



“Hearts of Stone”
1 Peter 2:7-8
Pastor’s Choice Series

Introduction

1 Peter 2:4-8 And coming to Him [Jesus Christ] as to a living stone, rejected by men, but choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For this is contained in Scripture: “Behold I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, And he who believes in Him shall not be disappointed. This precious value, then, is for you who believe. But for those who disbelieve, “The stone which the builders rejected, this became the very corner stone,” and, “A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense”; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.

Christ: the Living Stone Christians: the Living Stones Non-Christians: the Dead Stones

Two Kinds of People in the World

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Those who accept Christ | • Those who reject Christ |
| • Those who believe | • Those who disbelieve |
| • Those who are living stones | • Those who are dead stones |

I. Their Reactions to Christ

Heart of Stone Reaction #1 - Rejecting Christ: The Cornerstone

1 Peter 2:7 But for those who disbelieve, “The stone which the builders rejected, this became the very corner stone...” (cf. Ps. 118:22)

The Messiah, Jesus Christ is the rejected stone that became the very Cornerstone...the guide...the foundation...of our faith. Christ the Cornerstone has a whole list of high expectations for His followers. It’s not surprising that many have chosen to cast Him aside. (cf. Deut. 32:18; Matt. 32:18)

The Outcry Today

- | | |
|---|---|
| • “I do not want anyone lording it over my life.” | • “I want to find my own truth.” |
| • “I want to do my own thing” | • “I will only do that which is right in my own eyes.” |
| • “I want to set my own standards...with no absolutes” | • “I want to live for today; not worry about eternity.” |
| • “I don’t need Christ or anyone else telling me what to do.” | |

1 Corinthians 3:11 “For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

Heart of Stone Reaction #2 - Tripping Over Christ: The Stone of Stumbling

1 Peter 2:8 “A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense....” (cf. Isaiah 8:13-15)

Christ is a “stone of stumbling” (Greek: lithos proskommatos) and “a rock of offense” (Greek: petra skandalon) “...we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block (Greek: skandalon) and to Gentiles foolishness...” (1 Cor. 1:23)

We can try to avoid Christ, but He will always get in the way. He is deeply imbedded in the road of life and not easily removed.

The Deeply Embedded Stones That Cause Unbelievers to Stumble

Doctrinal Objections (“I don’t believe...”)

- “I don’t believe in God
- “I don’t believe the Bible is God’s Word.” etc.

Moral Objections (“How could God...?”)

- “How could God allow suffering?”
- “How could God allow people who have never heard the gospel go to Hell?”

Personal Objections

- “I had religion crammed down my throat.”
- “Christians are so unloving and judgmental.”
- “There are too many hypocrites in the church.”
- “I have no interest in religion filled with rules.”
- “I tried it and it didn’t work for me.”
- “I want a religion that lets me do what I want...”

Stumbling Stone #1 - The Simplicity of the Gospel

Acts 16:31 “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved...”

Romans 10:9 “...if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved...”

Stumbling Stone #2 - The Narrowness of the Gospel

John 14:6 “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.”

“How can Jesus Christ be the only way to God?” “Aren’t there many ways to God?”

Acts 4:11-12 “He [Jesus Christ] is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the chief corner stone. And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”

Heart of Stone Reaction #3 - Being Offended by Christ: The Rock of Offense

1 Peter 2:8 “...a rock of offense; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word...”

Things That Offend Unbelievers

Rock of Offense #1: The Christian View of Morality

Rock of Offense #2: The Christian View of Judgment (cf. Matthew 7; 1 Corinthians 6; etc.)

II. The Reason for Their Rejection of Christ

1 Peter 2:8 “...for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word (i.e. the revelations of God) ...”

God has presented Himself in general revelation

- through creation above us - telling us that He is powerful
- through conscience within us - telling us that He is holy
- through providence around us - telling us that He is good

God has presented Himself in special revelation

- through the Bible - the Written Word of God
 - through Jesus Christ - the Incarnate Word of God (Jn 1:1, 14; Col. 2:9; Heb. 1:1-2)
- He is the ultimate expression and revelation of who God is

Because God has revealed Himself, all men are without excuse (cf. Rom. 1:20; 2:1)

Matthew 7:7-8 “Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened.”

III. The Result of Their Rejection of Christ (1 Peter 2:8c)

1 Peter 2:8 “A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense”; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.”

The unbelievers’ lifelong refusal to respond to God’s general and special revelations of the truth of the gospel is what seals their fate.

Matthew 21:42-43 “Jesus said to them, “Did you never read in the Scriptures, ‘The stone which the builders rejected, This became the chief corner stone; This came about from the Lord, And it is marvelous in our eyes’? Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it. And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.”

“Christ is either a stepping-stone or a stumbling stone.” (J. Vernon McGee)

Conclusion:

Ezekiel 36:26 “Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & ACTION ITEMS:

1. List the initials of some unbelievers for whom you are praying.
2. What are some of the things your unbelieving family and friends “stumble” over?
3. In what specific ways do you believe God is revealing His Son to them?
4. What did you get most out of this message?