

Growing or Stumbling?

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: 20 November 2022

[0 : 0 0] Well, Psalm 96 in the Scottish Psalter, we're going to sing from verse 1 to verse 7. We'll sing a new song to the Lord, sing all the earth to God. To God sing, bless his name, show still his saving health abroad. Verse 1 to 7, and the tune is Southwark. We stand to praise God.

O sing a new song to the Lord, sing all the earth to God. To God sing, bless his name, show still his saving health abroad. Among the heathen angels his glory to declare, and unto all the people show his works at what rest are.

For great the Lord and greatly is to be magnified.

Ye worthy to be near to see above all gods beside.

For all the gods are idols of which slighted nations fear.

[1 : 5 0] But our God is the Lord, by whom the heavens created were.

Great honor is before his face, and majesty divine.

Strength is within his holy place, and their beauty shine.

Do ye ascribe unto the Lord, all people in the time.

Glory to ye unto the Lord, and mighty by the sky.

[2 : 5 4] Amen. I will come to God in prayer. Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, we thank you for the great privilege and beauty that there is in worshiping your name.

We thank you that we come singing praise to you, and help us that we will come to sing a new song to the Lord and join in with all the earth as we offer up our praise to you today.

We thank you that your people gather to worship just as we do, from the rising to the setting of the sun on this your own day. And we pray your blessing on our time together, and your word to us, that you will minister to all our hearts and speak to us powerfully through your word.

We thank you, Lord, that we come, for you invite us. Your word does say to come to you. And so many invitations go out to us, Lord.

We pray that we will always, first and foremost, hear your invitation to us, and that we would worship you with all our hearts. So may you encourage us and build us up through your word.

[4 : 0 9] Lord, bless us all together, both in our service and in the Sunday school, the creche and the tweenies too, Lord. May we all know that you are with us and that you are near to us, that you are our help and our strength on a daily basis.

Bless the young ones, Lord, we pray. Look after them. Be with them in this week when there will be a holiday weekend. Take care of both children and families, and give rest to teachers too over the weekend.

We pray, Lord, your blessing on all our people as we commit ourselves into your hands. Go before us, we pray, and we ask all things for the forgiveness of our sins.

In Jesus' name. Amen. I'll just say a word to the young ones before you go out to Sunday school and creche in Twenies. It's good to see you today.

I was just wondering this morning about the idea of that word saying in the prayer, to come, to come and to worship God.

[5 : 12] It's an invitation to us. And getting an invitation is a wonderful thing. We often get invitations. Maybe you get invitations to birthday parties. You get invitations to weddings.

Maybe just now you're starting to hear about invitations. Maybe to where you're going to have your Christmas dinner or Christmas parties. And all of these kinds of things. Today there's an invitation going out for children to come to the holiday club on Saturday the 17th.

So it's always great to get invitations. It's an exciting thing. And when someone invites you, it makes you sometimes feel special. That someone's remembered you.

And it also makes you maybe feel excited that there's something to look forward to. That there's going to be something involved in the invitation that you've received. Maybe it's food.

Maybe it's a party. Maybe there's something about the invitation. It's going to be a special time. Well, the greatest invitation that we have is the invitation that Jesus gives to us.

[6 : 17] When he speaks to us in his word, he so often tells us to come to him. An example is in Isaiah chapter 55.

There it says to us in verse 1, Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters. And he who has no money, come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk.

Without money and without price. There's a great invitation there. It doesn't matter. You don't need money to come. He says, just come. Come and take this. It's free. And that's the invitation of the gospel.

Jesus says to us to come. And that word come, you can maybe break it down by its letters and just take this with you. When Jesus says to us to come, think of it like this.

Who is the invitation from? It is from Christ. Christ himself is inviting us to come. So that's the C. And then you think of O.

[7 : 20] Christ offers. He is putting out an offer to us, an invitation to us. And we need to respond to that. So the O is he offers.

He offers. M. Me. It's a personal invitation. It's an invitation to you today, every one of you, to come to Jesus who offers me.

And then E. What does he offer us? Everything. He offers us everything. He offers us this great promise of life through him.

So come, he says. Christ offers me everything. So may we hear this invitation, every one of us, and come to the Lord Jesus who will give to us everything we need for life and for eternity.

Well, let's say the Lord's prayer together now. Amen.

[8 : 51] We're going to sing together now to God's praise in Psalm 10. It's in the Sing Psalms version on page 12. Psalm 10.

We're singing at verse 12. Psalm 10 at verse 12. Arise, Lord, lift up your hand.

Do not forget the poor. Why does the wicked say of God my conduct he'll ignore. We're going to sing from verse 12 to the end of the Psalm and the tune is Stroudwater.

Arise, Lord, lift up your hand. But I, Lord, lift up your hand.

Do not forget the poor. Why, master, waken, saint of God, my God, that ye may know?

[10 : 04] But you, O God, you see such a strong, and you will bring me rest.

The pain of peace is just in you, you help the Father less.

- Lord, bring the wicked persons power, and all into the heart.
 For all the evil which he thought would never be my does.
 The Lord will never make us king, his throne will always stand.
- [11 : 30] The hidden nations of the world will perish from this land.
 O Lord, the needy once desired, you answered from all night.
 You give encouragement to them, and listen to their cry.
 For you, the fiend of fatherless, and those who are oppressed.
 So that from fear of mortal land, the helpless make our rest.
- [13 : 01] I will turn together to read in God's word. We're reading two passages. First of all, in the Gospel of John, and chapter 1. The Gospel of John, chapter 1.
 And we read from the beginning of that chapter down to verse 18. John 1 at verse 1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
 He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him. And without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.
 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came to the light. He came as a witness to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him.
 He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him.
- [14 : 15] Yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
 And the word became flesh, and dwelt among us. And we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son, from the Father, full of grace and truth.
 John bore witness about him, and cried out, This was he of whom I said, He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.
 And from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses. Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.
 No one has ever seen God. The only God who is at the Father's side, he has made him known. Our second reading is going back to our study in 1 Peter.
- [15 : 27] We're reading in chapter 2. 1 Peter chapter 2. We're going to read from verse 1 down to verse 8.
 So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.
 Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.
 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.
 For it stands in Scripture, Behold, I am laying in Sion a stone, a cornerstone, chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.
- [16 : 38] So the honor is for you who believe. 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 offense.

They stumble because they disobey the word as they were destined to do. Amen. And may God bless these readings from his word.

We'll join together in a word of prayer. Let us pray. Our Father, in heaven, as we come to your word, may we realize just the power that is found therein, that we would recognize its authority.

It is a word given by you, inspired through your spirit, as he gave words to men to write for us to receive. We thank you that you have given us a word that guides us in this world, that has guided generation after generation, reminding us, Lord, of the great gift that you have given to this world, your own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who was with you in the beginning, as we have read, the one through whom all things were made, and yet the word, as we read, that became flesh and dwelt among us.

We thank you that Jesus came to make his habitation here with us, that in all our needs he saw and you sent.

[18 : 16] And we thank you that your word reminds us that he has given all for us, that he came to lay down his life for us, that we might have life through him.

And help us, Lord, then, that as we come to your word anew today, that we would have a real longing for it and a thirst for it, that you would come, Lord, by your power to minister to our hearts, to speak to us a word that we may understand and to recognize the great power and authority that is behind your word, that your word calls us with that great invitation to come, to come and see the Christ who offers everything for us and who offers everything to us.

We pray, Lord, that your spirit will be with us, to lead us and to guide us in all things. We thank you that your word is personal to us, that it ministers to us, not just as a congregation of your people or as the nations of the world, although it speaks widely and powerfully in that way.

We thank you that there is a personal nature to it as well, that your word reminds us that our very names are known unto you, the very number of the hairs on our heads are all accounted to you.

We are so personal to you. You have made us, you have formed us, and you have made us with a purpose. And we pray that our purpose and all our great needs will be met in you, in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

[20 : 00] Help us to know that you are with us, for that is your promise. Whenever we go through great trials or tribulations, even as we are thinking of from this letter of Peter to a scattered people, we know the great promises of the hope that you give to your people in every circumstance, in every generation, that you minister to us.

You tell us, Lord, that though there will be difficulties and that they may not be removed from us, they will not ultimately harm us when our trust is in you.

For we are being refined, even in the fire, that we will be found precious in your sight, that you would take away all the blemishes that are within us, the sins of our hearts, our shortcomings, O Lord, how so often we sin against you.

But we thank you for your great forgiveness and for the way you form us and shape us and mould us as your people. We pray that you will build us up, O Lord, and that you will draw us and guide us by your Spirit day by day.

We thank you for your cause throughout our land and throughout the world. When we know, Lord, the many great difficulties that surround our people and people far and wide, when there is oppression among the nations of this world, when there is so much that leaves us asking the question, Lord, even as the psalmist asked, Arise, Lord, lift up your hand.

[21 : 38] Do not forget the poor. Why does the wicked say of God, My conduct he'll ignore? We know that you never ignore the conduct of the wicked, but that, Lord, you will bring justice, that you will bring forth all that is deserving upon all of us as sinners.

But we pray, Lord, for you to have mercy, to reach down to the needy ones, to hear prayers from here, to hear them on high, and to give encouragement to each and every one as we need.

Far and wide, Lord, may your people know you as their Lord and as their God, the one who is perfect in every way and able to supply our every need.

Give us grace for each day, Lord, and help us in all we do to do it for your glory. We thank you to be able to be involved in the work of your kingdom, and we continue to pray for the gospel ministry here in our islands and in our town and for ourselves as a congregation.

Bless every endeavor to minister to people, young and old and throughout our communities. We pray for the holiday club planned for the Christmas time and pray your blessing on it that you will indeed be in the midst of all that we do in your name there.

[22 : 57] We pray for the work collecting for the baby bank. We, Lord, hear that there is such a pressing need and an increasing need for it. And we pray, Lord, that you will help us to try and meet these needs in whatever way we can to support and to encourage.

We thank you for the work going into the production of the WFM recipe book. We thank you for all the work that's been done over the years and the great blessing it's been to so many causes throughout the world.

And we pray, Lord, that you will continue to bless and encourage that work and that ministry too. We do pray, Lord, for our communities, for those who need you, those who are unwell, those who are troubled in heart and spirit, those who are mourning and grieving in our midst at this time.

We know, Lord, the needs that are many around us. And we pray for your comfort of the Holy Spirit to surround and to help all who need you at this time. All who call upon your name, may you hear their cries, O Lord, and draw near to us, as we call, for help in our times of need.

We thank you that you are indeed a refuge and a strength. And may we know your ever-present aid. May you bless your word to us now as we continue to sing your praise and to hear your word.

[24 : 25] Blessed to all our needs and to all our hearts. Uphold us throughout this day and guide us in everything that we do. Bless the ministry of your word today and into the evening as well.

Remember Scott as he ministers tonight. Be with him. Bless him and uphold him too. And all your servants, near and far. So go with us now and pardon us all our sin.

As we ask all things with the forgiveness offered in Christ's name. We ask it through that powerful and mighty name. The word that became flesh and dwelt among us.

The Lord Jesus Christ. To him be glory now and always. Amen. We will sing to God's praise in Psalm 118 in the Scottish Psalter.

Page 399 of the Psalm books. Psalm 118 singing at verse 19 to verse 26.

[25 : 26] So set ye open unto me the gates of righteousness then will I enter into them and I the Lord will bless. And we see in verse 22 words quoted in our reading in 1 Peter.

The stone is made head cornerstone which builders did despise. This is the doing of the Lord and wondrous in our eyes. We'll sing verse 19 to 26 to God's praise and the tune is credited.

D. He'll sing verse 19 to 26 in the show called drowned in the wedding of righteousness.

righteousness. Then will lie and turn into him, and now the Lord will bless.

Then since the age of God died, the just shall enter in.

[26 : 41] The will lie for the weakest, and thus my safety be.

That stone is written for our soul, which filled our city skies.

This is the truth of the Lord, and wondrous in our eyes.

This is the day God made in it, with and miss God's love he an daughter.

Now, to Blessed is he in God's great name, that cometh us to save.

[28 : 09] We compromise, praise to the Lord, pertain to blessed heart.

If we can turn back to our reading in 1 Peter chapter 2.

We're looking through the verse 1 to verse 8 of this chapter as we continue our study in this letter. 1 Peter chapter 2, just 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.

And so on. Just see these words at the beginning of verse 4. As you come to him. And we read of who this is. It's the Lord Jesus Christ.

[29 : 18] We read of it in John's Gospel 2. That great word that was with God in the beginning. The word through whom all things were made. And the word that became flesh and dwelt among us.

The word that is truth and in whom there is glory. And as Peter is writing to this scattered church, people scattered far and wide, he is writing with this great truth to them.

Reminding them of what God, who God is and what he's saying to them. Both in what he says himself as he writes, but also as we see very often through his letter, he quotes from the Old Testament.

He reminds them so often of the truth that they already have. The truth that God has spoken in the past. We saw it the last time we were looking at this.

He quoted from the Old Testament in the end of chapter 1. All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, the flower falls.

[30 : 23] But the word of the Lord remains forever. The word of the Lord remains forever. The word that is truth is the foundation of life.

And this truth is all about Jesus. That's what he is reminding the people of in this letter. The truth that Jesus is always with them.

No matter what they're experiencing, no matter what trials and tribulations that they are going through, that they would know that Jesus is always with them.

We've seen it already in how he is. Their hope that salvation is through him. That in their future, security has its foundation through faith in him.

It's all about Jesus. And all the time, day by day, week by week, month by month, year by year, we are hearing more and more of Jesus.

[31 : 26] His gospel, the truth, the word that became flesh and dwelt among us. But as Peter is writing to the people then, and even as he's speaking to ourselves today, the question on our hearts should be, what are we doing with him?

What are we doing with him? Do we just hear and let it pass by? Or are we hearing and being changed by the power of this word?

Do you believe him? And do you believe his power? Do you believe that there is power in this word as you hear it read? Or as you read it yourself?

As you come here today or as you listen online, do you know the power of this word? And do you understand what it can do or even what it is doing in you?

We've been thinking the last time we were met together about how Peter was moving from looking up to the holiness of God, to looking out and to seeing how this word and truth ministering in our hearts affects how we live and move in this world.

[32 : 43] We were particularly thinking last time about how we are to love one another earnestly. That through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and trusting and obedience to his word, that we are to go forward loving one another.

And as he continues, he's bringing more and more ingredients into our lives, how we are to live outwardly with our eyes fixed on Jesus. But it's always in remembering the truth of this unchanging and powerful word.

And this is our main focus together this morning, this power of this word and how it's able to transform lives.

It's done it before. It'll do it again. And the question is, are you allowing that power to change your own heart? Story told of a Christian man who had a good friend.

He was a real special friend to him. But this friend was very antagonistic towards the gospel, towards the word of God.

[33 : 55] He didn't want to know anything about God's word. He enjoyed his friendship with his Christian friend, but that's as far as it went. He was saying, don't talk to me about your faith.

Don't talk to me about Christ. And the Christian friend was just desperate to share the word with him in some form or other. And so what he decided was that he would leave a Bible for the man in his home.

And the man's wife put the Bible into the study. And when the man who was so antagonistic towards the gospel saw the Bible, he was enraged about this.

He was furious. And he picked up the Bible and he started to rip the pages out of the Bible. He began to throw the pages into the fire.

He just wanted rid of it. Page after page, he was ripping it out and throwing it into the fire. One point, as he was throwing the pages, one blew back and fell on the floor beside him.

[35 : 01] He bent down to pick up that page, going to throw it back into the fire. When he glanced at the words on the page, which went like a dagger through his heart.

It was Matthew chapter 24, verse 35. And it says, Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away.

And that word went into that man's heart. And it was the beginning of God starting to transform the heart that was so hard to soften it and to melt it and to bring to realize the power that is behind that word.

The power of the Lord Jesus Christ. And he couldn't get away from these words. For days afterwards, these words were just going round in his head.

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word will not pass away. And over time, he came to bow the knee to the Lord Jesus Christ, the author of that word.

[36 : 04] And he came to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with all his heart. A heart that was so enraged and angry against God, melted by the power of this word.

And this word is powerful. It changes hearts. It changes lives. And whose heart doesn't need change? All our hearts need change.

And that change comes through this word of God changing our hearts. Solomon, in the book of Proverbs, reminds us that the heart is the center of our lives.

He says in Proverbs 4 verse 23, Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flows the springs of life. Open your heart to this word, for that's the spring of life.

So there's three things I want us to see in verse 1 to verse 8 as we think about the truth and the power of this word. How it continues to infiltrate our hearts and take over our hearts.

- [37 : 12] And we see first it's a word that gives life. Secondly, we see it's a word that builds up but also causes stumbling. And thirdly, we'll see it's a word, a truth that gives recovery.

First thing we see is it's a truth that gives life. How important are our Bibles? How important is the word of God to you today?

We would only know probably how important it is if we were no longer had it. If the word of God was taken from us. Other books can be good to read and good for us.

But nothing compares to the word of God. Just imagine what life would be like without this word. And without this Jesus who is the cornerstone of it.

What kind of people would we be? What kind of world would we live in? Well, we're giving it a hint of it as the world continues to push out God's word.

- [38 : 24] When it all becomes about ourselves and our own motives and desires in life. We become very selfish, inward looking, greedy.

Just looking after number one. No concern for others. Where would we be without the grace and love of God? The importance of this word.

Again, as outlined by Peter for us as he continues in this letter. He places such importance on the word of God again and again.

Speaking God's word to them. Reminding them of the word that they have. How it has been the foundation of all life up till then.

And from that point too to this day and going forward. The word of God remains forever. But when we push it away. It only leads us down a path of destruction.

- [39 : 23] Rejecting the word. It leads us away from the God who is able to give life.

And give to the full. And you get the impression here as he goes on into chapter 2. This is again on the basis of the word remaining forever.

But how we are to be obedient to the word and love one another earnestly. He says in verse 1. Put away all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy and all slander.

All these things that lead to so much sin in this world. All these things that lead us down the wrong path. He's saying put them away.

Malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, slander. The things that we see so rife in our world today. And we have to guard our own hearts against too.

- [40 : 27] Because as we let these things into our hearts. They take over. And that is what we become. And so he is saying no. Put these things away.

Put them off. But as well as putting that away. He tells us what to put in its place instead. Put these things away. But then he says in verse 2.

Like newborn infants. Long for the pure spiritual milk. That by it you may grow up to salvation. If indeed you have tasted the Lord is good.

Put these things away. And instead crave. Long for. Desire this pure spiritual milk. That you may grow up to salvation.

What is this milk that gives salvation. Gives life. Gives growth. It is the word of God. And when you think of that picture.

[41 : 23] Like newborn infants. Long for the pure spiritual milk. You can picture a newborn baby feeding. And just the thirst that is being quenched.

And that longing. From that life giving milk. Often brings to my mind too. When you think of sometimes animals. And how they desire that life giving milk too.

You think of lambing time. And maybe when you have had a pet lamb. And you have had to feed it by the bottle. And when that lamb comes to get his bottle. It's almost pulling the bottle out of your hand.

It's got that longing for that milk. Is that the kind of longing that we have for the word of God? Remember seeing one film clip of a calf.

A young calf. Who was being fed in a stall. Not by a bottle. But by a bucket of milk being placed in front of it. And how do you think that calf drank the milk?

[42 : 22] Was it just a little sip with its tongue? No. Not at all. The calf was sticking its head right into the bucket. Fully immersed in the bucket of milk.

Snorting it. Sucking it up. When the calf came up out of the milk. It snorted milk out its nose. It was just so full on. And then it just stuck its head straight back.

Into that bucket of life giving milk. Again we think. Is that the longing that we have for this word? This powerful word.

That is able to change our hearts. To guide our hearts. And to guard our hearts. We should be immersed in this word.

Craving. Longing for it. We have it before us. Let us use it. This word gives life.

[43 : 20] This word changes people. And changes us for the better. I'm sure many of you. Or maybe all of you have heard of the man Charles Spurgeon.

You'll have heard him quote it. You'll have maybe read his works. A man who did remarkable work for the Lord during his years. Have you ever read about his conversion?

He was converted at the age of 15. He'd been brought up in a Christian home. And he tried to read the Bible. And say his prayers himself. But he knew that there was something missing.

He just wasn't fulfilled. He was feeling quite miserable and low in his life. But there was this one Sunday at the age of 15. And he was on his way to church.

To his regular church. But the night was snowing. And cold. And he got caught up in this snowstorm. And he ended up going down an alley just to take shelter.

[44 : 21] Expecting to continue on to his own church once it had passed. But what happened was he ended up seeing another church. An old Methodist church with a small congregation.

So he nipped in there just to take shelter. And as he was sitting in there. The regular preacher wasn't there. And was a substitute as he calls it in his testimony.

He came into the pulpit. And the man who was preaching. He said he didn't have much to say. And he just kept repeating the text that he was preaching from.

And the text was from Isaiah chapter 45 verse 22. Which says look unto me and be ye saved. All the ends of the earth. For I am God and there is none else.

And that word cut him to the heart. And that night God really worked in him. And brought that assurance of salvation into his heart.

[45 : 22] God's word is powerful. So we are to put away all that hinders. And instead crave this spiritual milk like newborn infants.

If we have tasted the Lord as good. We long for more. The second thing we see here is the truth. It builds up and causes to stumble.

It's as if he takes us next into the building site. And you see in going forward into verse 4 there. As you come to him.

A living stone rejected by men. He's talking here about the construction that goes on. The cornerstone which is Christ.

Everything else is built on him. It's all about Christ. And how we are to come to him. To worship him.

[46 : 23] You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house. To be a holy priesthood. To offer spiritual sacrifices. We are to be a people who worship.

This truth. It builds us up. And what Peter is saying here is. You are to come to him. To constantly come to him.

As you come to him. Who is a living stone rejected by men. He is saying keep coming to this word. He doesn't just mean keep coming to church each week.

He doesn't mean just keep tuning in online each week. What he means is keep coming to the Lord Jesus Christ. Keep building yourself up on the foundation that is Christ.

Believing in him with all your heart. For it says whoever believes will not be put to shame. Whoever believes will not be put to shame.

[47 : 31] People today are always trying to find the plan for recovery. In so many different ways and formats in life. People are looking for recovery.

In so many different ways. We think of economic recovery just now. The Chancellor putting out another budget this week. And looking for a way for our nation to recover.

And a plan being put into place. We are to follow this plan for recovery. Because that is the way we will make progress.

But so often the plans for recovery have no word of God. And what Peter is saying here is. As he looks to a people scattered.

Discouraged. Going through trials. And they are thinking. How can we recover? How can we come through this? He is saying it is not about your plans. It is not about rejecting Jesus.

[48 : 31] What you need is Jesus Christ as the cornerstone. The stone upon which everything else is built. Because we are not going to recover.

We are not going to be in the right plan. Unless we have him as the cornerstone. And so the gospel says come. Come to him.

Come to the one who is the living stone. He was rejected by men. But in the sight of God chosen and precious.

And how precious is this cornerstone. How important is this cornerstone. It is of greatest importance to us.

Without the right foundation. Everything else will crumble. And the gospel is our foundation. Because Jesus Christ is the heart of that gospel.

[49 : 33] It is all about him. Romans chapter 1 verse 16 says. For I am not ashamed of the gospel. For it is the power of God to salvation.

For everyone who believes. Faith and believing is at the heart of this gospel. We are to believe in him.

The honor is for you who believe. It says in verse 7. So do you? Do you believe in the Lord Jesus? Do you believe in his gospel and its power?

Romans 1 verse 16 says. I am not ashamed of the gospel. I am not stumbling over the gospel. I am not stumbling over Jesus.

My faith. My trust. Is in him. But if you are ashamed. If you do not believe. You are just pushing that away. You are stumbling over the very thing.

[50 : 36] That is able to save. The very thing that has the power. To save you. When it speaks there in Romans. Of the power of God. To salvation.

The word there for power. In the Greek is dunamis. And that is where our word today. For dynamite comes. That is the power.

That is behind this word. That is the power. That is behind this truth. It is dynamite. It is explosive. It is power to break into our hearts.

As you look across to our nation these days. As you see the work going on for the new pier there. And you will hear it through certain points too. The breaking of the rocks.

Those rocks that are so hard. Being broken down bit by bit. And then those rocks being used. As the foundation of the new pier. Well our foundation is Christ.

[51 : 35] And it is his truth. That breaks down our hard hearts. Through the power of this word. The dynamite of this word. It is a word that is powerful.

And able to save. You are either being built up by it. Or you are stumbling over it. But Peter says to come.

To come to him. Who is the living stone. He may have been rejected by others. He may be being rejected by many today. But you are to come.

And to put your trust in him. And as Peter finally as we see here. As he is speaking these words to them. He is reminding that this truth.

This word. Points to recovery. The reason why the word became flesh. And dwelt among us. Was for our salvation.

[52 : 36] That we might find our hope. In the Lord Jesus Christ. And again. You just go back to chapter 1. As we were thinking. The foundation of this truth.

It is really what is in verse 19. It is all about the precious blood of Christ. What he has done for us. The foundation.

The cornerstone is Christ. And what he has done for us. We are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. Do you believe the word of God?

Do you believe that is the good news. As it is preached to you at the end of chapter 1. Do you believe that this word is able to change hearts.

To change even your heart. It is a powerful word. It is a word that has changed hearts over years.

[53 : 35] And many have testified and do testify. About knowing the power that there is in this word. It is the power of God to salvation.

And I want to leave you today. With a testimony. A testimony of one. Who came to experience this power for himself.

Even though he felt. So unworthy. And that his heart. Was not able to be changed. He came to know. The power of God. And the truth of God's word.

That was able to transform. His life. It is a powerful testimony. It is a moving testimony. And it is a testimony that was told.

By a preacher in the past. Called Charles Finney. Dr. Charles Finney. And he was once preaching. In the city of Detroit. In Michigan.

[54 : 31] In the United States. And that night. There was a man in the congregation. A man who was known. By so many who belonged to that congregation.

A man who was known. For stumbling in so many ways. In life. Who rejected. The Lord Jesus. And who in the eyes of so many.

Had no interest. In him. But this man that night. He was under conviction. The Lord was speaking. Into his heart.

And that night. Dr. Charles Finney. Was preaching. On a text from 1 John. Chapter 1. The text was.

The blood of Jesus Christ. God's son. Cleanseth us. From all sin. That was. What he was preaching. After the service.

[55 : 26] The man who was under conviction. He went to Dr. Finney. And asked him. If he would walk home. With him. Some of the others. In the church. Knowing that man.

They advised against him. Going with him. But Charles Finney. Felt that he should. And so he went. And walked home. With him. And when they reached.

A building. The stranger. The strange man said. I want you to come in. Here. With me. And they went in. And stranger. Locked the door. Behind him.

And put his key. The key in his pocket. But he said. Don't be afraid. I'm not going to hurt you. I just want to ask you. A few questions.

The first question. He asked of Charles Finney. Was. Do you believe. What you preached. Tonight. Dr. Charles Finney. Responded by saying.

[56 : 22] I most certainly. Do. Well the man continued. You see this building. We're in. Here we are. In this room. It's the back.

Of the bar. Which I own. And he said. Wives. Come into my bar. With their babies. Begging me.

Not to sell drinks. To their husbands. And yet. I turn. A deaf ear. To their cry. Dr. Finney. Tell me. Can God. Forgive.

A man like me. Dr. Finney replied. I have. I have. But one authority. The word of God. Which says. The blood of Jesus Christ.

God's son. Cleanseth us. From all sin. The man. Kyron. Saying. That's not all. In another room.

[57 : 14] Back there. I run. I run. A gambling hall. It's not enough. That we get. People to spend. Their money on drink. We make sure. That we get. Every penny.

Of them. Of them. By taking them. Into the gambling room. And fixing the cards. So they're never. Going to win. And we send. These men home.

To their families. Their hungry families. Penniless. Dr. Finney. Tell me. Honestly. Can God. Forgive. A man. Like me. And again.

Dr. Finney replied. Again. He says. I have. But one authority. The word of God. Which says. The blood of Jesus Christ. God's son. Cleanseth us. From all sin.

The man carried on. And said. That's not all. Across the street. Is my home. Where my wife. And my little daughter.

[58 : 11] Live. Neither of them. Has heard a kind word. From me. In five years. I'm an awful husband. I'm an awful father.

I'm an awful man. Dr. Finney. Do you think God. Could forgive. A man. With a heart. Like that.

Dr. Finney carried on. With his head lowered. And his eyes. Beginning to fill. With tears. He said. My friend. You have painted. One of the darkest. Pictures.

I have ever. Gazed on. But still. I have one authority. The blood. Of Jesus Christ.
Cleanseth us.

From all sin. The word. Was taking hold. Of the man's heart. Finney prayed. With a man.

[59 : 08] The man opened the door. And ushered him out. Into the night. And he stayed. In that room. All night. Until daybreak. He ripped.

Every deck. Of cards. That was in that building. He poured. Every bottle. Down the sink. And he poured. His heart. Out to God.

And the Lord. Cleansed. Him from all. His sin. He went across. The road. In the morning. And he sat. In the living room. And his little girl.

Called. Daddy. Mom. Mom says. Breakfast. Is ready. When he replied. With a kind. And polite word. His daughter.

Ran back. To his. To her mother. And said. Dad spoke. Nice to me. Something's wrong. And the mother. Followed the little girl.

[60 : 02] Back into the living room. And that man. Called them both. Took them. Each one. On each knee. And he explained. To their amazement. That they had. A new husband. And a new father.

He said. I'm done. With that business. Across the street. Christ. Is now. My master. The blood.

Of Jesus Christ. Cleanseth. From all sin. That is how powerful. It is. To take hold. In the hearts. That are even. Harder than anything.

We could imagine. Ourselves. All our hearts. Are so hard. That man. Went on. To follow Jesus. The rest of his days. Serving the Lord.

Through that church. A great lesson. About a faithful preacher. Who had every trust. In the word he preached. And a faithful man.

[61 : 01] Who came to believe. And go on. In the strength. Of the Lord. It is a word. That is powerful. And the word says.

Come. Come. Come. To every one of us. Because Christ. Offers me. Everything. Let us come.

And know. The power. Of this word. To crave. And long. For it. Not to stumble. Over it. But to be built. Up by it.

To all grace. And glory. By the Lord. Jesus Christ. May he bless. His word. To us. We'll conclude.

By singing. To God's praise. In Psalm 34. In the Scottish. Psalter version. Psalm 34. At verse 5.

[61 : 58] We'll sing. Down to verse 9. They looked to him. Enlightened were. Not shamed. Were their faces. This poor man cried. God heard. And saved him.

From all his distresses. We'll sing from verse 5 to 9. To God's praise. They looked to him. And lighted were. Not shamed. Where their faces.

This poor man died. This poor man died. All hurt and sick.

It from all his distresses. The angel of the Lord.

[62 : 59] set up. On God's death.

that Somehow and in the midst fear God is saints and that in fear shall be with what opens after the benediction I'll go to the main door we'll close with the benediction now may grace mercy and peace from God Father Son and Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with you all now and forevermore. Amen.