Christ refused, becomes the Headstone (Quality: Very good, quiet)

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Date: 29 December 2002 Preacher: Pont, Philip

[0:00] The Lord, for his most needed help, I ask your attention to Psalm 118 and verses 22 and 23

Psalm 118 and verses 22 and 23. The stone which the builders refused has become the headstone of the corner.

And this is the Lord's doing. It is marvellous in our eyes. The stone which the builders refused has become the headstone of the corner.

This is the Lord's doing. It is marvellous in our eyes. It might be some interest just to say how this word was, or a part of this word was given to me early Friday morning.

I trust one's exercise doesn't stay on the day, or indeed on forthcoming days, but continually is the exercise of the word of God with us.

[1:44] But sometime early Friday, this came to me, in the darkness, this is the Lord's doing.

It is marvellous in our eyes. All day Friday, I waited for what was the Lord's doing.

Then I waited all day Saturday, and it was nothing. Oh, my hope rose up. I can't explain to anybody how my hope rose up that we might hear of something which was the Lord's doing.

And therefore, we could say it is marvellous in our eyes. And the nearer the Lord's day came, the poorer I become. So much so, that in the midst of the night season, last night, I vowed and declared I'd read a sermon.

Because I had nothing, and I was exceedingly emptied out of anything and everything. But then I had to pray this, the Lord will keep my hand from putting anything to his work.

[3:12] And having nothing else. And that's literally true. One has to venture upon these words. But the Lord has joined to it.

This verse 22. The stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing.

It is marvellous in our eyes. And you that read your Bible will see, and it is recorded in the margin. There's half a dozen places in the word of God that speak about this foundation.

In fact, about this very word. It's all in the New Testament. But there it is to remind us of the importance of it.

The stone which the builders refused. And that stone is Christ. And really, as I found these hymns, I believe on Friday.

[4:25] And I looked at them last night, and I thought I might as well throw them away. For what sense of good they seem to my mind to be.

But the last verse of the hymn is what though the gates of hell withstood. Yet must this building rise.

Tis thine own work, almighty God, and wondrous in our eyes. The foolish builder, scribe and priest. Rejected with disdain.

Yet on this rock the church shall rest. And envy, rage in vain. Well, it has a general view, of course.

The stone which the builders refused has become the headstone of a corner. It has a general view, my friends. The church is built on a foundation that cannot give way.

[5:22] And will not give way. If you look at the Ephesians, the reference in the Ephesians. Ephesians 2. It speaks of Jesus Christ.

The chief cornerstone. And I know little about building. But I know this. That if you was to have a building without a foundation. You would be most foolish.

And I know this too. I think it is the practical way. When they are building houses. Or where there is much brickwork to put up.

They put the corners up first. And build to them. My friends, how is a poor example. The Lord delivers us from looking for natural examples.

But it is a poor example really. Because, my friends. We come back to this. The stone which the builders refused. On what ground do you stone?

[6:21] Is your religion. And mine. It is a general word. The church is built. On a foundation. The Lord Jesus Christ said to Peter.

Upon this rock. Will I build my church. And the gates of hell. Shall not prevail against it. I remember a dear minister.

Quoting from that hymn. Onward Christian soldiers. And they were very sweet lines to me. If I could gather them together.

Perhaps I will in the course of time. Gates of hell shall never. Against this church prevail. That is God's own promise.

And it cannot fail. The stone which the builders refused. What then dear friends. Where is your region and mine? Is it on this stone?

[7:27] Again we must look at the holy word of God for help. And there is no other better help. Than as the spirit directs us. And in 1 Corinthians 3 we find this.

He speaks of himself here for a moment. According to the grace of God which is given unto me as a wise master builder.

I have laid the foundation. And another buildeth thereon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is lay which is Jesus Christ.

Now if any man build upon this foundation.ord kalo you have done it. God. For other people. G google. If you have laid the foundation. For other things for you. misread Lukehake. Blessed.

When the apostle said, I have laid the foundation, he did not remove for a moment the singular and sacred work of the Holy Ghost.

[8:45] He is the one that lays the foundation. What he has done, what the apostle means by this is that having in this to lay the foundation, he has preached the foundation.

He has set it forth. He has in his writings and preachings laid the foundation which is Jesus Christ and him crucified.

He has laid that before believers, before the church. He has only laid it there as far as he can, as far as preaching is concerned.

It is built upon this foundation.

It rests upon it. And gates of hell shall never against this church prevail. That is God's own promise. And it shall not fail.

[10:05] And it cannot fail. The stone which the builders refused has become the headstone of the corner. What a marvelous work it is.

What a wondrous work it is. And what a sure work it is. And it's laid in the soul. The Lord will put it there.

All my hope on Christ is stayed. There's a hymn that says this. On Christ the solid rock I stand.

All other ground is sinking sand. My friends, it's so needful is this foundation. That same hymn, 1106, has got a line in it.

When all around my soul gives way. He then is all my strength and stay. My friends, it will come a time when it will all give way.

[11:06] Except this foundation. Oh, you think of the vast numbers. And may we never be amongst them. That have a religion.

And speak of spiritual things. But have no true foundation. My friends, what a solemn thing it is. But it's true.

And there's thousands of foolish builders, we might call them. The Lord keep us from being amongst them. The stone which the builders refused. Is become the headstone of the corner.

But go back into your old path. Go back into your unregenerate ways. You refused this. And so did I. You had no, it was, as the prophet wrote in the 53rd of Isaiah.

There was no form nor comeliness. And we did not desire him. But a mercy, my friends. If you've got a real religion. If you have, you've got a real foundation.

[12:12] And God began it. He never asked you. And he doesn't need your hand to build this foundation. He doesn't need your hand in any manner or way.

It's his work and his work alone. Wonderful thing, you know. If you can, as it were, stand and look at that work of grace.

Not in others. Blessed be God when you can see it in others. But blessed be God when it's revealed within you. And you can look at the work and say, this is the Lord's doing.

This is the Lord's doing. My friends, wonderful. You'll bless God for eternity. Let alone in this time state. This is the Lord's doing.

Well, my friends, may we have such a religion as that. Because it will stand every storm. And the greatest of storms that it will stand is the storm of death.

[13:17] And as you and I face each other on this last Sunday of the year. My friends, it's a strong reminder. That we're one year nearer to the end of our journey. Oh, and then the poet's words come again.

In that dread moment, oh, to hide. Where are you going to hide? Well, in this person who is the stone. Which the builders refuse. The headstone.

And you'll find a refuge there if you've got grace. And you'll need a hiding place there. My friends, it will be a hiding place which is sufficient.

Hide me, oh, my Saviour, hide. Till the storms of life are past. Safe into the haven guide.

Oh, receive my soul at last. It's very solemn, my friends. We must not take up any to offend.

[14:16] We must not speak against these things which are so evident in the world. It's an offence now to criticise another's religion. It is so, and you can indeed be brought into problems over it, my friends.

But there's only one real religion. There's only one real church, and that's the Church of Christ. And if you and I are a member of that church, all other religions, all other titles, denominations, whatever you call them, are resting short.

The stone which the builders refused has become the headstone of the corner. And by nature, we all do so. By nature, we more or less say we'll not have this man to reign over us.

What is there, my friends, in Christ Jesus? To a dead soul, nothing. What is there in a vain, Professor? But there's something of the letter there.

There's something of tradition. And there's been such a lot of tradition, hasn't there, in the last few days. The singing of his praises.

[15:37] His name has been on the lips of sinner and saint. But there's an enormous amount of tradition. My friends, the Lord deliver us from wrong tradition.

And resting upon tradition also. But this blessed person is the foundation stone, the cornerstone of the Church.

And will be and ever shall be and must be the cornerstone and strength and foundation of real religion.

My friends, if you and I have a good work, and that's the gracious work of the Holy Spirit, it will centre on this person.

If you've been convinced of sin and grown unto the knowledge of it, and mourn because of it, and weep because of it, and are brought to the throne of grace to confess it, my friends, any relief, any comfort, any hope, that may arise from a gracious Holy Spirit's work in your soul, it will arise from this foundation, and nothing else.

[16:55] It's very remarkable, you know. We spoke in prayer about that Passover lamb, my friends, but deliverance rested on that.

Deliverance rested on it. And it was the Lord's doing. He had sent various other plagues upon Egypt.

And he hardened Pharaoh's heart. He resisted, again, those words of Moses. There were times when he did, as it were, begin to see that it was time to let those Israelites go.

But then he hardened his heart again. The plagues that were sent, and whatever they were, and one of them, it was said the finger of God was seen in it.

But that didn't alter him. Because his heart was hardened. But that last visit of God was a visit of mercy for Israel, and a visit of judgment upon Egypt.

[18:12] And that was the deliverance. My friends, if you are in the bondage of sin, if you're under Satan's captivity, if you're tempted of the devil, you might be one that has known better days in your soul, or you might be one of those who is waiting for the blessing.

He'll show you this foundation. He'll show you this foundation. And he'll show you this blood, which was shed for many.

And that precious blood, as it's applied, will bring deliverance from the oppressor, and from all sin, and from iniquity.

The stone which the builders refused. We read on Christmas morning, he came unto his own, and his own received him not.

They refused him. Why did they refuse him? When he was so obvious, the Son of God, because their eyes were hardened, hearts were hardened, and their eyes were closed.

[19:23] They were left. My friends, they were left. Oh, think about it. If you've any hope in the mercy of God, bless God, you wasn't left, as those Jews of old were.

Their eyes were holden, their hearts were hard, and their ears were deaf, and their soul was dead. My friends, and that's why you could write.

He came unto his own, and his own received him not. That's why it is written here, the stone which the builders refused. Oh, think of all those religious people, the high priests, that he was from descendancy, from Aaron.

Think of the Levites, whose work it was in the temple, to assist the priests, think of all those scribes, and Pharisees, think of those Sadducees, oh, a multitude of religious people, and they refused this headstone.

think of Mary Magdalene. Think of dear Peter. Think of the woman in the Gospel of Luke, who washed the feet of Christ, with her tears.

[20:57] Think of those disciples of Jesus Christ, 11 of them were believers in him. Think of those. Think of Saul of Tarsus for a moment.

Think of David, with all his sin and iniquity. And you think, my friends, of the greatest of sinners. And may it be that it's the witness of your own soul, that you stand here, in this place, and bless God, if you've not refused this headstone.

The stone which the builders refused, is become the headstone of the corner. And he will be so, in the spiritual experience, of every child of God.

The world will be the world, and it will sink, in utter distress and despair one day, into the pit, forever and ever.

But there is a people, my friends, whose spiritual life, and whose teaching, and the teaching of the Spirit, in their soul, and their knowledge of salvation, and their hope for heaven, rests upon, this headstone of the corner.

[22:22] And then they will say, it is the Lord's doing. It isn't theirs. There's no taking up with Jesus Christ, my friends. It's not within us to do so.

We haven't got a nature, that he's able to take up with Jesus Christ. We don't make our response, to those sorts of exercises of men.

The stone which the builders refused, the stone which the builders refused, is become, the headstone of the corner. Wonderful mercy, my friends, if you are signalled out, separated by sovereign grace, called by electing love, brought to be a poor and needy soul, brought to cry out for mercy, as did the publican in the Gospel of Luke.

My friends, and blessed be God, if indeed it is so, that you can look to that work, and say, that Christ is first, and Christ is last, and Christ is all and in all.

There is another word, which I would just remind you of, and it's amongst those words that we should read sometime, concerning this foundation stone.

Ye also, this is the Apostle Peter, writing to the strangers, while we go back a word, to whom coming is unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious.

Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, and holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ.

Wherefore also it is contained, in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion, a chief cornerstone, elect precious, and he that believeth on him, shall not be confounded.

Unto you therefore, which believe, he is precious, but unto them, which be disobedient. Disobedient. The stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed.

Oh, how solemn, my friends, are those. The day will come, you know, that he who has been refused, will be their judge. What great importance, lies in those words, what think ye of Christ.

[25:30] my friends, what importance, lay, what great importance, lay in those words. Because, as I've often said to you, the, what you would answer, to the question, will indeed reveal, whether there is grace, in your soul, the stone, which the builders refused, is become, the headstone of the corner.

This, is the Lord's doings. Good to have a work, my friends, when, like those two gracious people, in the book of Judges, Manoah and his wife, good to have a work, which they didn't put a hand to.

The angel did wondrously, and Manoah and his wife, looked on. Good to have such a work. That's not the looking on, in complacency.

That's not the looking on, in the expression, of many of the world. Whatever, will be, will be. My friends, it's a gracious looking on.

It's a wondrous looking on. It's as Christ is revealed, as the way, the truth, and the life. It is as hope, and blessing, and mercy, rests upon him.

[27:05] Oh, there's a looking on there. This is the Lord's doing. My friends, from first to last, God the Father chose a people, in eternity past.

Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ, took those, took that people, as his people, and for his, for their sins, he entered into this world.

It's, it's, very true, my friends, but it's exceedingly solemn. How many, in the last few days, have heard the truth, whether it's through, the hymns, or the carols, that have sung, or the scripture readings, that have been, read.

Thou shalt call his name, Jesus, for he shall save his people, from their sins. Christ, took upon himself, the salvation, of his people, and entered this world, as a child, born of a woman, born unto the Lord, laid in a manger.

They all know that. They all know about, this business of being, laid in a manger. They all know this. My friends, how the, these things are accompanied, with various carols, and so on

[28:29] But oh, blessed be God, my friends, when you can see, that amongst that people, a number that no man could number, is your unworthy name.

The stone which the builders refuse, has become the headstone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing. And then by the blessed spirit of truth, speaking life into your dead soul, quickening you into life, bringing to you the hopelessness, of what it is to be, dead in trespasses and sins.

Conscious now, that your being itself, is the subjects of sin. You walk your pathway, your thought, everything. My friends, concerning the natural man, is sin.

The best intentions, are, died with sin. Your worship of the name of Jesus, is, died with sin. You're taken up of a profession.

My friends, sin, comes into it. Would you believe it? But it does. But oh, this work, this is the Lord's doing. Wonderful, my friends, that you might be able to trace.

[29:48] The, the dear man, Moses said, thou shalt remember, all the way, in which the Lord thy God, hath led thee. He didn't say, what I've done.

He didn't say, well, when I took up, the, uh, position and place, to bring Israel out of Goshen. He didn't say, the steps that we went, towards the Red Sea.

It was the Lord's work, that he brought, before Israel. My friends, may the Holy Spirit, bring the Lord's work, before you. This is the Lord's doing. Oh, if you can trace, the spirit of truth.

You don't remember, when you was born, into this world. You're not capable. The mental abilities, that are, in a child, is not developed, sufficient, to remember, the day of one's birth.

But I do believe, my friends, a child of God, knows today, or, those, approaching times, or those, exercises, within the spirit, when, the Lord, put his hand, to what, is his work.

[30:56] This is the Lord's doing. It is wonderful, my friends, but it's his doing. And it takes away, all responsibility, of man, to do, anything, towards his own salvation.

This is the Lord's doing, in the provision, of grace, of life, in the soul. The text, on Christmas morning, for your interest, who wasn't here, was this, that the people, who walked, in darkness, have seen, a great light.

My friends, and they, and left to themselves, they'd walk on, in darkness. But, blessed be God, there is a people, who's, shall be, sweetly, and sacredly, taught of the spirit.

What it, what it was, what was it said, about Jesus? Him, in him, was life. And that life, was the light, of men. this is the Lord's doing.

Oh, have you ever wondered, it is his goodness. Have you ever stood, and had a view, of his sovereignty? Have you ever wondered, why it should be so, when there's plenty, of better people, that he has passed by?

And as the, the old pastor, at the Dickley, used to say, there was better people, in hell than him. This is the Lord's doing. Oh, my friends, to cry out, after Christ, to seek after him, when you've got a nature, that doesn't want him, when you've got, a nature, that would refute, the very knowledge, of being a sinner, and would, would indeed, turn from such things, to, other things, which are more, interesting to the flesh.

this is the Lord's doing. Oh, my friends, the stamp, of divine sovereignty, is upon, real religion, the authority.

It was once explained, very simply to us, years ago. if you take a banknote, you know, there is, an inscription on it, there is a signature on it, but there's also, a promise on it, and if you look, at your banknotes, tomorrow, it says, I promise, to pay the bearer, and the signature, on the bottom, is that, is the chief cashier, of the Bank of England, and it's a promise, that he's kept.

My friends, have you such, a signature, have you, have you such an authority, on your religion. This is the Lord's doing.

Why was I made, to hear his voice, and enter Wilder's room, while thousands, make that wretched choice, and rather starve, than come.

[34:16] solemn, my friends, but oh, how glorious it is. How wondrous it is. This is the Lord's doing, it is marvellous, in our eyes.

I want to go back, a little. The stone, which the builders, refused, has become, the headstone, of a corner. And I want, to look at it, like this.

The Lord, help us, to do so. what he, indeed, intends to do, with his people. They're not all, raised up, for this, or that, position, and place.

They're not all, preachers, or deacons, or anything else, in the church of God. humble walkers, these are dear, in Jesus' eyes.

But according, to his divine appointments, my friends, he raises some up. The stone, which the builders, refused, has become, the headstone, of a corner.

[35:27] I'm not taking this, away from Christ, not for a second. My friends, but the Lord, uses, and raises up, whom he will.

I, I thought about, those words, in the, again in the second, of Ephesians, where he speaks of, of a foundation, of the gospel, not, of, the gospel, in its, redeeming love, and blood, but this, but are built upon, the foundation, of the apostles, and prophets.

And who would have thought, my friends, in the order of things, that God, in his divine sovereignty, had a work, for Saul of Tarsus, to do.

Him that was trying, to overthrow, the work of God. God. But then, when you look, as you can read, in, you can read about, his evil heart, you can read about, his evil ways, and the hatred he had, to Christ, and his people, and oh, how hard was his heart, that he could, hail men and women, to prison, and to death.

And yet, you know, in the most, wonderful way, God had a work, for him to do. The most unlikely, the most, indeed, unexpected, because when he came, to walk, to walk with the disciples, they wouldn't have anything, to do with him.

[36:57] He said himself, again, referring to the word, of God, as the best example, and indeed, where the truth is, to be realized.

If you look at, the Galatians, chapter one, there again, he, puts all the honor, and all the glory, upon his God, but when it pleased God, not man, when I, not when I thought, well, I'll take my lot, with this people, or I'll change camps, as it were, but when it pleased God, who separated me, from my mother's womb, and called me, by his grace, to reveal his son in me, that I might preach him, among the heathen, immediately, I conferred not, conferred not, with flesh and blood, and so on.

And then he comes down, to the end of that first chapter, and he said, and was unknown by face, unto the churches of Judea, which were in Christ, but they had heard only, that he which persecuted us, in times past, now preaches the faith, when once, he destroyed, and they glorified God, in me.

the stone, which the builders, refused. Oh, my friends, how in the history, of the church of Christ, has the most, unusual, characters, been raised up, into the church, to preach Christ.

I've always said, that the preaching, of the gospel, must surely be preached, by sinners, saved by grace. Angels can't preach it. because they've never, experienced it.

[38:49] The stone, which the builders, refused. My friends, what a remarkable, but yet, an evidence, of divine sovereignty. Even in those, that hold places, in the church of Christ, they have to wonder, why it was, and how it came to be.

I remember, when I had to disclose, the exercise, of the ministry, to my own father, the first thing, he said it was, I didn't think it was you, I thought it was your brother.

But nevertheless, my friends, there is the truth. But, there again, the effect of that grace, is not to, lift up. The effect of that grace, is not to make, the person proud.

The effect of that grace, is in reverse, really, in absolute opposite. Because, this same, Pharisee, that we spoke about there, Saul of Tarsus, this same, hater of the gospel, and persecutor, of the people of God, the effect of that grace, and there was, very much evident, was this, unto me, who am less, than the least, of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach, among the Gentiles, the unsearchable riches, of Christ, the stone, which the builders refused.

I wonder how many, of the children of God, who have made a profession, would have to say, I never thought, I'd be found there.

[40:33] I never thought, the day would come, when I stand before a church, and give a testimony, to the work of grace. Or I could well understand, this one, or that one, because they are, so godly in their walk, and in their pathway, and in what they talk about, and in their action, but well for me, I don't think it's for me.

And now I look back, and wonder at it, and I have to say, this is the Lord's doing. This is the Lord's doing. My friends, if it isn't, it's all wrong.

But there is then, also a warning here. In the, eighth chapter of the Acts, we find a man, who believed, and was baptized.

His name was Simeon, Simon. His name was Simon. My friends, he wasn't one of those, whom God had chosen. Why wasn't he?

What was the evidence? His heart wasn't right. That was what was evident. And it took a gracious apostle to discern that.

[41:47] God's, but there again, my friends, his own way and pathway revealed it, when he would have purchased, if he could have done, the gift of the laying on of hands.

The stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner. Oh, you go back, my friends, read about these dear old saints of God, whom the Lord raised up to preach the gospel.

Remember Francis Coval, the West Street pastor, who had a disability, a dreadful disability.

What would you think a preacher wants? Well, he wants a fluent tongue, as it were. He wants to be able to speak, and the words flow. And the poor man was a stammerer.

Stammerer, you couldn't understand what he said when he worked. Couldn't understand what he was talking about, because he stammered so much. My friends, he was one of those who God raised up as a preacher of righteousness, whose ministry was well blessed, and owned by the spirit of the good of the church of Christ.

[43:07] And if it is what I hear is right, or what I read is right, when he stood in a pulpit, all that stammering disappeared. And he opened his mouth to preach, and the Lord removed his disability.

The stone which the builders refused has become the headstone of the corner. Oh, my friends, what a wonderful mercy these words are written, not only concerning the person of the head of the church, but also of those who are of the church.

those who the Lord has blessed with grace, or will bless with grace. Those, you know, you'll find many are one who will say, well, we weren't surprised, you know, when we heard this or we heard that.

But then there are others, my friends, you'll have to say, what a wonderful work of grace. They were brought out of the world. They were brought into the fellowship of the gospel and into the ways of God.

But, my friends, it must be also said, whether you're brought up to go to the chapel or not, every one of them is a brand plucked from the fire. The stone which the builders refused has become the headstone of the corner.

[44:33] Amen. God willing, there's a prayer meeting next Wednesday.

And next Lord's Day, there's a prayer meeting in the morning and a preaching service at night. Shall we close with hymn 352?

The moon and stars shall lose their light, the sun shall sink in endless night, both heaven and earth shall pass away, and the works of nature all decay.

But they that in the Lord confide and shelter in his wounded side shall see the danger overpassed and every storm and live at last.

hymn 352. a cunt and a stren overpassed of and they who all and they are even day to us how well theormous tree and heda In that high price right the wiltile part of the child of the star.

[46:40] In that high price and a half Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[50:52] Amen. Amen.

Amen. thy grace to be seen. Oh, bring this to the light, Lord, we pray, and that we might then be able to say this is the Lord's doing, and wonderful in our eyes. Oh, not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy goodness, and for thy mercy's sake. Oh, pardon what's been said amiss, but do bless thine own word.

Lord, be with us now, and take us home in peace and safety. Abide with us, Lord, bring us together tonight, and may thy spirit again be in the midst. May the grace of the Lord Jesus, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, remain with us now and always.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[52:50] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.