

The Chief Cornerstone

Sunday, August 31st, 1986

1 Peter 2:6-9

“Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, 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, 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. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”

I’m reading this morning from the Book of 1 Peter, Chapter 2: verses 6 through 8. Recently a listener wrote and requested that I repeat my text. This listener said, “I like to follow along in the Bible when you are preaching. When you only give the text one time; I can’t find it.” So, here it is again; I’m preaching from the first epistle of Peter, chapter 2: verses 6 through 8.

I believe that I have a very important subject today; it is entitled, “THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE.”

Let me read the text, 1 Peter chapter 2:6; *“Wherefore, it is written in the Scriptures, Behold I lay in Sion, a chief cornerstone; elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded, (disappointed or put to shame). Unto you therefore, which believe; He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, (or rejected). The same is made the head of the corner, the chief cornerstone and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.”*

The primary purpose for me preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord in my pulpit, over this television broadcast, and other places, is that you might believe on Him. That is why I am preaching. *“We preach not ourselves.”* We seek not to gain a following. We seek not to build a reputation. *“We preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ the Lord.”*

They asked John the Baptist, *“Are you the Christ?”* He said, *“No.”* They said, *“Are you that Prophet of whom Moses wrote?”* He told them no. They said, *“Who are you?”* He said, *“I am a voice, (just a voice), crying in the wilderness; prepare ye the way of the Lord.”* John said, *“That is who I am, just a voice.”*

John the Baptist was miraculously born. He was a man of whom God had His hand on. He was sent as the forerunner of the Son of God. When he was asked to identify himself,

He said, "I am a voice and I am sent to proclaim the name of the Lord, to cry, *behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.*"

My friend; that is the primary purpose of this broadcast, for this preacher preaching to you, that you might know Christ.

The apostle John summed it up in John 21:31. Here, at the close of the book, he said, "*These things are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you might have life through His name.*" That is the one object that you "*might believe that Jesus is the Christ and that believing you might have life through His name.*"

I believe that I can say, that is my one objective and my primary goal and mission in life, that those to whom I preach, might know, believe, receive and lay hold upon and embrace by faith, the Lord Jesus Christ.

I'm deeply concerned about four things in reference to your faith and your faith in believing in Christ.

First of all: I'm concerned about what you believe.

Secondly: I'm concerned about how you believe.

Thirdly: I'm concerned why you believe.

Fourthly: I'm concerned about when you believe.

That is simple and very easy to follow. I want you to believe on Christ. I'm concerned about these four things. I'm concerned about what or whom you believe, how you believe, why you believe on Christ and when you believe on Christ.

Let's look at those four things: The first thing that I mentioned was this; I'm concerned about what or whom you believe. I want you to listen to me and believe me; I am telling you the truth. It is simply not faith that saves, or faith that brings us into a living union with almighty God but it is faith in a Person. Did you hear that?

It is not simply faith that saves; it is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord said in Acts 16:31 through the apostle Paul, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.*" He didn't just say, "have faith and you will be saved." He didn't just say, "believe and you will be saved;" He said; "*Believe on Christ.*"

Paul said in Romans 10:13, "*Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved.*" Here in 1 Peter 2:6, our text, God says; "*Behold; I lay in Sion, for a chief*

cornerstone, elect, precious. He that believeth on Him shall not be disappointed” (or put to shame).

So, you see, it matters what you believe. It matters whom you believe. That is what Paul said, *“I know whom I have believed; I am persuaded that He.”* My confidence is in a person. My faith is in a person. Faith must have an object. It is not faith if it does not have an object. Faith is not a general thing. Faith reaches out to someone or something.

John said that in 1 John 5:11; *“This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son of God hath life and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”* That is what I am saying. I’m interested in what you believe and whom you believe. Faith must embrace a person; it must lay hold on Christ.

Our Lord said, *“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on Him, might not perish but have everlasting life. For God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him might have everlasting life.”* Do you see that? It is what and whom you believe.

Now, the second thing that I am deeply concerned about is this, how you believe. I’m onto something here and I want you to listen to it. It is whom you believe; it is Christ. He is the object of faith. The second thing is how you believe.

Listen to Romans 10, *“If thou shalt confess with thy mouth, Jesus to be Lord.”* That is what I said a moment ago, it is whom you believe and it is to confess Jesus Christ to be Lord, and *“believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”*

How a man believes is with the heart. *“With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.”* You see, saving faith is not a historical faith at all. Faith is not like someone asking you if you believe that George Washington was the first president of the United States. That is a historical faith.

You might say, “Yes; I believe that. I believe that Abraham Lincoln was the president during the Civil War and John Kennedy was the president who was shot in the early part of the 1960’s. This is all historical faith. That is not saving faith just to say that a person called Jesus Christ lived on the earth, died, was buried and rose again. Satan believes that; it is a historical faith. That is not saving faith.

Neither is traditional faith, saving faith. Traditional faith is something that is handed down from father to son. It is not just mental agreement to some facts. This saving faith is a personal, inward, heart faith.

Let me quote that Scripture again from Romans 10; *“If thou shalt confess with thy mouth, Jesus to be Lord, and believe in thine heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved, for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”*

When Phillip was talking to the Eunuch and the Eunuch stopped the chariot and said, *“Here is water; what doth hinder me from being baptized?”* Listen to what Phillip said to him; *“Thou mayest if you believe with all your heart that Jesus is the Christ.”*

Is this just an emotional fit? Is this just a passing fancy? Is this just a historical, traditional, faith, or do you actually, in your heart, believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? Has it touched your affections, your inward being? Do you see what I am saying?

All right, that is the first two things. I told you that I was concerned about four things. I want you to know Christ. I want you to know a person. I want you to believe on Him, receive Him, and love Him in your heart. That is where it takes place. If God has your heart, He has everything.

God can have your money and not have your heart. He can even have some obedience, outward obedience, and not have your heart. If God has your heart, He has everything. Whoever has your heart has everything, if you love Christ.

That is the reason the Lord said, the whole Law is fulfilled in two words, one word, two commandments, *“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”* If you have heart love, that is it. If God has your heart He has everything. So, faith is a heart work.

Here is the third important thing about saving faith: Why do you believe? Why do you believe that Jesus is the Christ? I have thought about this, why do I believe so strongly in Jesus Christ, (and you know that I do). Why do I believe that Jesus is the Christ?

I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. I believe He is the only Saviour of sinners. I believe that the hope of eternal life rests in, upon, through, and because of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I believe in His perfect life and sacrificial death and intercessory work. I believe that!

You ask me why I believe that; I will give you six brief reasons that I want you to see.

First of all: I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God because I am commanded in the Bible to believe it. That's exactly right! God commands men in the Bible to believe. He said this, *"This is my beloved Son; hear Him."* I have heard God's command and I am going to hear Him. I am going to believe on Him.

"He that believeth not the record that God hath given concerning His Son made God a liar." That is the reason that I believe it. I'm not going to make God a liar. Our Lord said, *"If you believe not that I am He, you will die in your sins."*

So, I am commanded to believe that Jesus is the Christ. I don't fully understand all that is involved in that but I believe. I'm like the Centurion who said, *"Lord; I believe; help thou mine unbelief."*

Second: I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Messiah, because He fulfills every prophecy and promise in the Old Testament, every one of them. He is the woman's seed; *"The woman's seed shall bruise the serpent's head."*

He is the virgin's Son; *"Behold, the Lord Himself, will give you a sign. A virgin shall be with child and bring forth a Son and call His name Emmanuel."* He is the virgin's Son. He is the seed of woman. He is the seed of Abraham and Jacob. He is of the tribe of Judah, the family of Jesse and the family of David, the household of David.

That is what the Old Testament says, that the Messiah will come through Abraham, Jacob, Isaac, Judah, Jesse and David. He is the child of Bethlehem. He was born in Bethlehem. That is where the one shall come *"whose goings forth has been of old from everlasting."* He is the Holy One of God.

Jesus Christ manifests every attribute of God's character. Even the demons said to Him, *"We know who You are; You are the Holy One of God."* I believe that Jesus is the Christ because he fulfills every prophecy and every promise in the Old Testament regarding the Messiah.

Third: I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Messiah, because He fulfills every type and picture of the Messiah in the Old Testament. He fulfills it from Abel's sacrifice all the way down.

In His life, death, and resurrection, He is the *"Passover Lamb."* He is the *"Rock Smitten."* He is the *"Tabernacle"* in which God dwells, where God meets men and men

meet God. He is the *“Priest,”* the *“Mercy Seat,”* the *“Brazen Serpent lifted up.”* He is the *“Kinsmen Redeemer.”* He is the *“City of Refuge”* and He is the *“Lamb of God.”*

All the way through the Old Testament the Redeemer is pictured in types, shadows, and sacrifices. Jesus Christ fulfills every one of those. He is the *“Lamb slain.”* He is the *“Firstborn of every creature.”* He is the *“Lord our Righteousness.”* He is the *“Lord our Banner.”* He is the *“Lord that healeth.”* Every Old Testament type points to Christ. He is the *“Bread of Life.”* He is the *“Water of life.”*

Fourth: I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God because He meets every need a sinner has in reference to God. That’s right; the sinner has some needs in reference to God. The Law demands that I have a perfect righteousness which I don’t have in the flesh. Christ came down here, performed it and perfected it. He worked it out for me.

The Justice of God demands death. *“The wages of sin is death. The soul that sinneth, it shall die.”* Christ died. He meets my every need.

The presence of God requires a Mediator, a Great High Priest with a suitable sacrifice. Where are you going to find such a one? The Holy presence of God demands that we have a High Priest. That High Priest has to have a perfect sacrifice. Where are you going to get it? Only in Christ can you get it; He meets every need that a sinner has in reference to God.

Fifth: I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God because *“He is able to do all that He promised.”* That is what was said of Abraham; *“He staggered not at the promises of God. He was strong in faith, giving glory to God.”* He believed that *“everything God promised, God was able to perform.”*

I believe that everything Jesus Christ has promised in His Word, that He is able to perform. He said, *“Come to Me and I will give you rest. Look to Me and live.”* He said, *“Come to the water and drink and never thirst again.”* He promises all of these things. *“He is able to save them to the uttermost that come to God by Him.”* Paul said, *“He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day.”*

“He is able to keep us from falling. He is able to present us faultless.” He is the only one who is able to present us *“faultless before the very glory of God with exceeding joy.”*

“He is able to raise our vile bodies and make them like His own.” He was victorious over the grave. He has already been there and came out. He said, *“Because I live, you shall live also.”* He is able and I believe that!

Sixth: I believe (and listen to me), according to the Word of God, that *“God hath appointed a day in which He shall judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom He hath ordained,”* that is Jesus Christ. *“Whereof, He hath given assurance to all men in that He raised Him from the dead.”*

I believe that; I believe that there is a day coming when God is going to judge the world. *“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works”* (Revelation 20:12-13).

That day is coming when men will be judged according to and in relationship to that Man whom God hath ordained. He has given us witness to that fact. He has given us a preview in that *“He raised Him from the dead.”*

These are the things that I am concerned about: Whom you believe, that is Christ. How you believe, that is with the heart. Why you believe is because He is the fulfillment of all things. He said, *“If I bear witness of myself; my witness is not true.”* The Scripture says, *“Let every word be established at the mouth of two or three witnesses.”*

He said, *“The Scriptures bear witness of me. John the Baptist bore witness of me. The works that I do bear witness of me and the Father hath borne witness of me.”* That is why we believe.

Lastly, I’m concerned about when you believe. In reference to faith, the Word of God uses words like this frequently; *“Now is the accepted time.”* Listen to this word; *“Behold, today is the day of salvation.”* Listen to this; *“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness.”*

Listen to Ecclesiastes 12; *“Remember now, thy Creator, in the days of thy youth. Boast not thyself of tomorrow. Thou knowest not what a day will bring forth.”* Paul said, *“Knowing the terror of the Lord, (in reference to unbelief), we persuade men to believe Christ now.”*

Let me have your ear just a moment. Let me talk to you just a second. I want to give you two or three things that I feel most strongly and deeply about. My concern, my friend, is not that you make some sort of commitment to me. I have never asked you to fill out a

card to have mailed in. I don't even have a phone number at the bottom of this picture to call in and tell me anything.

I'm not interested in you making a commitment to me or to an organization. I don't keep records of how many people were saved, how many people were baptized or how many people made a profession of faith. We never use numbers or statistics on this broadcast. I'm not interested in you making a commitment to me or to an organization.

I am interested in you believing the Word of God. I'm interested in you embracing by heart faith, the Lord Jesus Christ, individually and personally between you and God. Don't call me. I don't need your numbers, names and these things. I want you to know Christ.

That is what Paul said, "*Who is Paul; who is Cephas, who is Apollos?*" They are no one. They are just a bunch of nobodies, just "*ministers by whom you believe.*" John the Baptist, who are you? Are you the Christ? Why no he isn't. Are you that prophet? No, he is not that prophet. Well, who are you? "*I am just a voice; that is all.*" I'm crying, "*Behold, the Lamb of God.*"

I'm not interested in you making a commitment or making a call. I'm interested in you laying hold on Christ with your heart, by faith, "*look to the Son of God.*" He is the only Saviour of sinners.

Let me tell you this, I'm not even interested for the moment, (now don't misunderstand me), in you making any public commitment or signing up to be a member of any religious denomination. The important thing for you my friend is to lay hold of the mercies and promises of God in Christ Jesus.

Don't turn to men; don't turn to men's advice. Don't look to men for council. His name is "*Wonderful,*" His name is "*Counselor,*" His name is "*the Mighty God,*" His name is "*the Everlasting Father.*" His name is "*the Prince of Peace.*"

Turn your eyes to Christ. Turn your ears to His Word. Turn your heart and faith to Christ. Men can't help you here. It is the Spirit of God that convinces men of sin. It is the Spirit of God that turns the heart to Christ. It is the Spirit of God that reveals the Son of God. It is the Spirit of God that grants repentance and leads you to repentance. It is the Spirit of God that gives faith.

I beg of you, quit getting your religion and professions, assurance and confidence from the words of men. They can't save you and they can't assure you of salvation. Christ is the Saviour.

I'm not interested in the moment that you raise your hand or you making any public commitment. It is heart faith that saves. *"God looks on the heart."* He doesn't look on the raised hand, the running feet, the energies and the activities of men. *"Christ looks on the heart."*

This is a private matter. What men can talk you into; another man can talk you out of it. What men can give you; another man can take away from you. What God does for you is forever. *"What God doeth; it shall be forever."* What God does in your heart, shall be forever.

So, I beg of you; don't turn to the flesh. Don't turn to the arms of the flesh. Lean not upon the strength of your flesh. Turn your eyes to Christ. Can you do that?

Another thing that I am saying is this, I'm not preaching a doctrinal position. I wish that the names Catholic, Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Church of Christ, Church of God or Church of the Nazarene would have never come into being.

I'm not preaching a religion. I'm presenting a Person, the living God manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is what He said in my text and this is quoted in Isaiah; God Almighty Himself said; *"Behold; I lay in Sion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a chief cornerstone, elect and precious. And he that believeth on Him shall never be disappointed,"* (shall never be put to shame).

I'm not talking about someone that joins a movement. I'm not talking about someone that reforms his life; it is not he that works in religious circles, it is not he that wins souls, it is not he that tithes, not he that keeps a day, but *"he that believeth on Him shall never be disappointed,"* (shall never be put to shame).

There are all kinds of religion today. Religion is all around us and all over us. It is under us and on top of us; it is choking us to death. Somebody said, "America's got religious indigestion." I think they were right; it is a whole lot like it was in the days when our Lord walked on this earth in the flesh.

They kept asking Him questions. One of them said, *"Is it lawful to pay tribute to Caesar?"* They settled that. Another one came up and said, *"Well; here is a man that has had four or five wives; who is going to be his wife in the resurrection?"* They got it

settled and another fellow came up and said, *“Is it wrong to do this; is it wrong to do that? Which is the greatest Law? Which is the greatest sin? Which is the most important Law?”*

They got that settled and Christ put them to silence. They started to walk off and He said, “Hold on now; I’ve got a question for you; *“what think ye of Christ?”* That is my question to you today. I know that you have all of these issues and all of these things that you want to settle.

People write to me and they want me to explain something in the Revelation. They want me to explain something about the resurrection. They want me to explain something about the coming of the Lord. I want you to look to Christ.

If you miss Christ, you can have all of that other information and perish. If you have Christ, you don’t need all of that other information. You can leave it all in the hands of Him who is your Lord. He’s my Father; He won’t fail me. He is my Redeemer; He will not let me down. He will not do anything contrary to my good or His glory.

I can rest in these. I can rest in the future. I can rest in the past, present and future, knowing that Christ upholds me with His hands. God said, *“Behold; I lay in Sion.”* This is God’s doings and this is not man’s doings. He is God’s cornerstone.

God said, *“He that believeth on Him will never be disappointed.”* There is no judgment to them who are in Christ. *“There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ.”* God said, *“He will never be put to shame.”*

I like that hymn that says:

The soul that on Jesus
Hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not,
Desert to its foes.

That soul, though all hell
Should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no never,
No never, forsake.

Can you lay hold on that? Can you look to a Person? Why don't you push religion aside and all of these voices that you are listening to? I want you to listen to God and look to His Son. He said, "*He that honoreth My Son; I will honor him.*"

"I lay in Sion, a chief cornerstone. He that believeth on Him will never be put to shame. He will never be disappointed." I believe that, do you? I believe Him!