The Living Stone

1 Peter 2:4-8.

**Thesis:** To discuss the significance Peter’s reference to Jesus being a stone.

1. Peter shifts from describing the new life in Christ, to the image of Jesus as a stone. Throughout the Old Testament stones were used as metaphors for strength and stability.

2. There are many references throughout the Bible to Jesus as a stone.

3. Peter selected several Old Testament passages using the stone metaphor and applied them to Christ and His followers.

4. Many terms are used to describe Jesus and His nature (e.g. Lord, King of kings, Good Shepherd, etc.). While this description is a little unusual, it is not without great significance and importance. It defines another aspect of Jesus relationship to His people and the world.

I. **Christ is the living stone.**

   A. He is the living stone (vs. 4a).
      1. Coming to Him is not a reference to our initial obedience, but indicates our continuous coming to Him.
         a. Same word used in Heb. 4:15.
         b. We can continuously come into His presence with confidence.
      2. Peter uses a bold metaphor “living stone”.
         a. Stones are dead and lifeless.
         b. He is a living stone because He is the source of energy, vitality and life for the church (Jn. 1:4).
         c. He is a living stone because He has been raised from the dead.
      3. The one whom we serve is not dead but living and actively involved in the church and in the lives of those who follow Him.

   B. He has been rejected by men (vs. 4b).
      1. This living stone who draws men to God and into life, has been rejected by the very ones He came to save (Jn. 1:11).
         a. Rejected: To cast aside as worthless after examination.
2. Initially rejected by the nation of Israel.
   a. They examined His claims and rejected Him because He did not fit their expectations.
   b. Currently millions around the world still reject Him for the same reasons.
3. Jesus predicted the rejection by His own people (Mt. 21:42; Psa. 118:22).

C. He is chosen and precious in God’s sight (vs. 4c).
   1. Despite the rejection or acceptance of men, how God views Jesus is even more important.
      a. Though wicked men reject Him, God chose Him (as a purposefully shaped and fitted stone) and sent Him into the world for a specific reason to which He was purposefully fitted.
   2. God regards Him as precious.
      a. God regards Him as worthy of honor and recognizes His unsurpassed value (Phi. 2:5-11).
   3. This shows the contrast between how God views His Son and how man does.

II. Christians are living stones.
   A. We make up a spiritual house (vs. 5a).
      1. Continuing the building metaphor, Peter now says Christians are living stones and comprise a spiritual house.
         a. No doubt Peter wants us to think of the temple.
         b. It was the focal point of Jewish life and the place where God’s presence dwelt and where He put His name (Dt. 12:11; 1 Ki. 8:29).
      2. Although it was full of beauty and splendor (Mk. 13:1) Jesus said He would replace it as the most important aspect of God’s relationship with His people (Jn. 2:19-21).
      3. As the place where God dwells among His people and His name is, there continues to be a Temple today (1 Cor. 3:16-17; Eph. 2:21).
         a. The spiritual house is the church (1 Tim. 3:15).
         b. It is not built up by beautiful stones, gold or jewels, but by living stones made beautiful by living lives of faith and goodness.
   B. We are part of a Holy priesthood (vs. 5b).
      1. Under the Law of Moses, priests stood between God and man.
         a. They were from only one tribe and family.
         b. Only they could offer sacrifice (1 Sam. 13:8-14).
         c. Sacrifices were offered to God through them.
2. Now all of God’s people (every Christian) are priests (Rv. 1:6).
   a. Like the sons of Aaron we have the right to approach God personally and offer up our own sacrifices through Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5).
   b. We are holy because we have been set apart for the purposes of God.
   c. There is no clergy-laity distinction.

C. We offer up spiritual sacrifices (vs. 5c).
   1. Sacrifices were typically slaughtered animals/physical in nature.
   2. As part of the spiritual house, this spiritual priesthood offers up spiritual sacrifices.
      a. We offer our bodies as living sacrifices (Rm. 12:1-2).
      b. The sacrifice of praise (Heb. 13:15).
      c. The sacrifice of service and good deeds (Heb. 13:16; Phi. 2:17, 4:18).

III. Christ is the chief cornerstone.
   A. He was predicted by scripture (vs. 6).
      1. Peter references several scriptures to back up what he has been saying (Is. 28:16; Ps. 118:22; Is. 8:14).
         a. Isaiah wrote of those rulers who had misled Israel and a future ruler.
         b. He is the one whom God has laid as the cornerstone of this spiritual house. The cornerstone ties together and anchors two walls of a building (Eph. 2:19-22).
         c. Laid in Zion/ Jerusalem. Jesus died there and ushered in a new age.
      3. Ps. 118:22; Is. 8:14 are quoted to reinforce his next statements.

   B. He is precious to believers (vs. 7a).
      1. The fact the stone is precious (honored) those who believe in Him have this same preciousness transferred to them.
         a. This is only available for those who believe.
      2. Those who have their hope and faith firmly fixed upon Him will never find occasion to be disappointed in Him.

   C. He is a source of stumbling to unbelievers (vs. 7b-8).
      1. Peter shows the other side of the same coin. To those who believe, Jesus is a great blessing and a life giving stone upon which we build our lives.
2. What about those who disbelieve?
   a. Jesus applied this to Himself (Mt. 21:42; Acts 4:11; Psa. 118:22). The builders were the Jewish leaders who rejected Him.
   b. Although rejected, He is still the cornerstone of God’s purposes.

3. Jesus also becomes a source of stumbling to those who disbelieve (Is. 8:14).
   a. They stumble/ fall over the gospel. They fail to understand and accept it. The source of life becomes the source of judgment and doom.
   b. When one rejects Him they fail to obey Him (Mt. 7:21; Lk. 6:46). This natural consequence of unbelief is what those who reject Christ are appointed to.

**Conclusion:**
1. Christ is the important life giving, foundational stone upon which God’s purposes for mankind are carried out and upon which we build our lives.

2. As a result of building upon this living stone, we too become living stones and build up the spiritual house of God the church. As such we have important responsibilities and blessings.
   A. We offer up spiritual sacrifices as a part of this holy priesthood.
   B. We will never be ashamed as long as our faith is firmly planted in Christ.

3. Although many reject Him, He is precious in God’s sight and is still the cornerstone of God’s purposes.