

**GOD’S GIFT, A LIVING STONE:**  
**THE PRECIOUS ONE**

**I Peter 2:4-5**  
**December 12, 2010**

**INTRODUCTION:** According to **1 Peter 2:3**, at salvation, all believers experience how gracious the Lord is to those who trust Him.

**1 Peter 2:3, “Now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.”**

It was, indeed, at Christmas that God gave His greatest gift, the Lord Jesus Christ; Immanuel, God with us.

If you have a television, you were probably brought to tears recently as you joined the world in watching the miners rescued in Chile. It was an amazing moment each time a miner came to the surface! Watching the emotions and hearing the final speech of the Chilean President was truly moving. However, he made one statement that stood out to me. Speaking to the miners, he said, *“When our day of judgment arrives, we trust and hope you will all be here to rescue us.”* We understood his emotions, but some vital truth was missing.

*“The majority of the world believes that some type of judgment, by some god or spirit, is in the future. Because of this, they live in continual fear, utter darkness, and personal anxiety for their entire lives. They hope their offerings to idols and spirits will be the source of their rescue.”*

Mike Wright, UPG

**Isaiah 9:2, “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.”**

**1 Peter 2:9b** says, **“that you may proclaim the praises of Him Who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”**

**I. THE SAVIOR: GOD’S PRECIOUS ONE. 4**

**A. LIVING STONE.**

**“coming to Him as to a living stone”** – Peter uses a metaphor of a *living stone* to identify the One to Whom believers come, Jesus Christ. The O.T. designates God as the only rock, the foundation and strength of His people (**Deut 32:4,31**). In the N.T., Jesus Christ is the rock and the stone on which the church rests. Peter’s image is of a stone that was perfectly designed, shaped, and hewn out to become the cornerstone of the church, not merely a stone, but a living stone. That living stone is Christ because He lives forever, having risen from the dead.

**Romans 6:9, “knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.”**

## B. CHOSEN.

The Father measured Him by the standards of divine perfection and declared:

**Matthew 3:17, “And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’”**

**Jeremiah 23:5-6, “Behold, the days are coming,’ says the Lord,  
‘That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness;  
A King shall reign and prosper,  
And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.  
In His days Judah will be saved,  
And Israel will dwell safely;  
Now this is His name by which He will be called:  
THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.’”**

## C. PRECIOUS.

Means costly, highly prized, rare

## II. THE SAINT: GOD’S PRIVILEGED ONES. 4

**“coming to Him”** – it is to that unique **living stone** that everyone must come to receive the spiritual privilege that accompanies a relationship with God; salvation.

**2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”**

**John 1:12, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:**

**Matthew 11:28, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”**

Jesus Christ, the chief cornerstone, fulfills the image of the temple as God’s house.

Each time someone trusts Christ, another stone is quarried out of the pit of sin and cemented by grace into God’s building. What a privilege to be part of “His” church.

**Ephesians 2:19-22, “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”**

**v.21 “a holy temple in the Lord”** – every new believer , as he/she comes to Christ, is a new stone in Christ’s temple, the church, Christ’s body of believers. Christ’s building of His church will not be complete until every person who will believe in Him has done so.

**v.22** reminds us that the church (Christ’s body), you and I, are **“a dwelling place (habitation)of God in the Spirit”**

**“Coming to Him”** – denotes a conscious coming into God’s presence with the intent to remain; word implied the movement of the entire inner person, into the experience of intimate and ongoing communion with Jesus Christ. The word conveys more than a mere drawing close to Christ for salvation.

As we **come** to the **living stone .4**, He gives life and we become **living stones. .5** and this gives **living hope.**

**1 Peter 1:3, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”**

### **III. THE SINNER: THE PROBLEMED ONES. 4**

**“rejected indeed by man”** (disallowed); past action with results continuing indefinitely. Word means to test or to examine, which establishes direction as being “away from.” The Jewish leaders of the first century, having examined the living stone, make a summary judgment, pushing Him away. The word *rejected* is borrowed from **Ps 118:22**, which means to “lightly esteem” or “to despise.”

The messianic credentials of Jesus were examined by the religious leaders of Israel and rejected.

**John 1:10-11, “He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.”**

Hear the prophecy from which **1 Peter 2:7** is quoted.

**Psalms 118:21-24**

**“I will praise You,  
For You have answered me,  
And have become my salvation.  
The stone which the builders rejected  
Has become the chief cornerstone.  
This was the Lord's doing;  
It is marvelous in our eyes.  
This is the day the Lord has made;  
We will rejoice and be glad in it.”**

He simply did not measure up to any of the Jewish establishment's expectations.

Dr. Luke recorded the Psalm reference twice; note **Luke 20:17**

**Acts 4:10-12, "let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."**

To those who receive Him, He is their Cornerstone

To those who reject Him, He is their Stone of Stumbling

**Luke 20:18, "Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."**

**"to fall on that stone"** – speaks of repentance and faith; mercy

**"on whomever it falls"** – judgment

Oswald Chambers, **The Bounty of the Destitute**

*"There is a certain pride in man that will give and give, but to come and accept is another thing. I will give my life to martyrdom, I will give myself in consecration, I will do anything, but do not humiliate me to the level of the most hell-deserving sinner and tell me that all I have to do is to accept the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ."*

The greatest blessing spiritually is the knowledge that we are destitute; until we get there our Lord is powerless. As long as we are rich, possessed of anything in the way of pride or independence, God cannot do anything for us.

#### **IV. THE SPIRITUAL HOUSE: OUR OFFERING. 5**

##### **A. MY SALVATION.**

**"You also, as living stones"** – to be **living stones** means that believers have the eternal life of Christ. They are united with Him, which is their spiritual privilege. Christians become partakers of the divine nature. **II Peter 1:4**

Cowman, **If Christ Had Not Come**

*"A number of years ago a remarkable Christmas card was published by the title, 'If Christ Had Not Come.' It was based on our Savior's own words, 'If I had not come,' in **John 15:22**. The card*

*pictured a minister falling asleep in his study on Christmas morning and then dreaming of a world into which Jesus had never come.*

*In his dream, he saw himself walking through his house, but as he looked, he saw no stockings hung on the chimney, no Christmas tree, no wreaths of holly, and no Christ to comfort and gladden hearts or to save us. He then walked onto the street outside, but there was no church with its spire pointing toward heaven. And when he came back and sat down in his library, he realized that every book about our Savior had disappeared.*

*The minister dreamed that the doorbell rang and that a messenger asked him to visit a friend's poor dying mother. He reached her home, and as his friend sat and wept, he said, 'I have something here that will comfort you.' He opened his Bible to look for a familiar promise, but it ended with Malachi. There was no gospel and no promise of hope and salvation, and all he could do was bow his head and weep with his friend and his mother in bitter despair.*

*Two days later he stood beside her coffin and conducted her funeral service, but there was no message of comfort, no words of a glorious resurrection, and no thought of a mansion awaiting her in heaven. There was only 'dust to dust, and ashes to ashes,' and one long, eternal farewell. Finally, he realized that **Christ had not come**, and burst into tears, weeping bitterly in his sorrowful dream.*

*Then suddenly he awoke with a start, and a great shout of joy and praise burst from his lips as he heard his choir singing these words in his church nearby:*

***O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!  
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels,  
O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!***

*Let us be glad and rejoice today, because He **has** come. And let us remember the proclamation of the angel: 'I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord' (Luke 2:10-11)*

***He comes to make His blessing flow,  
Far as the curse does go.***

***May our hearts go out to the unconverted people of foreign lands who have no blessed Christmas day."***

## B. MY SPIRITUAL FAMILY.

**“are being built up a spiritual house”** – corporately they are built into a spiritual house. God is putting all believers in place, integrating each one with others, and each one with the life of Christ.

**“a holy priesthood”** – full admission into God’s presence

**Hebrews 3:6, “but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.”**

**GREAT TRUTH:** You can belong to our church without belonging to His church

## C. MY SERVICE.

**“to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ”** – this *begins* when believers offer God themselves; our lives as instruments of righteousness (**Romans 6:13**)

2<sup>nd</sup> – **Hebrews 13:15, “Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”**

Declaring God’s attributes and His works

3<sup>rd</sup> - **Hebrews 13:16, “But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”**

Doing what is righteous and what honors God  
Sharing or generosity

4<sup>th</sup> - **Romans 15:15-16, “Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God, that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”**

Converts, reconciled sinners