

Rebuilding with the precious cornerstone

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Preacher: Andrew Wingfield

[0 : 00] Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father, There is no shadow of turning with me.

Thou changest not, Thy compassion will not, As Thou hast been, Thou forever wilt be.

Great is Thy faithfulness, Great is Thy faithfulness, Morning by morning, year, mercy, mercy.

O, I have needed, Thy hand hath provided. Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.

Thank you. Good Wyoming Capital financiers, Sardis aneagogues, P■ng surs & moans, Page

■■■■in', Pre■■■ai tamerind , South andprem, any hearing , We are young to live and alone.

[1 : 30] Hundred caregiver and well, Join with the nature and my full witness To thy faithfulness,

mercy I love Great is thy faithfulness Great is thy faithfulness Morning by morning new mercies I

see All I have needed thy hand hath provided Great is thy faithfulness Lord unto me Thank you

Lord that you never stop loving us No matter how many times we let you down Thank you Father for

it provided Thank you for food and all of us Thank you for loving us

Thank you Father for all that you do for me And all that you do for me And share us in your word

that you will be with us To the end of our living God bless you God bless you For his compassion

God bless you You are always there for us We praise you God bless you Thank you Jesus

Hallelujah Hallelujah Hallelujah Father for sin and the peace and endurance Thine own dear

presence to cheer and to ride Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow Blessings of thy

world Blessings of thy Which have thousand beside Great is thy faithfulness

Great is thy faithfulness Morning by morning new mercies I see All I have needed All I have needed

Thy hand hath provided Great is thy faithfulness Great is thy faithfulness Great is thy faithfulness

Great is thy faithfulness Great is thy faithfulness Lord out to me Shout for joy to the Lord for the

earth Shout for joy to the Lord for the earth Shout for joy to the Lord for the earth Shout for joy to the

Lord for the earth Worship the Lord with the hands Come before him with joyful song Come before

him with joyful song Know that the Lord is God And surely you will be with us And we will dwell in

your land Great is thy faithfulness Great is thy faithfulness His faithfulness continues to all

generations Well, welcome everybody to our morning service

That's quite noisy That's better, good Welcome to our morning service And to our 176th anniversary

Yeah, indeed We just had that lovely song Which we recorded last year For our 175th anniversary

Great is thy faithfulness And again at the end of this last year We say to the Lord Thank you Lord

for your faithfulness to us Over this last very, very strange year So I thought we would I've really

splashed out here as you can see We have a candle for our birthday And now who would like to

blow this candle out?

Yes, would you want to come and blow the candle out? Yeah, that's you Come on Now in a sense

The light of Christ will never be blown out But it just seems the appropriate thing to do When you

light a candle Thank you so much Well done I wonder what you give thanks to God for As you start

this new year of the church As we go past our 176th anniversary Into our 177th year The most

important thing I guess for us all Is to remember the foundations upon which we build Which is the

Lord Jesus Christ So shall we turn to him now And call out to him in prayer Let's pray, shall we?

[6 : 26] Lord Jesus, we want to thank you for your faithfulness to us We want to thank you for your

wonderful gift of love and sacrifice On the cross And we again, as we enter a new year We say that

we want nothing more than to build our lives on you Over the last year we've often felt weak and

sometimes fearful But your love is stronger than our fears We have been through a bit of a storm

And you have brought us through In the darkness of life we have sometimes lost sight of you But

you have never forgotten us You tell us, Lord, who we are We are chosen We are called We are

called We are forgiven Hallelujah Amen Let's stand, shall we And confess our faith As we

remember that he is our cornerstone

Let's worship God Our hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus' blood and righteousness My hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus' blood and righteousness My hope is built on nothing less My hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus' blood and righteousness My hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus' blood and righteousness I dare not trust the sweetest praise But wholly trust in Jesus' name But wholly trust in Christ But wholly trust in Jesus' name But wholly trust in Jesus' name My hope is built on nothing less My hope is built on nothing less I dare not trust the sweetest friend, but holy trust in Jesus' name.

Christ alone, on a stone, we wait strong in the Saviour's love.

Through the storm, He is Lord, Lord of all. When darkness seems to light His face, I rest on His unchanging grace.

In every high and stormy hill, my anchor holds within the hill.

[9 : 35] My anchor holds within the hill. Christ alone, on a stone, we wait strong in the Saviour's love.

Through the storm, He is Lord, He's Lord of all. When He shall come with trumpet sound, O may I then in Him be found.

Just in His righteousness alone, on a stone, we wait strong in the Saviour's love.

Through the storm, He is Lord, He is Lord of all. In Christ alone, in Christ alone.

In Christ alone, God of stone, weak made strong in the Saviour's love. Through the storm, He is Lord, Lord of all.

[11 : 18] And Father, we want to say that sometimes this last year, we haven't always built our life on you. And we're sorry, Lord.

We've become weak and we've looked elsewhere. But today, we want to again say, Lord, you are our cornerstone. We will build our lives on you.

Help us in this, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen. Do stay standing. I've got Judy and I think Bethany's coming out. To help us with some actions of a song that really helped us, I think, during this last year.

Be strong and very courageous. Don't be afraid. Let's enjoy this. It'll come up on the screen. Be careful to obey all the laws that Moses gave.

Meditate night and day. Keep it always on your lips. Do not ever turn away. Right or left, don't deviate.

[12 : 27] And wherever you will go, I will follow. I will follow. I will follow.

Be strong and very courageous. Do not be afraid. For the Lord God will be with you every step you take.

Keep this word upon your lips. Do not turn away from me. Have I not commanded you?

Do not be afraid. Be careful to obey all the laws that Moses gave.

Meditate night and day. Keep it always on your lips. Do not ever turn away. Right or left, don't deviate.

[13 : 36] Be careful to obey all the laws that Moses gave. And wherever you will go, I will follow. I will follow. I will follow.

Be strong and very courageous. Do not be afraid. For the Lord God will be with you every step you take.

Keep this word upon your lips. Do not turn away from Him. Have I not commanded you?

Do not be afraid. And wherever you will go, you will prosper and succeed. And wherever you will go, I will follow.

Be strong and very courageous. Do not be afraid. Do not be afraid. For the Lord God will be with you every step you take.

[14 : 45] Keep this word upon your lips. Do not turn away from Him. Have I not commanded you?

Do not be afraid. Fantastic. Do take a seat. And I'll invite Joel to come up and share with us his Jenga.

Good morning, everybody. Now, I don't know about you, but sometimes when I'm here in church and I'm singing along to a song, you know, all is good, then we come to a particular line or word. And I stop and I think, I have absolutely no idea what that means. And I don't know about you, but I find that sometimes sometimes a bit too regularly. And one of those songs that you might actually find that about or maybe not realize you have that misunderstanding is one of the songs we sung

earlier in the service.

Christ alone, cornerstone. What is a cornerstone? I didn't know until that recently. And I thought it would be good for us to think about what a cornerstone is.

[15:56] Now, in a modern sense, a cornerstone is more of a symbolic thing. We actually have a couple of cornerstones on this church. I went out and took a photo of one before the service. We have one about where Roger is on the other side of the wall.

And it says, the site of this chapel was presented to, was presented by Mrs. Hearn and Veery. I apologize if I'm pronouncing this wrong. Of this town.

The stone was laid by Robert Wheeler, Esquire, April 16th, 1845. And it goes on to say a few more names. And in a sense, that's what a cornerstone means today.

It tends to be a symbolic stone that you put in the corner of a building to maybe show who built the building, who gave the land. But that's not what we mean when we sing Christ alone, cornerstone. We don't sing Christ alone, symbolic person who helped build Union Baptist Church building in 1845. So what do we mean? Well, in the olden days, when they were building a building, they would build them out of stones.

[16:59] Now, I don't have any stones, but I do have some Jenga blocks. And when you're building a building, if you just started putting the blocks down in any order, you might not get a very good structure.

So what they would do when they're building these big buildings is they'd get what they would call a cornerstone, which was bigger than all the others. And from that cornerstone, they would build the rest of the building.

And they'd lay this stone first in the corner so that they know they can have two nice straight walls coming off of it. And then they'd continue to build their building up a bit.

And it would probably look a bit more impressive than my sellotaped together Jenga blocks. But you get the idea. This cornerstone was at the corner of the building, not just because it was a nice place to be, but because it helped guide where the rest of the building went.

It was the first stone to be laid. All the others were aligned with it. They were supported by it. It was almost a bit like a second foundation in a way. It acted like a foundation stone.

[18:06] So that is what we mean when we sing Christ alone cornerstone. It's not Christ alone, a symbolic stone in the corner of the building. It's Christ alone. You are the one who was the first to be laid by the Father.

You are the one that we're all built around, that we're all supported by. So I hope that has helped a bit clarify your understanding of what it means to sing Christ alone cornerstone.

And there might be lots of other songs or words that you might find you don't quite know the meaning of. And what I'd encourage you to do, if you're ever in a situation where you don't know the meaning of a word, ask a parent, ask an adult.

And if they don't know, maybe go and ask maybe an elder or a deacon, see if they understand. And if no one understands the songs that we're singing, maybe we need to learn to understand the songs that we're singing.

It's always good to understand how we are praising God. So hopefully that has helped you. Now, as we learned a few weeks ago, it's really good to come together and celebrate as a church family.

[19:13] And as we heard a few weeks ago from Andrew, that is often with feasting. Now, unfortunately, we can't do much feasting at the moment, but we can do some praying and praising. So that's what we're doing tonight, as you can see on the screen.

Tonight, we're having a special evening service to come together and celebrate our church anniversary. So the evening is going to have some extended times of praise and worship.

We're going to have some times hearing from, hopefully within the congregation, things that God has been doing in our lives, in the lives of the church and the lives of the church's ministries. And we're going to have some time to pray over all those things.

So it's going to be tonight, 6.30, not in here, but in the main hall, which is up there. If you don't know how to get to the main hall, if you're new to the church, follow the alleyway that goes along the side of the building until you find some steps that lead up to a white door.

And that's where you need to go in. And it's just in the church building there. We've tried to make it so as many people can come and just be a part of the congregation as possible.

[20 : 15] So I've got some friends from my home church come to play in the band for us. So any musicians can just come and enjoy the service. Same with any people from the tech team.

So if you want to come along and pray and praise and thank God and celebrate our church anniversary tonight, the main hall at 6.30, come along.

Thank you, Joel. I was expecting that you might have them all falling down, those Jenga blocks, but probably as well you didn't. So thank you very much, Joel. Fantastic. Fantastic. I think we've now got Anthony coming to lead us in prayer.

Oh, just one other thing, sorry. You just put up the light party and then Anthony will come. On the 30th of October, we have a light party between 3 o'clock and 6 o'clock. And the deadline for booking for that for you and any friends you might want to invite is this Thursday.

So do make sure you get your booking in. There are spaces at the moment, so that will be great.

Thank you so much, Anthony. Anthony, do come and lead us. Oh, there's a song we're saying. Oh, dear. I'm getting...

[21 : 23] Yeah, come and play. Great is your love as the children go out. And then Anthony is going to lead us in prayer. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Great is your love Let the whole of sin You reach for us from on heaven's throne And we've had no hope You are the way, there is no other You are the way, there is no other You rose from heaven to victory You reign, O life, O majesty

Your name from behind and lifted up Jesus, Jesus, I've been up You are the way, there is no other You are the way, there is no other You are glorious, you are glorious Lord of all You have made us new We owe it all to you In everything, be exalted In everything, be exalted You rose from death to victory You reign in life, O majesty You reign in life, O majesty

You reign in life, O majesty Jesus, Jesus, alive in us You reign in life, O majesty The enemy is under your feet We are free, we are free Death has been defeated Death has been defeated by love Death has been defeated by love You overcome The enemy is under your feet We are free, we are free Death has been defeated by love You overcome, you overcome You overcome You overcome You overcome You rose from death to victory You reign in life, O majesty

[24 : 57] Your name, be high and lifted up Jesus, Jesus, alive in us You rose from death to victory You reign in life, O majesty Your name, be high and lifted up Jesus, Jesus, alive in us Jesus, Jesus, alive in us Amen Great, thank you It's a chance to come and just pray to our Lord together And yeah, let's pray our prayers of intercession So Lord, we want to thank you for our special anniversary 176 years of faithful witness here in High Wycombe

We are in awe of your amazing love and faithfulness And give you praise on this lovely day We are so grateful, Lord, as we look back to those who have gone before us And as some have said, it's as though we were standing on the shoulders of giants However, as our earlier song said, our confidence is in the Lord, our cornerstone My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness I dare not trust the sweetest frame But wholly trust in Jesus' name Christ alone, cornerstone Weak made strong in the Saviour's love Through the storm he is Lord, Lord of all Lord of all But on this day when many of our nation will be mourning the sudden death of Sir David Amis We pray for those in the community of Southend And our politicians to know your comfort and peace During this very difficult time But we also want to give you thanks, God, for the recently opened new home for Gold Hill Baptist Church

In Church Street in Champs St Peter That a number of us have visited over the last few weeks And we do pray that the hub, as they've named it In the heart of the village Will become the spiritual home for the fellowship And to those who will seek the Lord Jesus over the coming months and years Their strapline, the hub, heart and home And Lord, we also want to pray for Tim and Jenny Kately As they prepare to begin their ministry at Belmont Road Baptist Church in Hemel Hempstead at the start of November And Lord, we also want to give you thanks for the faithful service of Sue Lusby That she's given over the last 12 years Particularly in the admin office And pray for your blessing on her as she retires this coming Tuesday We do pray for Jane and Lynn as they adjust to Sue's retirement And Lord, we want to pray for Joel and his friends from Stoney As they lead us this evening in a time of worship and ministry on this anniversary day And we pray for Andrew as he speaks to us from your word this morning We do pray for an anointing of your Holy Spirit for Andrew As he ministers to us And for us as we listen and respond to your word And we want to bring all these prayers to you, our Lord and Saviour Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen So we are now in 1

Peter 2 Starting at verse 4 And the title is The Living Stone and a Chosen People As you come to him, the Living Stone Rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood Offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ For in Scripture it says See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone And the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame Now, to you who believe, this stone is precious But to those who do not believe The stones the builders rejected has become the capstone And a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall They stumble because they disobey the message Which is also what they were destined for But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation A people belonging to God That you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy

[30 : 16] Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Thank you very much, Chris Good morning, everyone Let's pray as we come to God's Word Father God, we thank you for the gift of your Word to us And I pray that you would work among us by your Holy Spirit For us to understand what you are saying to us today And we do pray for the leaders of our children, young people's groups As they are going to be teaching on this passage in their groups as well We pray for your blessing on them as we come to your word together In Jesus name, Amen Now I don't know if you can relate to any of the following scenarios Here's the first one You've bought an item of flat pack furniture from a well-known Scandinavian retailer And you realise several hours into the attempted assembly of said furniture

That there's one small but very crucial part missing And you just can't get the whole thing together Or does anyone here like jigsaws? I know, Karen, you're a bit of a jigsaw queen You rediscover a jigsaw that hasn't been done for ages And you realise several days into working on this jigsaw There's actually one piece missing And you can't complete it, it's so frustrating Karen's nodded, many of you may have experienced that as well If you've done jigsaws Or a third one, anyone into camping here After a long hours packing up everything And long drive to your campsite and your camping holiday You unpack everything and you unroll the tent Only to find that you left the tent poles at home And you're left with a limp tent Which you can't use All of these things have actually happened to me at one point And I'm sure some of you can relate to some of these scenarios Well, as we move forward slowly Out of the pandemic As individuals, as families and as a church We're in a process of rebuilding We've been looking at that as our theme this term And as we go on this journey of rebuilding Putting things back together, moving forward Are there things that we're in danger of missing or forgetting Which are actually really crucial?

Well, Peter has a suggestion for us in this letter Of what is crucial for us to hold onto As we build and rebuild In one word, his answer is Jesus That's a bit of a spoiler alert But we're going to unpack that in a little bit more detail As we go through this passage from 1 Peter chapter 2 And I want us to explore Three things this passage tells us about Jesus And then three things it tells us about Who we're called to be as a result And finally it tells us about a choice That we have to make So, three things that this tells us about Jesus First of all, in verse 4 He's the living stone As you come to him, the living stone Well, why does Peter describe Jesus as a living stone?

Because if you think about those two words Living, stone They don't normally go together, do they? A stone, by definition Is something which is not living Now, I know some bright person Is going to pipe up at this point And say, oh yeah, but what about coral?

[33 : 32] But I don't think that Peter's readers Would have known much about coral So I don't think that's what he had in mind I think the point he's making Is he's actually talking about something Which was expected to be dead Actually being alive And I think he's hinting to the resurrection here The fact that Jesus rose from the dead Made all the difference to Peter Who wrote this letter In fact, it transformed him completely Do you remember how Peter and the other disciples were After Jesus' death?

In John 20, 19 It says the disciples were together With the doors locked For fear of the Jewish leaders Peter and his friends were in hiding They were gathering away from everyone else After having seen Jesus executed They were fearful that something similar Would happen to them And they were terrified Now you may be here today As somebody with questions about Jesus And thinking All this talk about Jesus rising from the dead I'm not sure if I believe that Well, if you read the historical accounts Of Jesus in the Gospels It does beg the question Of how do you explain The

radical change that occurs In Peter and the other disciples From that scene Locked in for fear of the Jewish leaders To a few days later When we see Peter goes outside Onto the streets In Acts chapter 2 In front of the same Jewish leaders That he was petrified of A few days earlier And he boldly proclaims This truth about Jesus In Acts 2, 24 God raised him from the dead Freeing him from the agony of death Because it was impossible for death To keep its hold on him So as Peter explained Death could not keep its hold On Jesus Jesus' resurrection Transformed Peter and his friends From timid, fearful people Who were scared to open the door To bold preachers Who went out into public Proclaiming this truth The resurrected Jesus Transformed Peter And he can transform you and I So while we can look around the world And find pieces of dead stones Sculpted into sculptures Of religious figures We can never relate to Jesus In the same way that Say a Buddhist Approaches a statue of Buddha Because Jesus is the living stone He's the living stone Who is precious to God And chosen by him The Israelite people For many generations Had expected God's chosen one to come But did they miss that He was not only chosen He was precious He was the son He could not have been more precious To the Father The second thing we learn about Jesus Is that he's the cornerstone

Verse 6 says In scripture It says See I lay a stone in Zion A chosen and precious cornerstone And the one who trusts in him Will never be put to shame Peter is quoting here from Isaiah 28 Which was written hundreds of years Before Jesus came Zion In Zion The symbolic location of the new temple Is laid a cornerstone Again we see these two words Chosen and precious And he emphasises in this In this passage That this is a person The one who trusts in him Not it And there's a promise That those who trust in him Those who trust in this man Who is a precious and Trusted Who is a precious and chosen cornerstone Will be saved From being put to shame Well why does Peter use this image Of a cornerstone Well as we've heard very helpfully From Joel's demonstration with the blocks The cornerstone Was a very very important part Of the building In the Temple of Solomon's time

It would have been a massive massive stone That would have literally sat In the corner of the foundation And as Joel said This would have been laid before all the others Because it was strong It bore the weight of the other stones But more importantly It was a reference point For all the other stones That would be built into the wall Now the cornerstone Would have had to be By definition A perfectly rectangular stone They would have taken great care To chisel this stone out So all its angles were perfect And from this All the lines in the building Project out As we saw with the demonstration With the blocks You can't start with a wonky cornerstone Well you can start with a wonky stone But then what you end up with is What?

[37 : 51] A wonky building When you start doing construction Or making anything From anything of a precise nature You have to start with What engineers called a datum face It's the edge from which you measure All the other edges Now I remember In my design technology lessons at school My technology teacher showing me In woodwork lessons When you mark up a piece of wood Or any other material That you're going to be cutting You mark the datum face With a tick With a tick It's normally the longest straightest face And then you measure Every other measurement and angle From that face If you measure things from two different faces You end up with things that don't Don't match up And things just don't fit together So the cornerstone Is a shape which defines The shape of the building It's the reference point To which all measurements Refer back to Well the third stone image that we have Is the rejected stone If we can go on to the next slide please Paul We read in verse 4 As you come to him The living stone Rejected by humans But chosen by God

And precious to him And again He quotes in verse 7 From Psalm 118 Now to you who believe This stone is precious But to those who do not believe The stone the builders rejected Has become the cornerstone Now the Bible shows us That the nation of Israel Rejected Jesus as the cornerstone While they welcomed him As a king on Palm Sunday A few days later He was crucified as a criminal God's chosen, precious, perfect one Was rejected by those Who had been called To build his kingdom So that's three things about Jesus From the three stone images Just to recap He's the living stone He's the cornerstone And he's the rejected stone But what about us?

Well Peter tells us Three things that we're called to be As a result of this And the first one is Living stones Again Verse 5 You also like living stones Are being built into a spiritual house We are called to be living stones Just as Jesus is the living stone We who would otherwise be spiritually dead Without Jesus We get to be joined to Jesus To receive life from him And be part of something with him With him It means that we're empowered Because it goes with what Paul says In his prayer in

Ephesians 1.20 That the power which raised the crucified Jesus From the dead Is the same power available to us The second thing about us Is that we're called to be built into a spiritual house In the first part of verse 5 You also like living stones Are being built into a spiritual house And the words translated spiritual house In our Bible Can also mean temple of the spirit If we think for a moment about the temple

The temple in the Old Testament Was a place where God's presence and glory was But even in the temple It can only be accessed in a limited way At particular times By particular people With particular roles But the new temple that God is building Is his people And amazingly through Jesus God's presence and holiness Is available to us now As we're joined together with others The word built into literally means To be fitted together To be fitted together So it's saying As we're fitted together We have access to the holiness And the power of God In other words The Holy Spirit comes into Christians And works in Christians As we are fitted together The temple of the new covenant Is God's people It's us And it's as we come together as God's people That we experience the presence And glory of God You have access to this incredible glory Only as you fit together Share together

Worship together With the other living stones Well you might think Well that's not for me I just want to relate to God privately I don't want to be part of a community But God says It doesn't work like that God created us for relationships And the way to restoration Is through relationships Through being in the community That he is building So God says I'm going to come into your life I'm going to change you As you come into the church God is going to fit you together With others Like stones in a wall You'll have people next to you Alongside you You have people below you Perhaps supporting you Perhaps you'll have people above you Pressing you Perhaps there'll be a few sharp edges That you experience As you're pressed against other people But it's as you participate In the community of the church That you access the glory of God This is a challenge for us now Because many of us during lockdown Got a bit too used to worship In the privacy of our homes That was necessary for a while

[42 : 41] But it was never how it's supposed to be Which is why we're encouraging everyone now To join us in person If they possibly can And this is why we feel it's important To invest in the building Where we gather to worship And to build community Because it's here that we experience God's presence It's here that we grow And it's here that we worship It's not a coincidence that our project To transform this part of the building The sanctuary Is called living stones The living stones are not in the walls The living stones are sat here in front of me In these rather uncomfortable pews And we need this to be a space Which is accessible to all And which reflects the value That we place on meeting together As God's people To grow together And to worship him Well the third thing that we're called to be Is also in verse 5 A holy priesthood Like living stones You're being built into a spiritual house To be a holy priesthood Offering spiritual sacrifices Acceptable to God Through Jesus Christ

The priests in the Old Testament Were a very limited group of people Who had particular duties To carry out as part of the nation's worship to God Now the wonderful truth here is that Through Jesus We can all be priests So we all have a role To be able to enter God's presence To represent God to other people And to represent God To represent other people to God And also to make pleasing sacrifices to God Now unlike some of the Old Testament sacrifice This isn't a sacrifice This isn't a sacrifice to atone for our sins Hebrews 10, 14 tells us that Jesus the ultimate priest Has made that sacrifice once and for all But we are called to offer sacrifices of praise In response to what Jesus has done for us So how do we sacrifice to God?

Well Hebrews 13 verse 15 tells us Through Jesus Therefore let us continually offer to God A sacrifice of praise The fruit of lips that openly profess his name And do not forget to do good and to share with others For with such sacrifices God is pleased So we make sacrifices to God when we profess his name Whether offering a word of encouragement to somebody who is struggling Whether teaching our own children or in children's groups here in church Or whether sharing what you believe with a friend If you ever confess Jesus name God sees that as a pleasing sacrifice And we see there in Hebrews It's not just words it's actions When we're motivated by the good news of Jesus To go and help people who we have nothing to gain from To share with people knowing that it won't be reciprocated We're making pleasing sacrifices to God So we've seen that Jesus is the precious cornerstone The living stone who can empower us and give us life

And he's the stone who is rejected by many And if we believe that he's those things We're called to be living stones To be built together as a Christian community Where we worship and where we serve But ultimately we have a choice And Peter explains that to those who don't accept Jesus That to those people he's something else So we see in verse 7 and 8 To those who do not believe The stone the builders rejected Has become the cornerstone And the stone that causes people to stumble And a rock that makes them fall He is to them a stumbling stone The consequence of not believing Of not trusting Jesus as the cornerstone Is that Jesus becomes to us a stumbling stone Someone that will make us stumble and ultimately fall You see once a person has accepted the historical evidence Of Jesus life and come face to face with the claims that Jesus made They can never be the same again Not just confronted by church or by religion

But confronted by Jesus Christ He will either be the precious stone that they start building on Or he'll be a stumbling stone that they trip over They can't say I don't understand the gospel They'll be like people that Paul referred to in Romans 9 31 The people of Israel who pursued the law As the way of righteousness have not attained their goal Why not?

[47 : 01] Because they pursued it not by faith But as if it were by works They stumbled over the stumbling stone These people didn't trust in Jesus as the cornerstone They trusted in their own ability to be good enough The trouble was when they came to measure up They realised that the only perfect cornerstone That they could measure up against Was Jesus The only one who ever obeyed the law perfectly And without him they stand condemned before God And the one that they face as their judge Will be Jesus When he comes back So what about you?

Are you trusting Jesus? Or are you tripping over Jesus In the process of trying to avoid The reality that you're confronted with? If you sense a stirring in your heart And you've not responded to Jesus I encourage you to make that choice To respond to him today We have a wonderful opportunity later in the service As we come to the communion table To respond to Jesus Because that's the invitation He says Come to me We're invited to come to Jesus To accept the invitation from the precious cornerstone To start to build your life on him Rather than anything else And I sense there's an invitation to To those of us who've known Jesus for a long time But in this season of rebuilding To come back to him And make him our precious cornerstone And to come back to the community of living stones Jesus invites us to come back to him It means we make him our foundation Not something that we just hang over the top of everything else

If somebody asks you, who are you? How do you answer? You might answer based on your profession Based on your qualifications The friendship groups that you belong to Your achievements, your family, your marital status, your sexuality These are all layers that make up our identity Well through the pandemic Some people have had some of those layers removed Perhaps if you've been furloughed Or perhaps if you've had to give up roles that you've had And it's very unsettling But who are we deep down when all these layers of our identity are removed?

The Bible says we are loved by Jesus Coming to Jesus Trusting in Jesus means Making that the foundation of your being The baseline of who you are That's making Jesus your cornerstone It means First I'm a Christian and second I'm a parent Or a brother or sister or married or single First I'm a Christian and second I'm white or black or British or Asian or African First I'm a Christian Second I'm an employee or a student or a member of a sports team Loved by Jesus becomes our foundation Jesus invites us to make him our foundation And that involves being built together with other believers We may be finding that hard We may find that it takes more effort than it used to To come together with other believers Is Jesus precious enough to you to make him your foundation? Do you see Jesus as precious? If not it may be because you've not grasped this Jesus, the perfect precious one Was rejected He was rejected by his friends Ultimately he was rejected by his own father when he died on the cross And he had a choice, he didn't have to do that But he chose to be rejected And he was rejected for you Why?

[50 : 42] Because you are precious to him Jesus told a story to illustrate this A man was walking in a field and found something very precious Some treasure buried in that field Do you know what he did?

He went and sold everything he had in order to buy that field So that he could gain that treasure And that's how Jesus sees you You are so precious to him He gave everything for you If you realise that today I hope he'll become your cornerstone I hope you'll be willing for him to build you Together with other living stones into his building A temple where we can experience the glory of God's presence And we can experience all that the Holy Spirit longs to pour out on us Let's turn to God in

prayer Father God, we thank you For making Jesus your precious chosen one For making him the precious cornerstone Thank you that he is the only one that we can build our lives on Thank you that he is the only one that we can look to as a reference point Thank you for the miracle that the glory of your presence by your Holy Spirit is available to us

Through the community that you are building Your church We are so sorry for trying to build our lives on other things We recognise the danger of not choosing you as our precious cornerstone And we recognise the danger of not wanting to be built together with other living stones We come to you Lord Please Lord accept us as we are Build us, shape us Into the temple that you are building So that we may experience your glory Your glory that we may experience the filling of your Holy Spirit Lord I pray that you would fill us As we are gathered here You know where we have come from You know the layers that make up our identity Lord But at the end of the day We want to be known as people who are loved by you We are so thankful that you have chosen us And that Jesus was rejected because we are so precious to him

We thank you Lord Amen Thank you so much Andrew Let's just take a moment Just to reflect a little further on what God has said through his word Just a moment of quiet And perhaps just ask one or two questions Jesus He is the baseline of who we are He is building us together Lord help us not to resist What you are doing He is so precious

And he has treated us as so precious Help us to respond right Help us to respond right May our deciding and our choosing Be all referenced back to that baseline of Christ our cornerstone And all God's people said Amen Amen And sing a beautiful song Just as I am And it's got a chorus which says I come broken to be mended Shall we stand and worship God in preparation for taking bread and wine joining in fathom Alright this one but you hear it Not just worship your forty each time Twelve means

[55 : 11] Ae indeed A pour- ■■■ I am without one plea, but that thy blood foreshadow me, and that thou bidst me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am and waiting not to build my soul of one of God, to thee whose blood will cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come.

I come.

Just as I am, I must be lost, but mercy and grace my freedom fought, and now to glory in your cross, O Lamb of God.

And I will come to live open up, praise God.

[57 : 50] Just as I am. I come broken to be mended. I come wounded to be healed.

I come desperate to be rescued. I come empty to be filled. I come guilty to be pardoned by the blood of Christ the Lamb.

And I'm welcomed with open arms. Praise God, just as I am. Praise God, just as I am.

Amen. Amen. Do take a seat. I hope as you came in, you picked up one of these little thimble things.

Is anybody without one? Put your hand up now, and our welcomeers will make sure you have one. I think everybody's got one. Lovely. Thank you. Hear these words to guide us as we come to this table where the Lord is host.

[59 : 11] The table of the Lord is spread. It is for those who will come and see him broken bread and poured out wine, symbols of his life shed for us on the cross, and raised again our living stone on the third day.

The risen Christ is present amongst us by his spirit. He's here to meet with you as we take bread and wine.

This meal is for those who know him a little and would long to know him more. We invite as a church here all those who are seeking after Christ, who name him as their saviour and Lord, to take bread and to drink wine.

And if you want to do that, perhaps even for the first time this morning, we invite you to take bread and wine with us. I wanted to read to you from Mark 14, verses 22 to 26, where Jesus is sharing a meal with his disciples.

He says this, This is my body of the covenant which is poured out for many, he said to them.

[60 : 54] Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of this vine until the day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God.

Just focused on that verse 22, where he talks about what he did as he took the bread. I want you to notice that he took the bread.

He raised it to heaven, as was a custom, and asked God to bless the bread. And then he broke it. And then he gave it to them all. And he then said, This is me. And I'm giving myself to you all.

This is the glorious mystery that we enter into as we take bread and wine. We receive from Jesus' hand himself.

[61 : 56] He gives himself to us, broken. A sacrifice. Shall we give thanks for this unspeakable gift?

Lord Jesus, we marvel that with so many failings that we're acutely aware of in ourselves, that you choose to give yourself the most precious one for us.

We thank you that you're willing to be rejected, spat at, and killed on a cross. Your lifeblood poured out, stretched out over the world.

We come wounded, hungry, and thirsty for you this morning. Would you feed us at this table?

Would that this morning we would know the preciousness again of Jesus Christ and align everything in us, all of our baselines, to him, the one who is precious?

We ask this in the name of Jesus and all God's people said. Amen. I want to give you permission for about 20 seconds of fumbling with your little thimble thing.

[63 : 29] Take the first layer off and you get a little wafer. And then if you rip up the second bit, you're ready to go for the juice. So let's get that done. And then we can concentrate on each element.

Brothers and sisters, let's take the little wafer. Let's take the little wafer, the body of Christ, broken and given for you. Let us eat and be thankful. Amen. We give thanks that his lifeblood was poured out for us and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

May the blood of Jesus wash you whiter than snow. Let us drink and be thankful. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[65 : 13] We give ourselves to you afresh. Thank you that you take us and name us as your own, children of God.

Amen. Amen. Brothers and sisters of Christ. Father, we thank you for the many, many ways in which you have taken us and blessed us.

We could name so many ways in which you've blessed us. Both spiritual blessings and material blessings.

Lord, we want to thank you. Lord, we're also aware that you sometimes take us and break us and refine us.

And you rub off those hard edges and place us together with others. Lord, we give ourselves to you today.

[66 : 20] And we invite you to do that work of refining, of breaking, that we might be that holy temple. And finally, Lord, you give us, as you gave your son to the world, a light to the world.

Lord, we give ourselves as you send us, that Christ may be seen and heard and responded to in our day, in these strange days we live in.

Take us. Take us. Bless us. Break us. Give us, Lord. As we live our life in Christ, following his example.

Amen. Well, it's my delight and joy to welcome Joel up again. And to welcome him or invite him into membership of the church.

So, Joel, welcome. Yes. I've got just a few things to say. And then I've got some questions I'll ask you and some questions I'll ask the congregation. In the name of our loving God, it is a joy when anyone asks to come into the membership of the church.

[67 : 39] It's a sign, isn't it, of being joined to that temple. We're saying, yeah, you call us to be joined. We want to be joined. And I know from talking to Joel and getting to know him that he loves the church and has invested himself in the church he was from in Stoneleigh.

You've seen Joel over a year when he was on placement here in High Wycombe. And now he has graciously and we're delighted he's going to spend this year as our ministry trainee.

We're really thrilled about that, Joel. And you are an example to us. And I hope we can be encouraged as members of the church. To take seriously belonging to the church.

So a few questions. Do you believe in one God? Oh, just in case. I did give you these, but just to help you. I do. I do. Oh, you got them there. Very good. Very good. Okay. He's very organized. Do you believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, your creator and redeemer and the sustainer of all things? I do. Do you believe that God has led you to share in the worship, life, and witness of this local congregation?

[68 : 45] I do. And will you share with us the gifts God has given you that together we may serve God in our local community and in the wider world? I will.

Fantastic. And as Baptist Christians, we covenant together as a community of the disciples of Jesus Christ, baptized into his name. We share the joys and responsibilities of fellowship.

We gather for worship to discern the mind of Christ through prayer, through witness, and through service, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Will you share with us this common life and service? And will you walk together with us before God in ways that are known and yet to be made known? I will. Brilliant. Now, as members of the church and those of you who see the fellowship as your spiritual home, I'd like to ask you some questions.

And if you want to respond in the affirmative, can you say, we do, then we will, and then we will, if that makes sense. Here we go. Do you welcome into the fellowship of this worshipping community, Joel?

[69 : 57] We do. That's good news. And God has given us the gift of Joel, and through him has given us gifts of ministry in the life and witness of this congregation. Will you support Joel in the Christian service and in the responsibilities of church membership?

We will. Thank you. And will you pray for Joel and encourage him through hospitality, friendship, and prayer? We will. And I particularly want to thank Roger and Ruth for offering accommodation for Joel during this year.

We'd just like to say thank you to you, Roger and Ruth. Shall we just give them a clap for that? Shall we pray for Joel?

And you may want to just reach out a hand to ask God's blessing upon Joel. Thank you. Thank you, Father, for Joel.

Thank you for calling him, guiding him, directing him. We pray that you would place your hand upon him. Anoint him for the work you're calling him to as a member of this congregation.

[71 : 11] We ask you, Lord, to protect him from evil. Help him to stand against temptation. And to pour out his life for the love of Christ.

And as he does so, Lord, we pray you'd pour in blessing upon blessing. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Now, Joel, somewhere here I have a card for you.

With a reference to the book of Joel, it seemed appropriate. So the Lord bless you amongst us. God bless you. Shall we welcome Joel? Well, without more ado, Joel will continue in service as we sing our final song, O Church, Arise and Put Your Armour On.

Shall we worship God together? Amen. holiday.

O Church, Certainly rise and Put your Armour On. Hear the call of Christ our captain For now the weak Can say that they are strong In the strength that God has given With shield of faith and belt of truth We'll stand against the devil's eyes An army boat whose battle cries up Reaching out to those in darkness I'll go to war to love the captive soul But to rage against the captives And give the soul that we could bear in hope

[73 : 36] We will fight in faith and battle When faced with trials on every side We know the outcome is secure And rise to hell The prize for which he died An inheritance of patience Come see the cross Where love and mercy meet As the Son of God is stricken And see the foes lie crushed beneath his feet For the conqueror has risen And as the sword is rolled away And Christ emerges from the grave

As victory march continues till the day Every eye and heart shall see So the spirit march And strengthen every stride Give grace for every hurt and hope And when they run We'll pave to win the prize Of a servant good and faithful As saints of all still line away Retelling triumphs of his grace We hear the call No hunger for the day Where in Christ we stand in glory Just a couple of things to remember

Before we go One if you've got children Do go and collect them straight away From the double doors Of the memorial block That would be great If you could do that Before getting coffee Do get coffee Through in the information room And if God has spoken to you And you'd really find it

valuable Many of us I'm sure would To receive prayer Then do look for those With praying hands
badges Or any deacon or pastor We'd love to pray with you Let's ask God to bless us as we go You
might find it helpful To receive Put out your hands to receive Father you have blessed us In so
many ways And yet we know we continue to need More and more of you In our lives So we seek
after you For a blessing Father bless us With a holy discontent Of basing our life On anything other
than Christ Show us how empty that is

Bless us Lord With a desire to love your church As you have shown us That you love your church
Bless us Father To go out into the world In our vocations Our families And our communities To be a
light To the world To pour out our lives For the love of Christ And we pray that as this happens All
these blessings We pray that all the glory And all the praise Will go to you In Jesus name Amen
God bless you all God bless you all To be my joy Through the ages To sing all this love for me How
marvelous How wonderful

That my soul Shall ever be How marvelous How wonderful How wonderful Is my Savior's love For
me The highest throne That all this world has known Let faith the ones From every town Will one
day come Before the sun Will stand Made faultless Through the land Believing God's Find promised
grace Salvation comes

[79 : 08] Hear heaven's voices sing The thunderous phantom The praise Through ever Thou And
sapphires The sight Their presence Rise Oh glory Wisdom God Strength Thanks And honor On
followers Advance Up and That all things Will get Music up and Prime vibe Something And there
we'll find our home Our life before the throne We'll honor Him in perfect song Where we belong

He'll wipe his tears straight by As first and hundred days The Lamb becomes a shepherding We'll
reign within Their heavens' voices sing Their thundreer's anthem rings Through herald's homes and
sapphire skies Their praises rise O glory in wisdom's heart Strength thanks and honor To God our
King Who reigns on high forevermore O glory in ■■

And there we will reign KAREN Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[82 : 58] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[85 : 28] Thank you.