone of the corner, the chief cornerstone, now we are no more strangers, and I'm speaking of the stone built on that foundation, once you were a stranger, once you were a foreigner, what's the distinction?

if I met people up and down this road, they'd be strangers to me, but sometimes we see a foreigner, a double sense then, they'd be a stranger, but I wouldn't understand them, I wouldn't understand their language, do you remember, even in childhood days, even though like myself, you had no opposition to go to chapel, you were quite willing to go, some of you look back to say, yeah, but I did come to opposition, I did fight against it, but my friend, either way, whether gently led or more solemnly led, but there was a time when these things didn't mean anything, it was strange language, we didn't understand what was being said, we knew something of the Bible by the upbringing and teaching of the scriptures, like the history of the word, but we didn't know anything spiritually until the Lord began that work of grace, that instead of being a stranger, instead of being foreign language, though there was much we couldn't understand, still we were in difficulties, but there were little bits here and a little bit there that was made known to us, and oh how precious it was, and didn't you love those little bits, if I say that reverently, those crumbs would be better expression, and they started to gather you in, no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, now I do love this, because sinners called by grace, there's a sacred union, there's a drawing together, that they love one another, and they speak the same language,

[29 : 18] I know there's not perfection, that must wait till we reach glory, but nevertheless it is the same language, it's the same work, the same grace, the same salvation, the same dear saviour of sinners, and fellows, and you know, if you have the love of Christ in your soul to you, my dear friend, we know that we pass from death unto life because we love the brethren, I've said so often, I say it again, it's not passing, not love of the brethren that means we pass from death unto life, that's the blood of Christ alone that does that, but the fruit of it, the evidence of it, the comfort of it, that the interest in it, surely is seen in this, that we love the brethren, and you do, deny it, you may have among the brethren and sisters someone that's a bit awkward, pray earnestly for that to be broken, but my friend,

I say we vary of course in temperament and so forth, I won't enlarge that point, but it's I love to meet among them now, and at thy gracious feet about the finest you feel, Lord why am I here, why am I not up there in that gambling place, why am I not down to the public house, why am I not down in these awful sex places, my friend it's only grace that makes us to differ, remember that, but not only this, he says here, that fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God, this means the family of God, and that God is a heavenly father, and the Holy Spirit is making it known, and again, as I think of the word, and I want to quote it accurately, the disciple of love, in his epistle, the first epistle to John, how sweetly he says, behold what manner of love the father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of

God, therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knoweth him not, now you see, the world would recognize the world, that is when you were a stranger and a foreigner, though you may have been going to chapel, the world would recognize you, but now you start to speak about those things that are dear to your soul, they don't know you, they don't want you, because they don't stand the light, because they're children of the darkness, you're the child of light and life, and that's the distinction, and the household, and therefore you've got brethren and sisters in Christ, and therefore you do good especially to the household of faith, but you do good to all men, mark that, don't forget that, but at the same time, the sufferings and the trials, the dear people of God, if they're in trouble, you feel it, why?

Because of the love that you have, you would do anything to help them, you may be powerless, but you'll pray for them, you'll take them to Jesus, won't you? We've had some very solemn, heavy afflictions in this place for the last three or four years, and my friend, what a pouring out of prayer there's been, and what wonderful answers have been to those prayers.

That's it. But then he says, are built. These people are built, they've got a foundation, what is it? Now, the first may sound strange, but wait a minute, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

[33 : 01] You may say, but you've just said there's no other foundation but Jesus Christ the Lord. That is true. What does it mean? it means here not that we're built on the apostles themselves, Peter, John and James, or Isaiah or Jeremiah.

No. What it does mean is on the truth that those men of God preached. Those setting forth of the coming of the Messiah, those openings up of the revelation of the deep purposes of God in the salvation of sinners.

built on that. And then it comes Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone on the truth, on the word.

It's gone for me. Well known, but it may come back in a moment. We built on the truth, on the word, thy blood has seeded, hangs my everlasting all.

That's it. That one foundation. Now, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth as to a holy habitation to the Lord, a holy temple to the Lord.

[34 : 22] Ye also are builded as a together for an habitation of God through the spirit. Look at it. It's ever so solemn, isn't it? You think of it.

The habitation here, as we see, of God through the spirit. Sinners born again, the Lord dwells in their heart.

Wonderful. Here we see the building fiddly framed together. I tarry another moment or two. I've turned much longer on this than I anticipated.

Who was it those stones laid on that foundation? Where did they come from? Let's go back a little bit. They were perishing.

They were in the deep, dark caverns of the earth. But there's a sovereign purpose. God knows where all those stones are, covered in filth, misshapen, far off, hard.

[35 : 32] The purpose of God's grace, that be dug out. I've no knowledge of these things.

But as I believe with some, I've read, I think Philpott speaks of Portland stone. And when that was used, I believe he writes about one of the bridges in London, if I remember rightly, but I'm not a historian.

But those that engaged the work said it was enough to, I say, almost tear their heart out with the labour of it.

No, what I'm getting at is this. There are those cases, hard, as we may say, open enemies of the cross, and yet manifest as vessels of mercy, and brought out by solemn means.

others, they may be quite gentle, but it's the same power, they've got to be brought out, they've got to be shaped, they've got to be cleansed, they've got to be prepared, they've got to be made ready.

[36 : 51] They will take you back to the temple built by Solomon, won't they? the stones of that temple, there was no sound of hammer or chisel or any instrument on the temple site itself where the temple was actually being built.

It was all made ready and then brought to its appointed place. This one foundation, Jesus Christ the Lord and sinners prepared for it, made ready.

My dear friends, this is the need be of the tribulation, this is the need be of the temptations through which you pass, this may be and is the need be for that you yourself have got to be made smaller, have got to be prepared for glory.

With mercy and with judgment my web of time he wove and in the deuce of sorrow and lustre with his love, I bless the hand that guided and I bless the heart that planned when thrown in highest glory in Emmanuel's land.

Now I come now to one more, the last reading of the scripture tonight, to the words of the apostle Peter by inspiration. salvation. And again, oh my, oh Holy Spirit, I was going to say, I beg of thee to work here, oh the babes, I believe there are some babes in Christ here.

[38 : 24] Maybe a word for you tonight, you babe in Christ, you may say, how do I know I'm a babe in Christ? The scriptures tell you they desire this gold and silver of the world?

A great name for themselves? Palm and glory? Once it may have been, not now. Don't misunderstand it. There's right to make progress in your daily calling and work, that's right.

But it's the sincere milk of the word. It doesn't say the strong meat, it says the milk, but it says sincere. You want the truth, nothing but the truth, and you're going to feed on that.

I turn then in my meditation, and this is followed through this evening, after the Sunday school, newborn babes, if so be you tasted the Lord of grace, just a taste, dare you deny it?

To whom coming? Who do you come to? It is unto a living stone, this Christ, mark him, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, precious to God.

[39 : 46] He also, as lively stones, born again sinners, built up a spiritual house, and holy priesthood, and to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God by Jesus Christ, the spiritual sacrifice of true repentance, of prayer for forgiveness, of that spiritual sacrifice of thanksgiving, the spiritual sacrifice, I'm not my own, the spiritual sacrifice to offer those thanksgiving unto God, and those good works, not that we offer them for merit, but like Paul, writing to the Philippians, speaks of those things that the Philippian church had done for him, that a sacrifice pleasing and acceptable, a sweet smelling sacrifice in the sight of God, because it's to God, for his glory, and to his honour.

Now he says here, ye therefore, it is contained in the scripture, behold, I lay in Zion, a chief cornerstone, elect precious, and he that believeth on him, in you come, you dear believers, trembling believers, in you come, dare you deny it?

Ye the believers, think of it, it says to whom come in, then it says here, oh, sorry, I've just lost my place, just for the moment, let me get it quite right, and let he that believeth on him shall not be confounded, and then, unto you therefore that believe, what's the mark?

He is precious, this is the one foundation, this will stand forever, and forever, I feel here, I shall have to close, oh, my friend, may this be made precious to our souls, don't misunderstand that, about the headstone, I'm not quite clear on that, where they speak in the hymn, I believe we're going to sing about the headstone, where there's a type of Christ, but what I do know, and what I say is this, and it I believe sets forth Christ, it says the alpha and the omega of true believers, the first and the last, the beginning and the ending, not that there's an end in Christ, you know what I mean, but he that begun that good work will perform it, and that foundation is the foundation and there he shall have all the praise, as we read in the words of our text, and this is the

Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes, may God bless his own word and mercifully pardon all that is the best, amen.