

The Precious Stone

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[0 : 00] Well, if we could, this evening, with the Lord's help, turn back to that passage of Scripture we were reading. 1 Peter, if we look at chapter 2, 1 Peter chapter 2, and we'll take as our text the words of verses 4 and 5.

1 Peter chapter 2, at verse 4. As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men, but in the sight of God, chosen and precious, you yourselves, like living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

But particularly the words of verse 4, what it says, is a living stone rejected by men, but in the sight of God, chosen and precious.

Chosen and precious. When you're living with a three-year-old, you're living with a mind full of imagination.

And it's amazing to see where that imagination goes, and what that imagination does. Because our little David, he loves tools, and he loves working.

[1 : 27] He's always working. From the moment he wakes up in the morning, until the moment he sleeps. He's always working. To the point that Alison and I, we've tried to persuade David to take a Sunday off, because he doesn't want to stop working.

And he doesn't want to stop building, because he loves building things. Imaginary things, but he loves building things. But before he begins his working day, David makes sure that he has all his tools and all his equipment.

He makes sure that he has his toolbox, his tool belt, he has his high-visibility waistcoat, his hard hat, his ladder, which is just a tiny little step that he has, and he has keys for the van, which are old spare keys that we had.

And once he has everything gathered together, then he's off to work. And David, he takes his role so seriously that he'll tell people that he's no longer called David. Because a while back, David and I, we were in the shop, and Derek asked David, what's your name?

And he said to him, Bob. Bob the Builder. And apart from laughing at what he comes out with, it's amazing to see a little guy who never stops.

[2 : 44] Never tires of working. Never stops doing things. He's always on a job. Always building. Always working. Always constructing. And you know, when I read these words of 1 Peter, I can't help but think, just thinking about David always working.

That's what Jesus is like with his church. Always working. He is the great builder of his church. And he is the master craftsman.

And he never stops. And he never tires of working. Because he's always building his church. He's always working on his church.

And he's always constructing his church. Because his church is precious to him. And we saw that this morning when we were looking at verses 18 and 19 in chapter 1.

Where Peter reminds all these persecuted Christians who are being scattered because of their faith. And he reminds them that they have been redeemed not by their religion or corruptible things like silver and gold.

[3 : 54] But by the precious blood of Christ. Precious blood like a lamb without blemish and without spot. And as we said, Peter writes to encourage these followers of Jesus as they experience opposition and hostility for standing on the side of Christ.

And he reminds them of the hope which they have in Jesus Christ. They have a great hope. A living hope, he says. But not only that. As I mentioned this morning.

I believe the theme which runs through the letters of Peter. is the theme of the preciousness of Jesus. Because throughout his letters, as we saw this morning.

Peter, he repeatedly mentions the word precious. He says at the very beginning of his letter. That their faith in Jesus Christ.

These persecuted Christians. Their faith is much more precious than gold that perishes. And then he reminded them, as we saw this morning. That their redemption was accomplished by the precious blood of Christ.

[5 : 02] And then in these verses that we're looking at this evening. Peter says that Jesus is the precious stone upon which the church is founded. And then in his second letter.

Peter, he calls all the persecuted Christians. And he says to them that they are to cling to all the great and precious promises found in God's word.

And so the message of Peter is consider the preciousness of Jesus. What a lovely letter to write. Consider the preciousness of Jesus.

And that's what I want us to do again this evening. I want us to consider the preciousness of Jesus. And I want us to do so by seeing that Peter draws our attention to three things in this passage.

Three precious things in this passage. Because he talks about the precious stone. The precious structure. And the precious scripture.

[6 : 03] The precious stone. The precious structure. And the precious scripture. So we look first of all at the precious stone. The precious stone.

Look with me at verse 4. He says, As you come to him, a living stone. Rejected by men, but in the sight of God. Chosen and precious.

And so having reminded us this morning of our redemption through the precious blood of Christ. Peter now seeks to remind us that Jesus is a precious stone.

And we'll see later that when we come to verses 6 to 8. Jesus is described as the chief cornerstone. But in verse 4, Peter wants to highlight the preciousness of Jesus.

And the importance of drawing near to him. Because he says to us, As you come to him. And what he's actually saying is, As you come to him, keep coming to him.

[7 : 05] As you come to him, keep coming to him. Don't stop coming to him. Don't allow persecution or opposition or doubts or trials or heartache or sorrows.

Don't allow these things to stop you coming to Jesus. As you come to him, keep coming to him. Keep drawing near to Jesus.

Keep reading his word. Keep coming before him in prayer. Keep pouring out your heart before him. Keep gathering together as a worshipping people.

But whatever you do, don't stop coming to this precious Jesus. And you know, is that not what Peter came to discover for himself? Peter's always building upon his own experience.

Everything he learned from Jesus when he was a disciple. And it seems that here he's reminding us of the time when he first realized who Jesus was.

[8 : 04] Because Jesus, you'll remember, he asked his disciples, Will you also go away? Will you also give up following me and go back to your former ways?

And it's then that Peter steps forward and he gives that great confession of his faith. To whom else can we go? Thou alone hast the words of eternal life.

And we know and believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And so what Peter's saying to us is, As you come to him, keep coming to him.

And don't stop coming to him. Because he is precious. He is precious. And as you know, the word precious, it means to be highly valued.

But is that how we view Jesus tonight? Is he precious to us? Is he highly valued to us? And maybe you're asking yourself tonight, Well, how do I know that Jesus is precious to me?

[9 : 04] Well, if something is precious to us, Like a ring or a necklace or something, We'll take care of it. We'll cherish it. We'll keep it safe.

We'll look after it. Therefore, if Jesus is precious, We'll go to him with everything. We will cherish his word in our hearts and seek to try and obey it.

We'll spend time with him in his word. And in prayer, we will put him first before other things. We'll ensure that we're able to be in his house to worship him.

My friend, if Jesus is precious to us, Which he ought to be, Then we will make him the priority in our lives. And we won't want nothing or no one to come between us and him.

But is that how we view Jesus tonight? If it is, Peter is saying to us, Keep coming to him. But if it's not, Peter is saying to us, Come to him.

[10 : 12] And keep coming to him. But then Peter, he continues by saying that We are to keep coming to Jesus, Not only because he's a precious stone, But he's a living stone.

He's a living stone. He's not dead. He's not stone cold. But he's alive. He's a living stone. And the language which Peter is using here, Is that he says that this living stone, Continues to live.

He will go on living. He will never die. That's what he's getting at. And what Peter is saying to us is, Come to this living stone, And keep coming to him, Because he ever lives.

He ever lives. He's not only secured our redemption, Through his precious blood, But he is the one who also rose again. He ever lives.

And he rose again victorious, Over sin and over death. And again, Was it not Peter, Learning from his experience, Was it not him who was the first disciple, To reach the tomb?

[11 : 22] He was the first to look in. Peter and John were running together, But Peter was the first to go straight in. And he's saying to us here, The stone is rolled away.

The tomb is empty. I've seen it with my own eyes. This precious stone, He ever lives. He ever lives. And the message of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, That's the message which Peter sought, To preach again and again.

Because that was the foundation, Of the New Testament church. He is not here. He is risen. He is risen. And Peter is saying, He may have been rejected by men, But in the sight of God, He was chosen and precious.

And that was the message, Which Peter preached. His first opportunity to preach, On the day of Pentecost. Where he stood up and said, You men of Israel, Hear these words.

Jesus of Nazareth, A man approved by God, To you by miracles, And wonders, And signs, Which God did, Through him. He was delivered, He says, By the determined counsel, And foreknowledge of God.

[12 : 39] He was chosen, To do this work. And yet you took him. And by wicked hands, You have crucified him, And put him to death. He came to you, But you did not receive him.

You rejected him. But God raised him up. God raised him up, Because he was chosen, And precious. And because, He has provided a redemption, Through his blood.

He was loosed, From the pains of death. Because it was not possible, To hold him by it. My friend, Death could not hold him.

The grave could not, Keep him. And Peter says, You rejected him. But God raised him, From the dead. Because he is chosen, And precious.

And this is what your salvation, Is based upon, He's saying. This is where your, Your hope lies. This is what makes Jesus, Even more, Precious to you. That he's a living stone.

[13 : 40] A living stone. And because he lives, He continues to be, For the believer, A firm foundation. A firm foundation. A living stone, Who's a firm foundation, In which he's, Immovable.

And unchangeable. He's solid, And secure. He doesn't alter. He doesn't change, According to, The tides of the age. He never changes.

Never changes, Even in the midst of, Our changing circumstances. No, my friend, Is our precious, Living stone. He remains the same, Yesterday, Today, And forever.

It's wonderful. And as I know, We were reminded of last week, When we were looking at, Psalm 62, We were just singing it. The psalmist was, Testifying to, The stability, And strength, That he had, In Jesus Christ.

And his confession, To an onlooking world, Testifying to them, He only, My salvation is. And my, My strong rock is he. He only, Is my sure defense.

[14 : 53] I shall not move to be. But then, The psalmist, Having testified, To who Jesus is, And what Jesus, Does for us.

And having testified, To how wonderful, And how precious, Jesus was to him. The psalmist, Pleaded with everyone else, To see how precious, He is too. And he says, You people, Place your confidence, Confidence in him, Continually, Before him, Pour ye out your heart.

God is our refuge high. Wonderful words. And that's what Peter, Is urging us to do. He's saying, As you come to him, Keep coming to him.

Don't stop coming to him. Don't stop placing, Your confidence in him. Don't stop, Pouring out your heart to him. Don't stop, Declaring him to other people, That he is your refuge, And your strength, And your ever present help, In times of trouble.

Because he is the precious stone. And he is the living stone. And he ever lives. He's living for you.

[16 : 03] Living ever lives, To make intercession for you. You know, I love those words, That hymn. I remember hearing them, When I was a child.

Because he lives, I can face tomorrow. Because he lives, All fear is gone. Because I know, He holds the future.

And life is worth, The living. Just because he lives. Just because he lives. My friend, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Is the precious stone.

He is the precious stone. But secondly, I'd like us to see, That the precious stone, Is building the precious structure.

The precious structure. Read again at verse 4. As you come to him, A living stone rejected by men, But in the sight of God, Chosen and precious, You yourselves, Like living stones, Are being built up, As a spiritual house, To be a holy priesthood, To offer spiritual sacrifices, Acceptable to God, Through Jesus Christ.

[17 : 23] The persecuted Christians, To whom Peter was, Writing, They were probably very low.

The Emperor Nero, As we mentioned this morning, He was on the rampage, To blot out Christians completely. Nero demanded, Worship. He demanded Emperor worship, And to declare him, As the Caesar, To declare him as Lord.

But the Christians, They refused. They would only declare Jesus, As Lord. And as, Maybe as, As you know, In 64 AD, Rome suffered this, Terrible fire, Which lasted, Nearly a week.

And the people, They blamed Nero. They blamed the Emperor, Saying that, He did it for his own entertainment. He burnt the city, For his own entertainment. But Nero, Used it as an opportunity, To blame the Christians.

And, By blaming them, He said, Well, I can now round up, As many Christians, As I can find, And put them to death. And as one historian put it, He said, In their very deaths, Christians were made, The subjects of sport.

[18 : 37] They were covered, With the hides of wild beasts, And mauled to death, By wild dogs. They were nailed to crosses, Or set on fire. And that's the context, Of Peter's letter.

And so, What can Peter say, To these Christians, Who feel so weak, And so vulnerable, And so afraid, Of what the future, Holds for them. Well, Of course, He reminds them, Of the preciousness, Of Jesus.

That they're redeemed, By precious blood, And that they, That Jesus, Is the precious stone, Which they need, To keep coming to. But more than that, Because Peter, Reminds these Christians, That what they are going through, Is the same experience, That their precious, Saviour, Went through.

And what Peter, Is saying to them, Is, You are more like Jesus, Than you think. Because he says, Jesus is a living stone, Who was rejected by men, But chosen by God, And precious.

And then he says, You also. You also. You also are like living stones, Which are being, Built up, As a spiritual house.

[19 : 54] You're more like Jesus, Than you think. Because you're living stones. You're not dead, In sin. You're alive, In Christ. You've been raised, With Christ.

You've been resurrected, From your old life, Of sin, And death. And now you have, New life. You have abundant life. You have everlasting, And eternal life. You're a living stone, Just like Jesus.

But more than that, Says Peter, You've been chosen, And you're precious to God. You've been made holy. You've been washed, In his precious blood.

He says, You've been born again, Not of corruptible seed, But of incorruptible seed. You've been made, Like Jesus. You've been, You may have been rejected, By men.

You may be despised, By others, For being a Christian. You may be laughed at, And hated. You may experience, Sorrow and grief, For following Jesus.

[20 : 53] But you were chosen, And you are precious, And you are to keep, Coming to Jesus, And keep, Following his example. Keep following him.

Keep following his example. And that's what, Peter actually says, In verse 21. Down in verse 21, In chapter 2. Where he's talking about, Enduring, Suffering, Graciously.

Just like Jesus did. He says in verse 21, For to this, You have been called. Because Christ also, Suffered for you, Leaving you an example. So that you might, Follow in his steps.

He committed no sin, Neither was deceit, Found in his mouth. When he was reviled, He did not revile in return. When he suffered, He did not threaten, But continued entrusting, Him who, Himself to him, Who judges justly.

He himself bore our sins, In his body on the tree, That we might die to sin, And live to righteousness. By his wounds, You have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, But you have now returned, To the shepherd, And overseer, Of your souls.

[22 : 03] And Peter is saying, What you're going through, Is what Jesus went through. Take encouragement from that. Take encouragement from the fact that, Jesus is still with you.

He's still by your side, And he'll never leave you. And he'll never forsake you. But then Peter says, He says that, As living stones, You're being built up, As a spiritual house.

And what Peter is portraying to us, Is not so much a house to live in, But a house of worship. He's portraying to us, An image of the temple.

But he's saying that, This is not a physical temple. It's a spiritual temple. It's the church, Of Jesus Christ. Not the building, But the people.

And what Peter is, Affirming is that, Every Christian, Every living stone, Is part of the church of Christ. They are part, Of the precious structure, Which was redeemed, By precious blood, And founded upon, The precious stone.

[23 : 14] And every living stone, In this precious structure, Reflects the glory of Jesus. But what's interesting is that, Even though every living stone, Is just like Jesus, Yet at the same time, Every stone is unique.

Peter doesn't say that, This precious structure, Is built together using bricks. Bricks which look identical, To one another. They're all imitations, Of one another.

They're all the same shape. They're all the same size. No, Peter says that, This spiritual house, Which is being built, It's made of stones. And the amazing thing, About stones, Is that no two are the same.

Every stone is unique. And if we were to walk, Along the shore, At the maher, We'd never pick up, Two stones that are the same. Because every stone is different.

Every stone is unique. And you know, Is that not the testimony, Of every living stone, Here tonight? Is that not our testimony?

[24 : 18] That we were all brought, In different ways. And through different means. And, But we were all brought, To know the same precious stone, Jesus Christ.

We all have a unique story, Of how the Lord worked in our life. And how he spoke to us. And how he drew us. And how he brought things, Into our experience. Things, Which in a remarkable way, Made us see our need of Jesus.

And, These things made us, Cry out to him for help. My friend, We're all so different, From one another. And we all are, At different stages. We've all gone through, Different experiences.

But we're all precious to God. And we're all part of this, Precious structure. And we all have different things, To offer the church, Of Jesus Christ.

Some in big proportions, Some not so big. Some with full time commitment, Others who help when they can. Some who are seen by others, And some who do all their work, Quietly and effectively.

[25 : 22] Some who work with children, Others who work with the elderly, Others with their own friends. Some with big personalities, And very outspoken. And others who are quiet.

But every living stone, No matter what shape, Or size, Or experience, They're all precious to God. And they should be precious to us.

Look around you. Look to those on your left, And those on your right. You ought to love them, Because they are living stones, Which are chosen and precious.

They're not perfect, But they're precious. And they're precious, Because they have been purchased. They belong to God, And every one of his precious stones, They're still in the hands of the stonemason.

Still in the hands of the stonemason. I love, Seeing a stonemason at work. Remember when I was, Still an electrician.

[26 : 33] One was, Working round the side of a house. Amazing to see him working. And it's even better, When you see the finished article. Because they do such, A beautiful job.

Don't they? With, Even like a stone wall dyke. Like, You, Like the one at the, The gamekeeper's cottage. There's another one in Brough. There's another one, Down in Galson Farm, That seems to go on forever.

Beautifully done. Or even the war memorials. The one in Barvan, The one that's getting built here in Barvis. Their structure is impressive. And what's amazing about the work of a stonemason, Is that, Every stone is unique.

And yet, Every stone is slotted, Into place. Perfectly. They're all carefully placed, In order that the structure, Will hold together.

And every stone in the structure, Is important. Not one stone is left isolated. They all compactly fit together. And that's what Peter is saying, About the church of Jesus Christ.

[27 : 36] He says, You are being built up. You're not doing the building. But you are being built. Jesus is the stonemason. We are the living stones. And what he's building, Is something that will reflect his glory, And magnify his praise.

And when I think about this precious structure, Which Jesus is building, When I think about it in my mind, It makes me think, That as living stones, We are being shaped, And fashioned, Offside.

Offside. We are being fashioned away, From this precious structure, Which he is building. But when a great stonemason, Has carved in his final shape, And that particular stone, Looks exactly the way, He had always planned it to be, He will take that stone, And he will lay it, In the new Jerusalem.

It will be added to the precious structure, In that eternal city, Which hath foundations, Whose builder, And maker, Is God.

And each living stone, Will be set in place, In the place that has always been prepared for them. And in the new Jerusalem of heaven, The church of Christ will be, As the psalmist said, In Psalm 122, Jerusalem, As a city is, Compactly, Built together, Unto that place, The tribes go up, The tribes of God, Go thither.

[29 : 12] My friend, It's a wonderful prospect, It's a glorious hope, For the Christian, That as living stones, We are being built up, As a spiritual house, To be a holy priesthood, Which offers spiritual sacrifices.

And what Peter means by this, Is that as believers, And followers of the precious stone, We're not only being shaped, And built, To be part of this precious structure, Of Christ's church, We're also being created, Into vessels of worship, To God, Through Jesus Christ.

We're being shaped, And molded, In order to, Worship the Lord, In the beauty of holiness. That's what, It's all about. We're part of this, Precious structure, A precious structure, Which is being built, By a precious stone, Jesus Christ.

But what I'd like us, To consider last of all, Is that the precious stone, And the precious structure, They are all affirmed, Affirmed by Peter, In the precious scripture.

So let's look lastly, At the precious scripture. The precious scripture. Look at verse 6. He says, For it stands in scripture, Behold, I'm laying in Zion a stone, A cornerstone, Chosen and precious.

[30 : 39] And whoever believes in him, Will not be put to shame. So the honour is for you, Who believe, Or to, To you who believe, He is precious. But for those who do not believe, The stone that the builders rejected, Has become the cornerstone, And a stone of stumbling, And a rock of offence.

They stumble because they disobey the word, As they were destined to do. In order to affirm his teaching, About the precious stone, And the precious structure, Peter quotes three sections of scripture.

And for Peter, The scriptures are precious. The word of God is precious to the people of God. Because it's a living word. It's an eternal word.

It's a word that doesn't change, Doesn't alter. It's inerrant. It's infallible. It's unfailing. And, Is that not what Peter just said at the end of chapter 1?

He said in verse, If we look at verse 22, Having purified your souls, By your obedience to the truth, For a sincere brotherly love, Love one another earnestly from a pure heart.

[31 : 48] Since you have been born again, Not of perishable seed, But of imperishable, Through the living and abiding word of God. For all flesh is like grass, And all its glory like the flower of grass.

The grass withers, And the flower falls. But the word of the Lord remains forever. And this word is the good news that was preached to you. This is the precious scripture, Which has been preached to you.

And it's a precious scripture, Which is from God. And the first scripture, Quote that Peter gives, Is from Isaiah chapter 28.

That's what he says in verse 6. And the context to Isaiah 28, Is that God is judging the priests, And the prophets of Israel, For preaching lies, And leading the people of God astray.

Leading them away from God. Yet the Lord declares to his people, That there will come one, Who is chosen and precious. And he will preach the truth. That's why he says, Behold I am laying in Zion a stone, A cornerstone, Chosen and precious.

[32 : 59] And whoever believes in him, Will not be put to shame. Whoever believes, In the precious stone, This cornerstone, They will in no way, Be put to shame.

Now when we hear the word, Cornerstone, We're often tempted, To think of it as the first stone, Which was laid in a construction site, Right at the foundation.

Where every other stone, Would be placed, And set in reference, To all these, To that particular stone. And, We often think of the cornerstone, As one that's important, That, So important, That it determines, The entire structure.

But in the ancient world, The cornerstone, Wasn't the foundation stone. The cornerstone, Wasn't the first stone, Set in place.

It was, The last stone, Set in place. Because the literal meaning, Of the word cornerstone, Is the head, Of the corner. It's the chief stone, The last stone, It's the final stone, In the construction, To complete, The construction.

[34 : 13] And the last stone, In the structure, It was usually placed, It was lifted up, And raised, And placed, In a prominent position. Not on the corner, Of a building, As such, But over the door, So that everyone else, Would see it.

And, I suppose to explain, What I mean, Some of the churches, That were built, During the 19th century, They adopted this idea, Of a chief cornerstone. Because many of the churches, Throughout our island, They have a chief cornerstone.

And it sits, On the top of a building, Above the doorway, That leads into, The house of God. And everyone who, Passes the church building, Whoever they are, They can see, The chief cornerstone.

And you can see, This cornerstone, Sometimes before you can, Even see the church. Unfortunately, We don't have one, In this building. But there's one, In the church of Scotland, And you can probably see it, You'll notice it, When you're on the way home.

But the purpose, Of the chief cornerstone, Is to be the focal point, Of the building structure. Because, It's the chief stone. And, That's what Peter, Is affirming to us, Through this, Precious scripture.

[35 : 30] That Jesus, Is to be our, Focal point. He is to capture, Our attention, And captivate, Our minds. Because, He is the chief stone. And the role, Of the precious structure, Is to direct attention, To the precious stone.

Because, He is the chief cornerstone. And he, Completes, The precious structure, Of all the living stones. And the precious scripture, Says to us, Behold, I'm laying in Zion, A stone, A cornerstone, Chosen, And precious.

And whoever believes in him, Will not be put to shame. Whoever believes, In this cornerstone, That completes the whole structure, They will not be put, To shame.

But Peter knew, That there were many, Who would not believe, In this precious stone. Many who would reject him. There are many, Who didn't think, That Jesus was precious.

Which is why, Peter goes on, To say in verse 7, To you, Who continue to believe, He is precious. To you, Who believe, He is precious, He remains, The chief cornerstone.

[36 : 46] But to those, Who do not believe, They fulfill the words, Of Psalm 118, The stone, That the builders rejected, Has become, The cornerstone.

And in this, Peter is highlighting, The contrast between, Those who believe in Jesus, And those who do not. Those who accept Jesus, And those who reject Jesus. Those who, Who look to the chief cornerstone, And those who look to themselves.

Because this precious scripture, Which Peter quotes, From Psalm 118, Which we were singing, It was written at a time, When the temple was being rebuilt.

But the work on the temple, It stopped. And the reason it stopped, Was because people were more interested, In serving self, Rather than serving God.

And the cornerstone was rejected, It wasn't put in place, As the last stone, To complete the structure. That's why it was rejected. It wasn't, The structure wasn't complete.

[37 : 51] And you know, It was for this same reason, That Jesus quoted, These words in Matthew's gospel. Jesus was addressing the Pharisees, About the fact that they were meant, To be telling everyone, About Jesus.

But the problem was, They were far more interested, In serving self, Than serving God. And Jesus says to them, Have you never read the scripture? The stone which the builders rejected, Has become the chief cornerstone.

And even the apostle Paul, He picks up on it too. He's talking about the gospel, And the glory of the gospel. And he says, That it was built upon the apostles, And the prophets, Who were the foundation.

But Jesus Christ, Is the chief cornerstone, Whom the whole building, Fits together. And he says, He is the precious stone. He's the crowning glory. He is the precious stone, To the precious structure, Of his church.

And everything is pointed to him. Everything is about his work. Everything is about, His salvation. He may have been rejected, Says Paul. He may be the one they mocked.

[39 : 01] He may be the one they crucified. He may be the precious stone, Which the builders despised, And rejected. But despite the rejection of men, He still became, The chief cornerstone, Of his church.

Despite everything. And as a living stone, He was lifted up. He was resurrected. He was raised, To become the head, And focal point, Of his church.

And Peter is saying, To those, Who are willing to reject Jesus, And turn away from him. He's saying to those, Who are willing to, Turn their back, Upon this glorious gospel.

He says, You should be more interested in Jesus, Than interested in yourself. That's what he's saying. Jesus should be more, Precious to you, Than this world.

You should be more interested in Jesus, Than being interested in yourself. And Peter, He drives this point home, By quoting, Another precious scripture, In verse 8.

[40 : 15] He says, A stone of stumbling, And a rock of offense. They stumble, Because they disobey the word, As they were destined to do. They stumble, Because they disobey the word.

The word, Which lives, And abides forever. They reject Jesus, The chief cornerstone, Because they disobey the word.

And because they disobey the word, The stone, The chief stone, Is not precious to them. My unconverted friend, What Peter is saying to you, Is that, If you do not believe, You will be put to shame.

And what that means, Is that, Jesus, The precious stone, He will testify against you, And he will condemn you, For your unbelief.

But what, What's interesting is that, It's not only the precious stone, The chief stone, That will testify, Against you. All, The precious stones, The precious structure, Will testify against you.

[41 : 35] All these living stones, These, Christians, That surround you, Every single day, Of your life. Whether it's your husband, Or your wife, Or your children, Or your parents, Or your brother, Or your sister, Or your friends, They are a testimony, Against you.

That Jesus is precious. They are a testimony, Against you, To the truth. That Jesus, Is precious. But what I find so striking, Is that it's not only, The spiritual stones, Not just the, The precious stone, And the precious structure, Who will testify against you.

These spiritual things, But also, These, Physical stones, They will testify against you. Because, The stones of this church, That you come to every week, They stand as a testimony, In this community, To the worship of God's people.

And these stones, They have heard many sermons, But, You haven't heard them, Like they heard them.

These stones, Have seen changes, In people's lives, But you still, Haven't changed. These stones, Have witnessed bereavement, Pain, Sorrow, And death.

[43 : 10] And yet, That never changed you, Never affected you. These stones, Testify, To the work of Christ, In his kingdom.

But it still seems, That you don't want this man, To rule over you. My friend, Every stone, Here, It has heard the prayers, That have been said for you, And for your soul.

These stones, Have heard all the preachers, Who pleaded with you, To come to Christ, And yet you still, Haven't made a move. Others have come, Others have moved, Others have professed, Others have asked Jesus, To forgive them their sin, And change them.

Others have made Jesus, Precious to them. But you, You still sit, And you still wait. I don't know what you're waiting for.

These stones, Have seen, And heard so much. These precious stones, Have been watching, And waiting, And praying. They've seen so much, But yet nothing.

[44 : 20] They're wondering, When? When will it change? When will they move? When will they ask the Lord, To save them? Do you not think it's time, For you to start listening, To this precious word, And take note of it, What it's saying to you.

Behold, I'm laying in Zion, A stone, A cornerstone, Chosen and precious, And whoever believes in him, Will not, Be put, To shame.

And so we have been looking today, At the preciousness, Of Jesus. What better subject, Could you have, For the Lord's day?

This morning we considered, The precious blood, This evening, The precious stone. But what I want, To know, Is Jesus precious to you?

Is Jesus precious to you? And if he is, You come to him, And you keep coming to him, And you don't stop, Coming to him.

[45 : 49] May the Lord bless, These thoughts to us, Let us pray. O Lord, O gracious God, We believe, He is precious, And we thank thee for him, We thank thee, O Lord, For a precious saviour, And his precious blood, And help us, We pray thee every day, O to be truly thankful, For all that we have received, In him and through him, That we would not, Put these things to one side, But that we might embrace them, Day after day, To come to him, And to keep coming to him, This glorious saviour, Who loved us, And who gave himself for us, Bless us Lord, Tonight and in the week, That lies ahead, O Lord, Remember us, We pray, Remember, The mourning families, Both in Braggar, And in Shabbos, We pray, O Lord, That all that thy grace, May be sufficient for them, And the duties that they have,

In the week that lies ahead, Do us good, We pray, And cleanse us, In Jesus name, Amen. Amen. I shall conclude, My singing in Psalm 102, Psalm 102, Second version of the Psalm, That's page 368, Psalm 102, From verse 13, Down to the verse marked 18, Psalm 102, From verse 13, Thou shalt arise, And mercy yet, Thou to Mount Zion, Shalt extend, Her time for favour, Which was set, Behold, Is now come to an end, Thy saints take pleasure, In her stones, Her very dust, To them is dear, All heathen lands, And kingly thrones, On earth, Thy glorious name, Shall fear, Down to the verse marked 18,

Of Psalm 102, To God's praise. There shalt arise, By the mercy yet, The tomb of Zion, Shall extend, Her time for fear, Which was set, The hope is not, Come to an end, Thy saints take pleasure, In her stones, Her faith is not, To them is dear, All heathen lands,

And kingly thrones, On earth, Thy glorious nature, Fear, God, His glory, Shall appear, When sun, When sun, He built, Sun, He repairs, He shall reply, Glend his ear, Unto the need, His humble prayers, The afflicted, The afflicted, He will not scorn,

All times, This shall be on record, And generations, And generations, Yet unborn, Shall praise, And magnify, The Lord, The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, The love of God the Father, And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with you all, Now and forevermore.

[50 : 33] Amen.