

Christ is the Cornerstone Isaiah 28:14-29

Introduction

- Jenga
 - Object of the game is to pull out a plank without knocking the whole tower over
 - It's a game of skill, balance, and discipline to remain steady
 - On the first move, no one is going to take out the bottom corner plank
 - Doing this is a sure way to lose the game
 - The tower is narrow to begin with, taking out the bottom plank will cause the whole tower to lose balance
 - Jenga is a small-scale example of a principle in construction
 - The cornerstone of a building is important
 - It's the piece of the foundation that holds everything together
 - Everything is built around the cornerstone
 - If it is removed, the whole structure could come tumbling down
- New Sermon Series, "Making Christ the Center"
 - Important statement for MMBC, because it is the vision of our church
 - We've talked about the importance of making Christ the center before, but this time I want to talk about some of the things that compete for the center of our life
 - Everyone's life revolves around something. Our lives may revolve around our family, job, hobbies, activities, etc. Whatever our lives revolve around, it usually defines who we are.
 - The title, "Christian" implies that Christ is the defining factor in a person's life. However, how many of us who consider ourselves Christians, can really say that our lives revolve around Christ?
 - While our good intentions are to live in obedience to Christ, there are competing priorities that often get in the way; finances, time, needs, relationships, responsibilities, even guilt and shame.
 - Whatever our life revolves around, is what shapes us.
 - If our desire is to truly be transformed through an experience with the Living God, then our lives must revolve around Christ.
 - "Making Christ the Center" will be a sermon series dedicated to addressing those areas of our life that tend to compete with our relationship with Christ.
- Image of Christ as the Cornerstone
 - The image is developed beginning in the Old Testament and continuing into the New Testament.
 - It resembles a temple in the Old Testament and becomes the embodiment of God's people in the New Testament.
 - **Matthew 21:42-44**

- When Jesus made this statement no one really understood what he meant; so the context of the OT is important to understanding Christ as the Cornerstone
- As you consider Jesus' judgement, understanding the Cornerstone is key to our entrance into the kingdom of God.
- Without Christ at the center of our life, we will stumble and fall.

Reconsider the foundation that your life is built upon

- **Isaiah 28:14-15**
 - Scoffers
 - Rulers of Jerusalem
 - Made a covenant with death- "it will not whip us"
 - Shelter and Refuge was built upon self-reliance, arrogance, and lies
 - Two Scenarios
 - O.T. Speaking of the coming Assyrian Invasion that would lead to the exile of Israel
 - N.T. Speaking of Jesus crucifixion and the judgement on Jesus' accusers
 - Notice in **Matthew 21:42** when Jesus remarks, **Have you never read in the scriptures, 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.'** (ESV)
 - Jesus was quoting from the Old Testament
 - He was applying a principle from the Old Testament to what was about to happen through his death on the cross
 - The builders who rejected the cornerstone are the scoffers
 - Our Defense
 - "That's pretty harsh judgement. I certainly don't qualify as a scoffer. Look, I'm in church today! The pastor must be talking about all those people who are not in church."
 - It's easy for us to deflect, or dismiss this idea of a "scoffer."
 - Consider for a second who Jesus was talking about
 - He was not referring to people outside the temple. In both the O.T. and the N.T., the scoffers are those who are the religious leaders
 - The scoffers are those who know better, and are deceived by their own self-righteousness.
 - Don't think for a minute that you might not qualify as a scoffer.
 - Example from Leadership Conference
 - Impacted by a message from Pastor Erwin McManus
 - "The Last Arrow: Save Nothing For the Next Life"
 - Living to the fullest potential of God's calling on your life

- “We can become so afraid of death that we never live, so afraid of failure that we never risk, so afraid of pain that we never discover how strong we really are.”¹
 - I was deeply convicted, and yet at the same time a weight came off my shoulders as I began to embrace those words.
 - As a pastor, it’s my responsibility to challenge your faith. It’s my responsibility to encourage you to take risks. It’s my responsibility to challenge you to have courage.
 - Yet, I heard God challenge me. “There are some things that you are afraid of that are holding you back. They are at the core of your foundation. You need to let go of them, in order for me to take control.”
- Reconsider what your life is built upon
 - There’s a good chance that the foundation of your hope is not built on what you think it is.
 - Fear, Anger, Proving yourself, security, power, etc. Usually are etched somewhere in our foundation
 - Part of growing in our relationship with God is allowing God to challenge the very core of who we are
 - He does this through the study of his word
 - Had the scoffers that the prophets challenged in the Old Testament and the Religious elite that Jesus addressed, would have listened to the Word, they may have avoided stumbling and falling
- **Romans 9:30-10:4**
 - This isn’t the first time for Israel, now it’s the second time.
 - How often do we deceive ourselves by our own intentions!
 - “A zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.”
 - Sought their own righteousness
 - Did not submit to God
- Before you dismiss whether Christ is the center of your life, reconsider what your life is built upon
 - My guess, if you are human, there’s a part of your life that you hold closer to you than you give to God.
 - Make more room in your life for Christ!
 - In fact, make him the center!

When Christ is at the center of our life everything is tested against the Rock

- **Isaiah 28:16**
 - Rulers of Jerusalem meet the builder of the kingdom
 - A humbling experience, you thought you were in control, until you find someone greater than you.
 - Sure Foundation
 - Tested Cornerstone

¹ Erwin McManus, *“The Last Arrow: Leave Nothing For the Next Life.”* New York: Waterbrook, 2017, p. 17.

- Faithful to those who believe
 - Similar thing happened in the New Testament
 - **John 2:19, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” (ESV)**
 - “Who does this guy think he is?”
 - Jesus was of course was referring to his death and resurrection
 - “You may think you rule this place, but I’m the builder of the kingdom.”
 - Are we guilty of something similar?
 - We think we are the ruler of our domain
 - We think we have it all figured out
 - And then, boom- what we thought we knew about ourselves, or about life gets tested, and our feet get knocked out from under us
- Niagara Falls
 - Beautiful
 - I have stood beside the falls, I’ve taken the “Maid of the Mist” to get close to the falls, I’ve been in the tunnel behind the falls-hard to wrap your mind around something so big and powerful
 - I love water parks, and the slides-there’s hardly a slide I won’t go down
 - You will never convince me that it is a good idea to take a barrel over Niagara Falls
 - To be honest, after experiencing Niagara Falls, I would wake up in a cold sweat because I had dreamed about how close I was to the falls, and the volume of water
 - Niagara Falls is beautiful and frightening all at the same time; nothing compares to it- Go to Black Water Falls in West Virginia and then go to Niagara Falls and they are completely different
 - Here’s my point: We need that same kind of “awe” factor with God.
 - We need to quit playing around with God
 - Or treating God as some amusement park experience, and wake up to the reality that God is the real thing, and nothing else compares
 - We need to be in such awe of God, that to question his authority, or his purpose for our life puts fear into us
- **Matthew 21:44, “And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.” (ESV)**
 - When Christ is at the center of our life, everything is tested against the Rock.
 - It’s like going up against the #1 team every week, God never loses, and when you try to play against him, you only find out how weak you really are
 - Double-minded
 - Knowing the right thing, but choosing the wrong thing
 - Wavering in our faith-like a boat on choppy water
 - Unstable-
 - If Christ is not at the center of your life, you will stumble and fall
 - Not a question of “IF”, but “When”
- **Ephesians 2:20-22, “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together,**

grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.” (ESV)

- When Christ is the cornerstone of your life, then your life is being built for God to dwell in you. In fact, he is adding rooms and continuing to build on!
- And when life, or temptations knock at your door, you check with the builder of the house, as to whether its ok to let something into your life.
- When Christ is the center of your life, everything is tested against the Rock.
- Hand the keys of your life over to God, because he is the creator and architect, and builder.

Rebuilding Phase: Sometimes the structure of our life has to be torn down before it can be built strong

- **Isaiah 28:17-18**
 - What did the “scoffers” put their faith in?
 - Shelter and Refuge
 - Covenant with Death
 - They put their faith in themselves
 - Look how God responds
 - Sets the Bar, Draws a line in the sand
 - Justice and Righteousness
 - Hail and waters will overcome the shelter and refuge
 - Covenant annulled
 - Bed too short and Covering too narrow to wrap- this is what it feels like when we put faith in ourselves
 - Destruction-instead of fighting for Israel, God will fight against Israel
- Rebuilding Phase: Sometimes the structure of our life has to be torn down before it can be built strong
 - “Building Off the Grid”
 - Rebuilding a hiking cabin in Colorado
 - 7 generations
 - Not easy, but necessary to sustain and preserve
 - **Ephesians 2:12-14a, “remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and stranger to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace.” (ESV)**
 - Sometimes the structure of our life has to be torn down before it can be built strong
 - We all are in need of a rebuilding phase
 - Reconsider what your life is built on: there’s a good chance that the foundation of your hope is not built on what you think it is.

- We need to be in such “awe” of God that to question his authority or purpose puts fear into our life
 - Turn over the keys of your life to the creator, architect, and builder-Make him the center of your life!
 - Test everything against the Cornerstone
- Sometimes the structure of our life has to be torn down before it can be built strong
 - **Isaiah 28:23-26**
 - Tearing up the grown before something can be produced
 - At the time it seems strange and unusual: why must our lives be torn down before they can be built strong?
 - It’s the master builder’s work, rebuilding our lives, making a house for him to dwell
 - Christ had to die on the cross before bringing life to us-it’s a process we must all go through
 - **Isaiah 28:29**

Conclusion

- The Last Supper was a rebuilding phase
 - The disciples thought they had it all figured out
 - And then, Jesus, the center of the table, did the unthinkable
 - He had to tear down the old structures in order to rebuild a strong, everlasting hope!
- Have you created a life for yourself where everything has it’s place, even Jesus, and yet Jesus is not the center of everything?
 - Completing priorities: time, relationships, shame, finances, etc.
 - It can be scary to allow Christ to tear down that old structure, but what is even scarier is to live your life without him at the center and stumble and fall
- You can’t go wrong with Jesus
 - Laid the foundation
 - Sure foundation
 - Tried and Tested
 - Faithful to those who believe
 - Make Christ the Center of your life