

# LIFE GROUP LESSON

When in Romans LAW & GRACE - Week of August 18

## Introduction

In the days of Solomon building the Temple, Scripture says “The stones used in the construction of the Temple were finished at the quarry, so there was no sound of hammer, ax, or any other iron tool at the building site” (1 Kings 6:7). Can you imagine a quiet construction zone? There is a story that says early on during the construction of the Temple, the quarry sent an oddly shaped stone to the site; the contractor thought the quarry had made a mistake. The contractor ordered that the stone be thrown out, down a ravine into a trash dump, likely the Kidron or Ben Hinnom Valley.

Later when it was time for the chief cornerstone to be put in place, the contractor could not find it among the finished stones. He sent word to the quarry and demanded why this important stone had not already been hewn and delivered. The quarry supervisor replied and said it had been among the first stones sent. The contractor gave orders to look for it. Finally, it was located and retrieved from the rubbish, cleared of debris and moss, and brought back to the building site. The cornerstone had been at the site all along; it was their mistake for rejecting it. When the cornerstone was put in place, it became the rock that ensured the stability of the entire Temple structure.

## Background

After speaking to the religious leaders, a parable about evil farmers, Jesus calls them out: “Didn’t you ever read this in Scripture? ‘The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone. This is the LORD’s doing and it is wonderful to see’” (Matthew 21:42, quoting Psalm 118:22-23). Many of the priests and scribes had started to worship the law over God. They were blind to the Son of God in their midst. Has there ever been a time in your life when you were blind to the ways of God, and the very obstacle in your way was Jesus? – today Jesus may be saying to you,

I can either be stumbling block, a rock of offense, or I can be the rock on which you stand and build your life. What will it be?

## Read Romans 9:1-9, 30-33

### 1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?

The apostle Paul has a heavy heart for his fellow Jewish people. Like the religious leaders, Paul was once zealous in the wrong direction. It took meeting the Rock – the risen Jesus on the way to persecute believers – that the old Paul (Saul of Tarsus) was crushed by Christ the Rock. Paul later wrote this to the church in Philippi – “I was circumcised when I was eight days old. I am a pure-blooded citizen of Israel and a member of the tribe of Benjamin – a real Hebrew if there ever was one! I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience of the Jewish law. I was so zealous that I harshly persecuted the church. And as for righteousness, I obeyed the law without fault. I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God’s way of making us right with himself depends on faith” (Philippians 3:9).

### 2. What are you going to do about it?

Sometimes, the obstacles that we think are blocking our way, may be the very way God’s Spirit is getting our attention. Christ is the stone that will cause us to stumble; it is the rock hewn from the mountain that smashes to bits the idols we construct (see Daniel 2:31-35). However, if we stop going in the wrong direction, and fall before him surrendering our false worship – the lures of this world, self-worship, deceitful practices, and disrespect for others – then Christ becomes the cornerstone on which we live. As the refrain of a familiar hymn declares: *On Christ the solid Rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand. All other ground is sinking sand!*

# *When in Romans* LAW & GRACE

Text: Romans 9:1-9, 19-27

## In Closing -

Hear what the apostle Peter has to say about Christ, the Rock, in his letter to the early church. **Read 1 Peter 2:4-9.**

## 3. How can we help you?

Friend, what are you counting on to stabilize your life? The law may be challenging you because you are not living God's way. Your stumbling block may be Christ Himself. Why not surrender to His grace today? Jesus said, "There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13) and that is what He did for you.

## PLAIN TRUTH

What \_\_\_\_\_ our \_\_\_\_\_ can be used  
to show us the \_\_\_\_\_ to Christ.

1. The paradox is that the people of Israel and Judah had come to obey the law, to focus almost entirely upon \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_. Instead of \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of the law, they worshipped the law.
2. Jesus will always be a \_\_\_\_\_ block to us when we choose \_\_\_\_\_ over \_\_\_\_\_.

## One Year Bible Reading For This Week:

August 18: Esther 1:1-3:15, 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, Psalm 35:17-28, Proverbs 21:19-20

August 19: Esther 4:1-7:10, 1 Corinthians 12:1-26, Psalm 36:1-12, Proverbs 21:21-22

August 20: Esther 8:1-10:3, 1 Corinthians 12:27-13:13, Psalm 37:1-11, Prov. 21:23-24

August 21: Job 1:1-3:26, 1 Corinthians 14:1-17, Psalm 37:12-29, Proverbs 21:25-26

August 22: Job 4:1-7:21, 1 Corinthians 14:18-40, Psalm 37:30-40, Proverbs 21:27

August 23: Job 8:1-11:20, 1 Corinthians 15:1-28, Psalm 38:1-22, Proverbs 21:28-29

August 24: Job 12:1-15:35, 1 Corinthians 15:29-58, Psalm 39:1-13, Proverbs 21:30-31

August 18, 2024