

A SURE FOUNDATION

ISAIAH 28:16; 8:13-15

There is a concept in art known as “[appropriation](#).”

It’s when an artist takes objects from the real world and arranges them on a canvas to create a new thought.

Here’s a good example of [appropriation](#). It was done by Pablo Picasso in 1913. It’s titled, “[Glass, Guitar, and Newspaper](#).” He pulls together already existing images and repositions them to create a new point of view.

We don’t usually think of the Apostle Peter as *an artistic appropriationist* - but this is what he does in [1 Peter 2:4-8](#). He takes three OT passages - two from Isaiah and one from the

Psalms - and positions them side-by-side to create a new context and new thoughts.

Peter quotes **Isaiah 28:16**, **Psalms 118:22**, and **Isaiah 8:14**. He rearranges them, applies them to Jesus, and creates a new stream of thought concerning Messiah.

Not bad for a simple fisherman. *It's amazing what a person can do under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit...*

We've been studying **portraits of Jesus in the prophecy of Isaiah**. And we're finding the book of Isaiah to be full of such snapshots. Each week we've been filling in our picture frames with masterpieces...

Jesus is **The Root of Jesse**, He's **A Sign for Ahaz**, He's **The Messiah**, He's **Immanuel**, He's **The First and the Last**, He's **A Great Light**, and He's **A Splint and A Flint**.

And this morning we'll see Jesus as the Apostle Peter saw Him through Isaiah's eyes - as **A Sure Foundation**.

The prophet wrote 700 years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, but he saw Him more clearly than many of our Lord's contemporaries. The insights God gave Isaiah concerning Jesus amaze us, and they give us a better understanding of the Man we've pledged to follow.

This AM I want us to read the three OT passages that Peter quotes - in their original context. Then how he appropriates them into his portrait of Jesus in 1 Peter 2.

I'll put the OT verses on the screen, and we'll read 1 Peter 2 from our Bibles. First, Isaiah 28:16, **“Therefore thus says the Lord God: “Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; whoever believes will not act hastily.”**

Then Psalm 118:22-23, “The stone which the builder’s rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.”

And third, he adds a line from Isaiah 8:13-15, “The Lord of hosts, Him you shall hallow; let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. He will be as a sanctuary, but a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, as a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble; they shall fall and be broken, be snared and taken.”

Let’s read how it all comes together in 1 Peter 2...

Beginning in verse 4, “Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture (and first he quotes Isaiah 28:16), **“Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.”**

Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient (and now he inserts two more prophetic verses... one, Psalm 118:22), **“The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone,”** and (a second, Isaiah 8:14) **“A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.”** (He says of those who refuse to believe) **“They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.”**

The first thing you can't help noticing from Peter's portrait, and the verses from Isaiah that support him, is that Jesus is ***a stone***, and you and I are ***little stones***.

He uses these parallels in the context of construction. God is **building** a *“spiritual house”* - call it *“a temple.”* And these stones are God’s building materials.

Peter, a first century fisherman, wasn’t familiar with modern construction. He knew nothing of two-by-fours, or metal studs, or steel beams, or drywall, or split-face block. When Peter built... it was with ordinary stones.

Thus, in the spiritual house God is erecting, he refers to Jesus as the *“cornerstone”* and us as *“living stones.”*

It’s funny, but if you’re from my generation, when you hear the expression, **“The Stones,”** you probably think of the famous rock and roll band, *The Rolling Stones.*

The Rolling Stones have been touring the globe for over half-a-century. But if you haven’t noticed lately, *they’re getting pretty old.*

This year Mick Jagger turns 72. You could say, *Time is no longer on his side.*

In fact, this got me thinking... Maybe *The Stones* need to rewrite some songs to make their music more relevant to their aging band members. Here are the Top 10 suggestions for *The Senior Rolling Stones*...

- 10) **“I Can’t Get No Satisfaction”** could become *“I Can’t Get No Circulation”*
- 9) **“Let’s Spend the Night Together”** could be *“Let’s Take A Nap Together”*
- 8) **“It’s Only Rock and Roll But I Like It”** would be *“It’s Only Geritol But I Like It”*
- 7) **“I Wanna Be Your Man”** could change to *“I Want Your Healthcare Plan”*
- 6) **“Like a Rolling Stone”** could be *“Like a Kidney Stone”*
- 5) **“Gimme Shelter”** would change to *“Gimme a Tax Shelter”*
- 4) **“Brown Sugar”** or how about *“Brown Splenda”*
- 3) **“Jumpin’ Jack Flash”** would become *“Hip Replacement Jack Flash”*
- 2)

“Hot Stuff” would be “*Hot Flash*” 1) “You Can’t Always Get What You Want,” I can hear, “*You Can’t Always Chew What You Want*”

Excuse my diversion... for the *The Stones* I want to talk about today are *The Living Stones* not *The Rolling Stones*. The Living Stones are also a rock and roll band. We’re a band of people founded on THE ROCK - and when you live for Jesus you’re always on a roll!

We’re called to Jesus *and together* to make beautiful music for God. Peter calls us a temple of praise.

The Rolling Stones “*can’t get no satisfaction,*” but nothing is more satisfying than being a Living Stone.

Pulling from Isaiah 28 and 8, and then Psalm 118, Peter makes three observations about Jesus. He's **a living stone, a cornerstone, and a stumbling stone.**

Here are three portraits appropriated into one.

Peter begins these thoughts in verse 4, **“Coming to Him as to a living stone...”** Throughout the Bible the Messiah is referred to as *a rock* - or even *a mountain*.

Jesus is like a huge cliff - strong, sturdy, steady, unbreakable... our Lord is the bedrock of the truth.

Like a rock He's a refuge from the storm - a fortress that can withstand the enemy - a missile sent from heaven's sling to shatter the kingdoms of this world.

Jesus is *Stone Mountain tough*... He's deep, and wide, and large, and granite-like. Jesus rises and hovers over the horizon

as a great hope for the future. But He's also a durable foundation to build on today.

It reminds me of the vacation Jesus and His disciples took at a crucial time in His ministry. They journeyed north toward Lebanon and the base of Mount Hermon to a place called Caesarea Philippi. It was here that Peter uttered His great confession. When Jesus asked His men, *“Who do you say, that I the Son of Man, am?”*

It was Peter who answered, *“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”* And then Jesus promised him, *“You are Peter and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.”*

Here's where you had to have been there...

“Peter” or “petros” is the masculine form of the noun. It refers to a little rock, a pebble. There’s a brook at Caesarea Philippi. Perhaps Jesus reached in and pulled out a pebble. He held it up. “*This is Peter.*”

But then He said, “Upon this rock I will build My church” and He drew a contrast. For right over Jesus’ shoulder at Caesarea Philippi, there’s a huge, massive rock face. Jesus says, “*Upon this Petra I will build My church.*” Petra is the feminine form of the noun - it refers to a cliff. The rock Jesus spoke of was Himself.

In contrast to Peter a pebble, Jesus was a mountain.

Like I say, **you had to have been there.** *But Peter was there,* and he never forgot the analogy. Jesus is the strong foundation on which His Church sits. Here Peter encourages us to come to Him “*as to a... stone.*”

Jesus is sturdy like a stone, yet it's hard to *warm up* or *cuddle up* to a rock. This is why Peter calls Him **“a living stone.”** Yes, He's tough, but tender. He looms large, but loves deeply. Jesus is a warm-blooded rock.

If you're with Jesus you're never between a rock and a *hard place*. Jesus is a soft spot in a hard, cold world.

In fact, it's only by **“coming to Him”** that we find rest.

Notice, what else Isaiah 28 says of Jesus. Peter quotes it in verse 6. He's **“elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.”**

Did you know Jesus was elected! *Not by us...*

This is the problem with politicians. They have to run for re-election to maintain their office. This means they tell their electorate what they want to hear to get re-elected - then return to Washington and do as they like.

But Jesus wasn't elected by a human constituency. He was elected by God Almighty in a landslide vote!

Thus, His only responsibility is to please the Father and do His will. And the Father loves honesty, integrity, thus Jesus does as He says. He keeps His promises.

Jesus can be trusted. He's not a moving target.

There's nothing fickle about our Lord's decisions and directions. He's solid. He's a rock you can lean on!

And He's "precious!" In the world of gemstones there are two classical categories - precious and semi-precious jewels. Precious stones are the *diamond*, *ruby*, *sapphire*, and *emerald*. Traditionally speaking, these are the rarest, best quality, most expensive stones. All other minerals are called "semi-precious."

Well, among men Jesus is precious of the precious.

He's the rarest. No one else is like Him. Born of a virgin, He has divine origins. He's the only Son of God.

He's also the best quality human to ever walk this planet. Jesus was sinless - even in the heat of battle.

And He's *most valuable*. Nothing is as important to the Father as His Son. Thus, it spoke volumes of His love for us, when God sacrificed Jesus in our place.

Jesus is a living stone “elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.”

What kind of person do you think He is?

Trust in Jesus and He'll run to your aid. Rather than put us to shame, Jesus helps us save face. He offers us forgiveness and peace. He provides us a way out.

Trust Jesus and He'll never leave you high and dry - or up a creek without a paddle - or out on a limb.

Jesus is a living stone, but notice in verse 5 Peter takes it a step further, “**you also, as living stones...**”

You could say as Christians “**we're chips off the old block!**” We take after Jesus. Christ is **the living stone**, but we're all **little stones**... We're alive with the life of Christ. He breathes, and loves, and moves, and cares through us. And His Holy Spirit makes us strong.

In Christ we're rock solid. And Peter says all these living stones are “**being built up (into) a spiritual house**”

Another name for “**a spiritual house**” is “**a temple.**”

God is into Temple building. But he builds different types. The OT Temple was a stone structure that stood on top of Mount

Moriah in Jerusalem, but the NT Temple is “*a spiritual house*” made up of *living stones*.

You and I are being joined as a house for God.

The Church is not a literal building, but a people group. We’re the building material - the stones that God assembles on-site. God is fitting us all together.

Here’s how it works... the transforming power of Jesus sobers us... Some of us have gone from *being stoned* to *being stones*. Faith in Jesus makes us spiritually alive. The Jewish Temple had *limestone walls* - Jesus is building a spiritual Temple with *limestone walls*. Each of us has a place in His Church.

This is why I say, “**Don’t be off the wall - find your place on the wall!**” *Here’s your opportunity to join the band.* In Christ you’re a living stone, and you have a role in the spiritual house God is currently constructing.

It's interesting, when the OT Temple was built by Solomon, the Bible tells us the stones were quarried off-site - north of the city's walls. Today you can drive by the spot and see the remains of the ancient quarry.

The stones were cut and chiseled and fitted *at the quarry*, so they could be easily assembled on-site.

1 Kings 6:7 reads, "The temple, when it was being built, was built with stone finished at the quarry, so that no hammer or chisel or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built."

The temple was not your typical construction site. It was a place of peace. You went to the Temple to worship and rest from work.

God didn't want its halls filled with the noise of banging and sawing, so He had the stones sized, and chiseled, and fitted together at the quarry. Once the stones were custom-fitted - they

were delivered to the Temple Mount and assembled according to plan.

You and I are like those ancient stones - and the work of *making us fit* then *fitting us together* - is what God is doing in the world today. Here's what we need to remember - **the world we live in is the quarry.**

Heaven is the temple - and the temple is a place of peace, rest, worship. God doesn't want construction noises heard in heaven. You'll never hear any banging, drilling, or sawing - **that's what God does in this life.**

When you get banged around - drilled on - chiseled away - chopped off - whittled down to size, that's what's supposed to be happening in this life. Hey, we live in the quarry. This life is a construction zone.

Don't be surprised when your rough edges get sanded down - your ends leveled - your jagged exterior gets broken off. It's loud, dusty, noisy, chaotic in the quarry. But that's where important work gets done.

And this is where *our cooperation is necessary*.

The difference between *living stones* and *limestone* is that living stones have a mind of their own. They can jump up when they think the cutting is too severe. They can run when the chiseling gets uncomfortable.

We can thwart God's work by trying to escape the pick ax - or dodge the drill - or avoid the hammer. *Who wants to get nailed by the Holy Spirit? I hope we all do!*

This is often what happens when a person changes jobs, or leaves a church, or tries to avoid a friend.

God is using an uncomfortable situation to quarry us.

He's carving, shaping, piecing us together - but we have to cooperate. Don't bolt, or run, or try to escape. Always remember, "Heaven doesn't start until we get to heaven." For now God is working on us in the quarry.

He's building a Temple of praise by fitting us all together. Only when He's done, will He ship us to heaven, to be the Temple He'll occupy for all eternity.

Jesus is a **living stone**, but He's also a **cornerstone**. This comes straight out of the prophecy of Isaiah, 28:16, "**Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone...**"

Visit the countrysides of England and Europe, and you'll find old stone churches. Christians have met in these churches for a thousand years. When you build a rock church you intend for it to last a long, long time.

And the critical stone in these churches is the cornerstone. It's the lynchpin - the keystone. Pull it out and the whole structure topples like a house of cards.

The cornerstone is the one stone on which all the other stones lean. It's the heart and hub of the house.

This is true of Jesus. He's our "chief cornerstone." A true believer builds his or her life with Jesus as their hub. Everything in their life leans and rests on Jesus.

Lots of people like the idea of *looking religious*.

They'll tip their hat to Christianity and make Jesus a brick in the house their building. They'll fit Him snugly into one of the walls. *But not much depends on Him.*

In fact, they can ignore Him for days, when it's convenient to do so. They can even pull Him out of His slot for a time and nothing

much in their life will change... Nothing really rests on Jesus' involvement.

But Jesus is more than a brick. He's the cornerstone. Everything in my life should revolve around Jesus.

How I do work, and manage my finances, and express my sexuality, and make friends, and form decisions, and date, and marry, and parent, and vacation, and hang out... everything in my life should be influenced by Jesus... everything intertwined with Him.

He's **“a sure foundation”** to those who dig deep and build every perspective and approach to life on Him.

A few years ago, Yahoo Travel published a list of [America's Most Over-rated Tourist Attractions...](#)

Number 1 was [Fisherman's Warf](#) in San Francisco.

Coming in 2nd was the [Petrified Forest](#) in Arizona.

Third, was [Wall Street](#) in New York City.

And fourth on the list of most over-rated tourist stops was [Plymouth Rock](#)... I've been to three of the four, and Plymouth Rock is hands-down the lamest tourist destination in America! It's a pebble, not a rock. Plymouth Rock is an attraction that doesn't "rock."

Several years ago I taught at a CC Men's Retreat in Plymouth, Massachusetts. Ignoring the advice of my host, between sessions I hiked a couple of blocks to the memorial. I'm thinking, I'm here, I might as well see this thing! *But everyone was right! It was a laugher.*

Plymouth Rock is a gray, oblong, dirty stone maybe 3 feet by 2 feet. They built a Greek arch over the site, but the stone itself sits in the sand just out of the water.

The date 1620 is etched in its side, *but that's it!*

In fact, puny Plymouth Rock has a gate around it to keep it from being stolen. In my mind, I expected to see Miles Standish, musket in hand, standing on a noble looking rock-cliff, jutting out over the sea... Instead, all I saw was a lame, little rock on the beach.

Whereas, Jesus isn't a *Plymouth Rock*, He's a *Mammoth Rock*. Both Isaiah and Peter call Him "**chief cornerstone.**" Rather than a pebble, he's an El Capitan.

If He's not *your cornerstone* you don't understand Jesus. *And you're not enjoying the stability He offers...*

Perhaps this is why your finances are unraveling, and your marriage is falling apart, and your job is in jeopardy, and you're tanking on your parenting...

Remember, “**he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.**” As I’ve mentioned before, “**Life is a test.**” But you only pass if you trust in Jesus.

Jesus is *a big rock*. We should have *a strong faith*.

Dare to rest everything on Jesus. Build a life dependent on Him - *where if He doesn’t come through you’re sunk!* Expect the miraculous from a miracle-working Savior. **Believe...** you won’t “*be put to shame.*”

I read of a man who took a safe driving class. He recounted one of the questions asked by his teacher...

“If you’ve stopped at a traffic light and you see that the car behind you is careening forward with no intention of putting on its brakes, what should you do?”

Everyone in the class said you should let off your brakes so that when the car hit, you'd go forward absorbing some of the blow...
Sorry, wrong answer!

The correct answer is to apply your brakes as tightly as possible and brace yourself for the collision.

If your car is rigid and stabilized - *in essence, when you're relying on its foundation* - you're the strongest.

But when you're rolling with the punches - *just going with the flow* - you get the whiplash effect and it causes greater damage to both the car and its passengers.

It's best to have **a strong and sure foundation!**

And this is what Jesus brings to a life. A foundation doesn't protect us from the storm. In fact, it has nothing to do with whether a storm strikes us or not - *but a sure foundation is the*

best protection against the storm. In the storm it's the foundation that assures our survival.

Jesus is a **living stone**, a **chief cornerstone**, but He's also a **“stumbling stone.”** Peter quotes Isaiah 8:14, Jesus is **“A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.”**

To believers, Jesus is their cornerstone, but to those who reject Him, He's a stone over which they stumble.

Realize, many a big toe has been stumped on Jesus. In a sense, *Jesus is a tripping hazard, to some folks!*

People who want to know God, *but refuse to let go of their pride...* People who want to know God, *but refuse to let Him govern their lives...* People who want to know God, *but believe their lifestyle is their own choice...* People who want to know God, *but don't think they've done anything terribly wrong...*

All these people will stumble over Jesus! For He tells us to turn from our pride - surrender to His will - walk in His ways - and admit that we're a sinner...

Peter quotes Psalm 118, **“The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.”**

There was a legend associated with Solomon's Temple. During its construction the cornerstone was quarried first, but when it arrived on the construction site the builders didn't recognize its strategic importance. It was different from the other stones. The builders thought it was an oddity and tossed it aside.

Until the cornerstone was needed... that's when the builders realized their tragic mistake. They raced to retrieve the precious stone they had formerly rejected.

This is how the builders of Judaism treated Jesus.

They didn't realize He was the chief cornerstone of all that God intended to build. Jesus was so *different from the Jews and from what they had come to expect*.

They rejected God's cornerstone and tossed Him out of their Temple. But what the Jews spurned was still precious and valuable to God. So Jesus was offered to the Gentiles - *to us* - and to those who humbly receive Him, He becomes the chief cornerstone of our lives.

And one day still future, the builders of Judaism will realize their mistake. The Bible teaches that in the last days the Jews will come to Jesus, repent of their mistake, and embrace the Savior they once rejected.

Here's Peter's point - Jesus is God's line in the sand. As Isaiah says in Chapter 8, **“let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread.”** We're to yield to His authority.

Have you noticed, almost everybody likes God. Ask the guy next door - he'll probably tell you he has a relationship with God. *But what does He believe about Jesus?* For Jesus is the rub. He's the stumbling stone.

He's the rock in your shoe... He's the grit in your swimsuit... when you're at odds with Jesus, He causes some discomfort. He prohibits you from enjoying sin.

Author Dorothy Sayers once wrote, "I believe it to be a grave mistake to present Christianity as something charming and popular with no offense in it."

To the person who doesn't want to change, or obey, or submit - Jesus will be an offense. He requires all the above... *to be like Him we need to change - to follow we have to obey - for Him to rule we must submit.*

Peter closes verse 8 speaking to those who reject Jesus, “**They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.**” We all have an appointment with Jesus. One day, every one of us will meet Him face to face. You’ll answer for rejecting Him.

Here’s what needs to be said to some of us this morning -
Jesus is the rock who won’t go away.

Either let Him be your **cornerstone** or He’ll become your **stumbling stone**... Bow or He’ll break a few toes.

Jesus is too big - too vital - to be avoided or ignored. And He loves you enough to keep pressing the issue.

In Matthew 21 Jesus tells the story of the vineyard.

It's owner leased it out to men who began to mismanaged his vineyard. So the owner sent servants to rebuke them. These evil men killed his servants.

The owner decided to send more servants, but the managers were just as calloused and killed them too.

Finally, the owner sent His Son. He reasoned, *“Surely they’ll respect My Son.”* But the owner’s Son was also put to death. That’s when Jesus asked, *“So what will the owner do the managers of the vineyard?”*

Jesus answered His own question, *“Destroy the evil men and give the vineyard to folks who’ll serve him.”*

It was obvious the target of Jesus’ parable were the religious leaders of the day. The Jewish hierarchy who were threatened by Jesus, and wanted to shut Him up.

Rather than welcome the Savior and His wisdom, the Jewish leaders were offended by Jesus' intrusion into their lives. If it wasn't for the crowds that day, Matthew tells us they would've killed Jesus then and there.

That's when "Jesus said (Matthew 21:42), "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?" This is the passage that Peter quotes here.

Then He adds, "And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." Bow to Jesus and make Him the cornerstone of your life, or He'll become a stumbling stone that won't just stump your toe, but will grind you to dust.

There's an interesting story that took place in 2008 during the construction of the new Yankee Stadium. One of the construction workers was a Boston Red Sox fan.

I'm sure you know the Yanks and Sox are big rivals.

Gino Castignoli wanted to jinx the Yankees so he buried a Red Sox jersey in the cement foundation of the new park. He would've gotten away with it, if he hadn't have had such a big mouth. He bragged about his deed.

Well, the Yankees took his actions seriously.

They asked Castignoli's co-workers where he had been working. They found the spot where they thought the jersey was hidden, and spent five hours with jackhammers tearing up the foundation of their stadium.

They finally found the Red Sox jersey. It cost the Yankees \$30,000 to tear up and re-pour their foundation.

And I would imagine Gino paid a pretty good portion.

But this is what some of us need to do!

Like the Yankees we need to tear up our foundation.

There're a few flaws in what we've built - some *bad attitudes*, and *pride*, and *arrogance*, and *selfish habits*, and *sinful identities...* Jesus is NOT our chief cornerstone. We're not resting and building on Him.

Everything in our lives does NOT hinge on Jesus...

He's not the center of our relationships - He doesn't govern our work - He doesn't influence our thoughts - we have excluded Him from our dating or marriage - He's not welcome in our finances... It's really unthinkable, but we've relegated the Lord of glory to the outer fringes.

Our all doesn't flow through and around Jesus.

Don't you want your life, your family, your church to be built on a *“tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation?”* Is your life resting on a **sure foundation?**

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 3:11, “Let each one take heed how he builds... For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

There is no *surer, stronger, sturdier* foundation for our life, than obedience and surrender to Jesus Christ.

Don't be offended because of Jesus. Humble yourself today, and let Him be your chief cornerstone!