

1 Peter 2:4-8

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 09 August 2026

Preacher: Ife Ojetayo

[0:00] Therefore the Lord God said, Look, I have laid a stone in Zion, Amen.

Please be seated. There's a Norwegian word, Kusli.

I know I've said that wrong, and I'll be corrected when I get home. This Norwegian word, Kusli, we have no equivalent word for it in English, but you can get the gist of the word with this set of imagery.

It's like drinking hot coffee or tea with a friend while snow falls outside, or like sitting by a crackling fireplace with candles and lights all around you, or it could be enjoying a casual, friendly family dinner, or it could even be having a nice conversation or greeting someone warmly.

So you see, many things can be Kusli. It is a word that conveys warmth, comfort, togetherness, and a general well-being.

[1:48] It goes beyond just a beautiful room. It's the atmosphere, the company you're keeping, the mood, the joy, the hospitality that makes Kusli happen.

And, why do you need to know all of this? Imagine a world in which the church is Kusli, where the household of God is such a warm place, so unhurried, so full of welcome, that the stranger who comes through the door forgets he was ever a stranger at all.

That is what we want, isn't it? Who doesn't want that? Raise your hand. No, there's no one. That is what we want. However, I think that what creates that sort of atmosphere of love and warmth within the church is not just the beautiful building or the warm decor.

Although, I'm really grateful for the wonderful changes we are making to our small parish building to make it a more warm and inviting place. I'm grateful for that.

But in fact, the real thing that sustains love and makes our gathering lively and beautiful is when we have an encounter with the living God through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[3:24] That is what sustains us. That is actually what brings warmth and life to our gathering. And so, here's St. Peter's words again from 1 Peter 2 verse 4.

It's on page 1204 of your pew Bible, by the way. I invite you to open up and follow along. Peter writes, 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.

Everything in this passage, everything in this passage, particularly in this verse that I've just read, hangs on that first phrase, as you come to Him.

Not, note here, not as you improve yourselves, not as you sort out your doubts, but as you come to Jesus, the living stone.

And where does this coming begin? Just one verse earlier, Peter has quoted Psalm 34, when he said, If indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

[4:50] In that same Psalm, those who taste are those who come to Him, and their faces are radiant. And notice the tense here, as you come, not once coming, not as you came long ago, not at your baptism, or your conversion, although all of that is implied, but continually coming to Him.

As you have this morning come to Him, again and again, come to Him, as you do so. The way you keep coming back to a fire, in a cold hour, or to a hot stove, when you're around a campfire, in a cold fall evening.

As you come, continually to Christ, ongoing, continually, coming to Christ, is the ongoing action, of the Christian.

We must consistently, repeatedly, again and again, come, to the living stone, who is Jesus Christ. And yes, it's great if people say, of our church, Holy Trinity, that it's such a welcoming place, with lovely, kind people.

But, all of that praise, of a warm, nice, kind people, beautiful place, wonderful people, all of that, will be for naught, and be useless, if they cannot also say, that, this church, when they come, it is evident, that the people, in it, are people, who have had an encounter, with the Lord Jesus Christ. [6:43] Who have come, themselves, to the living stone. That they, are not just, a bunch of people, who know their, Bible, or know their theology, or, are the right kind, of Anglicans.

But, they can say of us, that, those people, have a true, and abiding relationship, with Jesus Christ. They have a relationship, with the crucified, risen, and ascended Christ.

That, brothers and sisters, is the first thing, we want people, to say about us. And, it's the last thing, we want people, to say about us.

And, without a sure, cornerstone, the building, as it were, no matter, how beautiful, that building is, with marbles, and how beautifully, ornamented it may be, that building, without a sure, cornerstone, is bound, to have, shoddy foundations.

And, ultimately, what would happen, to that building? It would crumble. So, let's, let's pause here, to hear the, clear implication, before we go on.

[7:59] You cannot be part, of a living church, by coming, to a group of people, who are lively, caring, and nice, or you cannot be, part of a living church, by merely coming, to a beautiful building.

No, you must first, come to Christ, the living stone, by faith. It is a relationship, with him, that brings, true life, and abiding peace, which our heart, longs for, which everyone, longs for.

I described, that feeling, of crucially, before. But, the truth, that our heart, Christ for, is that relationship, with Christ. That's what, brings that, feeling of warmth, and assurance, and peace.

It is an, ongoing encounter, with him, that makes us, live in stones. And Peter, quotes, Isaiah, chapter 6, here. And he says, behold, behold, I am laying, in Zion, a stone, a cornerstone, chosen, and precious, and whoever, believes in this stone, believes in him, will not be put to shame.

Understand, again, what a cornerstone is. It's the first stone, that is laid, when you're building, a building. It's the stone, from which, every other line, in the building, is measured, against.

[9:24] It is the core, that gives strength, and support, to the rest, of the foundation, and the rest, of the building. And if the cornerstone, is true, the house, will stand.

If the cornerstone, is false, the whole building, inherits, that same falsehood, a faulty line, shoddy foundation, destined, to crumble.

So let us know, here, what Peter, wants us to note. Peter, whose name, whose actual name, means rock. So named, by Jesus himself. Peter, is not speaking, of himself, when he says, when he's talking, about the cornerstone.

Contrary, to what the Roman church, teaches about, Peter's centrality, to the makeup, of the church of God. Peter, is not speaking, of himself. The cornerstone, that he speaks of, is Jesus Christ.

And this is not, the first time, Peter would say this, in Acts chapter 4, verse 11, before the Sanhedrin. Sanhedrin, is the, is the, the ruling court, in Jerusalem, of the 70 elders.

[10:34] Before this court, Peter, and John, were brought up, on charges. And Peter, said in front of them, the same court, that falsely accused Jesus, and condemned him to death.

Peter said, before this court, this Jesus, is the stone, that was rejected, by you, the builders, which has become, the cornerstone. And in this, Peter is only, echoing, what his master, Jesus has done, in identifying, the cornerstone, as himself.

Here is the paradox. This stone, is rejected, by men. And chosen, by God. The builders, the teachers, of the law, the priests, the learned people, of Israel, looked, at this stone.

They turned it over, they examined it, they tested it, and they judged it, unfit. And they pitched it out, onto the rubbish heap, outside the city, condemning, condemning him to death.

But it is, it is this same stone, that God made, the cornerstone, of the whole, spiritual building. The cornerstone, of his living temple, the church.

[11:55] And Peter writes, to these small churches, in Asia Minor, in present day Turkey. Peter is writing to them, those who needed, to hear these words, not unlike us.

They were being shamed, and despised, by neighbors, by employers, by their own families, for the crime, of belonging to Jesus. And Peter says to them, the world, may have an opinion, of who you are.

But the world, does not have, the final verdict, they may judge you, unfit, and cast you out. But God is the one, who ultimately, judges the stone's worthiness.

The world's rejection of you, is not evidence, against you. In fact, the world's rejection of you, might mean, that you belong, to that cornerstone, who was also rejected, by men. You are being treated, exactly, as the cornerstone, was treated, by the world. But remember, that like him, like him, you are chosen, by God.

[13:06] You are precious, to him. So let's look at what Peter says, in the next verse, in verse 5. He takes the word, he used of Christ, the living stone.

That's the word, he used of Christ. And he uses it, that same word, to describe, those who have come to him. He is the living stone, and you, are living stones.

The same word. The cornerstone, is living, he lives, because God, raised him from the dead. And the life, of that resurrection, that resurrection life, runs out, through the whole wall, like warmth, through a house.

You are not alive, because you are strong. You are alive, because you are set, upon him, who is the living stone.

You share, in that resurrection life. Can I ask someone, to sit between my children there, so that they can be quiet. Thank you.

[14:16] And notice, notice, notice here, that what Jesus says, about the stones. It's stones, right? Jesus says, stones, plural.

He's not speaking of, He says, you are, you are set upon, the living stone, the cornerstone. And now, you are living stones.

Plural. Building one house, singular. Peter never says, that you are each, a little temple, unto yourself. He didn't say, you are, a congregation of one.

No. He says, you are being built up. Passive, present tense language. God is the one, doing the building. God, is the one, placing you, into a single, spiritual house.

Laid upon, course, upon course, stone, upon stone, with saints, of every age, and generation, past. The living, saints, and the dead.

[15:27] All saints, selected, by God himself, to adorn, his temple. You are counted, among them, as you come, to the living stone.

And, there's a whole story, a story told, of a visitor, to Sparta, the ancient, Greek, Greek city state.

And, this visitor, asked, why Sparta, does not have, city walls.

He was taken, to the drill field, where, the Spartan soldiers, stood in rank. And, the king said to him, there are your walls, every man a brick.

That's Peter's point here. It's not these four walls. There, as Jesus, our commander himself, would, as if he was saying, to the world around, there are the walls, to my spiritual, temple.

There's living stones. And, this spiritual house, that God is building, has a purpose. It's being built up, as a spiritual house, to be, to be, a holy priesthood, to offer, spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ.

[16:47] That's what Peter says. Peter now tells us, that, as we come to this Jesus, the cornerstone, chosen and precious to God, we, ourselves, are called, to be priests, offering sacrifices to God.

Now, in the Old Testament, there are two kinds of sacrifices. One is an atoning sacrifice, which removes guilt, the guilt of sin. The other kind of sacrifice, is a sacrifice, of thanksgiving, because sin, has already been taken away.

Jesus Christ, has fulfilled, the first kind of sacrifice. By his oblation of himself, once offered, as a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, for the sins of the whole world.

He has fulfilled, that sacrifice, that remover sin, that atoning sacrifice. And in response, to what Christ has done, the church, we, the living stones, we have, ourselves, a priestly duty, to bring, a sacrifice, a sacrifice, of thanksgiving.

What then, does this look like, this sacrifice, of thanksgiving? Is it our songs of praise, when we sing, here, when we're gathered? Is it our offerings, during the offertory?

[18:11] Is it, perhaps, our evangelism, as we proclaim Christ, to the world? Is it when we come, to this, holy table, to partake, of the body, and blood of Christ?

Is that, a sacrifice, of thanksgiving? thanksgiving. Well, yes, it includes that. But it is far more, than that.

It is far more, than what we do, in this building, this sacrifice, of thanksgiving, that we're meant to give. Your patience, the whole, of your Christian life, is the offering, that you give, as a sacrifice, of

thanksgiving.

Your patience, your kindness, as you interact, with a difficult, co-worker, is a spiritual sacrifice, of thanksgiving. Your generosity, in giving your money, and time, to the work, of the gospel, that, is a sacrifice, of thanksgiving.

Your generosity, the forgiveness, you extend, when you'd, rather hold on, to a grudge, you're seeing Christ, as the precious, chosen cornerstone, of God, and coming to him, continually, presenting your, all life, to God, as a living sacrifice, that, is your priestly duty.

[19 : 36] Nothing, is too ordinary, to be laid, upon that altar, of sacrifice, to God. And nothing, is too holy, to be kept up of it.

Your whole life, is now meant to be, an offering, of thanksgiving. We'll speak more, of that priestly duty, next week. But for now, let's move on, to verse 6 to 8.

Peter, has told us, who the stone is, to those who believe. It is the cornerstone. And as he said, to the Jewish rulers, in Acts 4, the stone you rejected, that which has become, the cornerstone.

Peter continues, in Acts 4, verse 12, and there is, no salvation, there is salvation, in no one else.

But there is, no other name, under heaven, given among men, by which we must, be saved.

there is no salvation, anywhere else, but in him.

[20 : 46] Those who come to Christ, the living stone, they've come to share, in his place of honor, and privilege. They've come, to share, in his resurrection life, as they themselves, have come to find that, in Christ, they also, are chosen, and precious stones, to God.

But what of those, who reject this stone, and test it, and deem it, unfit, and unworthy? What of those, who will cast this stone out?

Peter tells us, that the stone, that the builders rejected, has become, the cornerstone. And then he goes in, and he said, this cornerstone, is a stone, of stumbling, and a rock, of offense.

But before the warning, do not miss, the promise, Peter draws out, in verse 7. He says, so the honor, is for you, who believe. Isaiah had said, the one who believes, will not be put to shame.

And Peter presses, that even further. It doesn't mean, not only be put to shame, he says, not merely, spared shame, but those, who trust in him, will not only, not be put to shame, but they will be honored.

[22 : 00] There's a positive aspect, of this. This mattered enormously, to Peter's first hearers, these small churches, in Asia Minor, that he's writing to. Their society, was using shame, as a weapon, to press them back, into conformity.

Our society, does that too, doesn't it? The world, wants to shame you, for standing, on the truth, of the gospel. For. For. They mock you, at the marketplace.

They pass you, over at work. They whisper, at family gatherings, about you. Because of what you believe, and whom you believe. And Peter answers, shame and honor, are not the world's, to end out.

The world, may try to put you, to shame. But God is the true, arbiter of honor. And those who come, to this living stone, will share, in the very honor, that is bestowed upon him.

The very honor, of the risen, and exalted Christ, will be given, you will share, in that honor. The world, may call you a fool, for being here, this morning.

[23 : 16] But to worship God, and to hear his word, the world, may call you a fool. But God calls you, honored people. Precious to him. So hear the warning, Peter just wants to communicate.

Because those who come to him, are will not be put to shame. But in verse 8, rejecting Christ, is not a neutral act. You don't just get to, take it or leave it.

It's not a matter of taste. It's not like, declining an invitation, to a dinner party. Peter calls, rejecting this cornerstone, Peter calls it disobedience.

And it has a moral, moral implications. The same cornerstone, that holds up the house, is also, a stumbling block, to those who reject him.

And the trouble is that, you cannot walk around that path. Christ, as a theologian puts it, Christ is laid, across humanity's path.

[24 : 23] So no one can, simply step over him. Every one of us, must do something, with him. We must climb, unto him, and take refuge, and stand upon him, or we will, we will fall, over him.

Indifference, is simply, falling over slowly. You may say, well, I don't, I haven't made up my mind yet. I don't really know. I'm still questioning. But that just means, you're falling, stumbling, slowly, to utter destruction.

There's an irony here, that Peter surely felt, I think, as he speaks of this, stumbling stone. Because the man, writing these very words, Peter, the rock, was once called, by his master, a stumbling block.

Jesus called him, skandalon, which is a stone of offense, a stumbling block. When Jesus said to him, get behind me, Satan, you are a hindrance to me. Because Peter, was seeking after, worldly gains, worldly attainment, and not seeking after, God's redemptive plan.

Remember that, in Mark, when Jesus says, I am going to Jerusalem, to be killed, and on the third day, we'll rise again. Peter took Jesus aside, and rebuked him. And Jesus says, get behind me, you are hindrance.

[25 : 50] And so, Peter, when he speaks of a stumbling block, to those who reject Jesus, he's not speaking, just in abstract alone. He knows what that looks like. He's not preaching down, on any one of us.

He's preaching as a man, who has been on both sides, of this stone. And he's inviting us, that it is not too late, to trust, in this cornerstone.

To come to him, repenting, with faith. Placing our trust in him. And then, there's this line, that ends in verse 8.

And we'll finish with verse 8, this morning, and we'll continue, verse 9, next Sunday. Peter writes, they stumble, those who stumble, will reject this cornerstone.

They stumble, because they disobeyed the word, as they were destined to do. Now, I'll not pretend to you, that this sentence is easy. Many people interpret it, in different ways, throughout church history.

[27 : 00] But I believe, what Peter is saying here, is this. There is one divine act, with a two-fold result. God has placed, the cornerstone down.

That is the divine act. Jesus Christ, is this cornerstone. He is the Messiah. He is the Savior. There is no salvation, in no one else, but in Him.

That is the divine act, of God. But the same God, who set that stone, in Zion, also sets, the consequence, of refusing that stone.

The verdict, concerning this cornerstone, is not arbitrary. It is built, into the very shape, of reality. Spiritual reality.

It is like gravity. It is not arbitrary, is it? It is built, into the reality, of the world. The same way, this cornerstone, is built, into the reality, of the world.

[28 : 02] You may come to Him. But if you reject Him, you will stumble, to your destruction.

But you cannot, avoid that fact. next Sunday, God willing, we will take up, verse 9 and 10. But, briefly, I want you to hear, the staggering title, by which, this spiritual house, that God is building, is called.

In verse 9 and 10. We are called, a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people, for God's, own, possession.

Mark this, brothers and sisters. None of these titles, belong to anyone, who has not, first done, the one thing, this passage, asked for us, of us.

The titles, that, that's described here, are for those, who are, stones in the house, living stones. And the stones, get into the house, one way only, by coming to, the living stone.

[29 : 14] So come, come to him. Let's just think back, about that Norwegian word, that I, that I mangled, in the beginning, of the sermon. Kusli, is never something, you achieve by yourself.

You can't achieve kusli, by sitting by yourself, it's in interaction, it's in community. You cannot be kusli, in an empty room.

However, how many candles, and ambience, you have around you. It requires company. It requires a table, where people can come together.

And someone at that table, who is glad you came, and welcomes you in. Brothers and sisters, that is what God, is building here, at Holy Trinity.

Not a monument, but a home. A house, of living stones. Warm, because the risen Christ, is in it.

[30 : 19] He is the cornerstone of it. And wide enough, for everyone, the world is thrown out. To come in. So I invite you this morning, to come to Jesus.

Be built on him. Stop seeing him, as a rock of offense. See him, as the living stone, through whom you can also, receive eternal life.

And if you have come to him, if you already have a relationship, with Jesus Christ, in a few moments, we will come to this table, and you will hold out your hands, your empty hands, and you will be given, the body and blood of Christ.

Come, to him, again, and again. Having repented, of your sins, having trusted, in his finished work, for you, on the cross, come.

And know that, even as we gather, around his table, know what he says of you. that you belong to him. You belong to him, who has brought you, into his house, as his own possession.

[31 : 32] You are not your home. You belong to him. May that be a warm, comforting truth, to you this morning. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen. Amen.