

Shadow of the Cross: The Cornerstone

Primary Texts

- Psalm 118:22–24
- Isaiah 28:16
- Matthew 21:42–44
- Acts of the Apostles 4:10–12
- 1 Peter 2:4–8
- Ephesians 2:19–22

Introduction: The Stone in the Shadow

Throughout Scripture, stones often carry prophetic meaning. A stone may mark remembrance, covenant, judgment, or divine intervention. But one stone rises above all others—the **Cornerstone**.

Long before the cross stood on Calvary, God had already revealed Christ through the image of a stone rejected by builders yet chosen to hold everything together.

A cornerstone was not decorative—it was essential.

In ancient construction, the cornerstone was the **first and most important stone laid in a building's foundation**. Every other stone was measured from it. It determined:

- the direction of the walls
- the angle of the structure
- the strength of the building
- whether the entire building would stand or collapse

If the cornerstone was wrong, everything built afterward would be crooked.

That is why Scripture uses this image for Christ: the cross reveals that Jesus is not merely part of salvation—He is the point from which everything must align.

I. The Cornerstone Was Foretold in the Old Testament

Psalm 118:22

“The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”

This verse prophetically reveals that the very stone dismissed by builders would become the most important stone in the structure.

Isaiah 28:16

“See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation...”

This cornerstone is:

- chosen by God
- tested by pressure
- precious in value
- certain in stability

How a Cornerstone Was Used

Builders first selected one stone with exact precision.

That stone had to be:

- perfectly shaped
- strong enough to bear weight
- correctly positioned

From that single stone they stretched measuring lines for every wall.

Everything depended on that first placement.

Spiritual Meaning

God did not randomly choose Christ.

He is the perfectly tested stone—able to bear the full weight of redemption.

Shadow of the Cross

Before Jesus was crucified, He had already been chosen as the foundation upon which grace would stand.

II. The Cornerstone Was Rejected by Men

Matthew 21:42

Jesus applies Psalm 118 directly to Himself:

“The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone...”

The religious leaders saw Him but misjudged Him.

They examined the stone and decided it did not fit their plans.

This Is What Builders Sometimes Did

If a stone appeared unusable, they pushed it aside.

Yet sometimes the stone rejected early became the very stone needed later.

That is exactly what happened with Christ.

At the Cross

He was:

- rejected by leaders
- abandoned by followers
- condemned by crowds
- crucified by Rome

The world declared Him unfit.

But God declared Him foundational.

Truth

What men reject may still be central to God's purpose.

III. The Cross Turned Rejection Into Foundation

Acts 4:10–11

Peter preached:

“Jesus Christ... whom you crucified, but whom God raised from the dead... He is ‘the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.’”

The resurrection confirms the cornerstone cannot be discarded.

What the Cornerstone Does in a Building

A cornerstone:

- carries alignment
- bears pressure
- joins walls together
- stabilizes the entire structure

What Christ Does Through the Cross

At the cross:

- justice and mercy meet
- God and man are reconciled
- sin is judged
- salvation is secured

Christ holds together what sin tore apart.

IV. The Cornerstone Determines Alignment

In ancient construction, if the cornerstone was even slightly off, the entire building would slowly drift out of line.

At first the error might seem small.

But higher walls exposed the flaw.

A Modern Example

In 2021, a 12-story condominium called Champlain Towers South collapsed in the middle of the night in Surfside.

For years, people lived inside that building. It looked normal from the outside. Families slept there. Children played there. Life continued there.

But hidden beneath the surface, structural weaknesses had developed.

Concrete deterioration and failure in key support areas eventually led to sudden collapse.

What looked secure externally had hidden problems underneath.

That tragedy teaches a sobering spiritual truth:

What is hidden underneath eventually determines what stands above

A life may look successful publicly while deep cracks are forming privately.

A family may look stable while spiritual erosion is occurring beneath the surface.

A church may look active while drifting away from Christ as its true alignment.

Spiritual Application

When Christ is not the cornerstone, misalignment may not show immediately.

But pressure always exposes foundations.

Storms reveal what calm seasons conceal.

That is why Jesus taught that wise people build on rock.

Without Christ:

- priorities distort
- truth bends
- convictions weaken
- identity becomes unstable

With Christ as Cornerstone

Everything finds order:

- worship
- family
- purpose
- morality
- calling

The Cross Is God's Foundation Inspection

At Calvary, God declared that there is only one foundation strong enough to carry eternity—Jesus Christ.

V. Every Life Must Respond to the Cornerstone

1 Peter 2:6–8

Peter says Christ is:

- precious to believers
- a stumbling stone to unbelievers

The same cornerstone that supports some becomes an obstacle to others.

Matthew 21:44

“Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces...”

Brokenness before Christ produces salvation.

Resistance against Christ produces judgment.

No one stays neutral before the cornerstone.

VI. The Church Is Built on the Cornerstone

Ephesians 2:20

“Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.”

A church must not be aligned by trends.

Not by personality.

Not by culture.

Not by preference.

Everything must be measured against Christ crucified and risen.

VII. The Shadow of the Cross Still Falls Today

Every person is building something:

- a life
- a home
- a legacy
- a future

The issue is not whether you are building.

The issue is what your life is measured against.

Storms reveal foundations.

What is built on Christ remains.

VIII. The Rejected Stone Is Still the Only Foundation

Many people know rejection.

The gospel declares that the rejected Stone receives rejected people.

Because He was rejected, we can be accepted.

Because He was crushed, we can stand.

Because He bore the cross, He became the cornerstone of eternal life.

IX. The Stone the Builders Could Not Understand

There is an old account often told about the building of Solomon's Temple.

According to Jewish teaching, builders received stones from the quarry already cut for placement. One unusually shaped stone arrived early in construction. It did not seem to fit anywhere.

The builders examined it, questioned it, and eventually pushed it aside.

It became an obstacle on the site—something workers stepped over while construction continued.

But when the time came to place the most important stone in the foundation, they discovered the rejected stone was the exact stone required.

The stone they had pushed aside became the cornerstone.

Whether remembered as historical detail or teaching illustration, the message is powerful:

What people may dismiss, God may have already designed for the most important place

That is the story of Jesus.

When He came:

- many did not recognize Him
- many misunderstood Him
- many rejected Him

They pushed Him outside the city.

They nailed Him to a cross.

They assumed His story was over.

But three days later, God revealed that the rejected Stone was always the chosen Cornerstone.

The cross was not defeat.

The cross was placement.

Calvary was where God set the Cornerstone into history forever.

And now every life must answer one question:

Will you build on Him—or stumble over Him?

Final Altar Call 🙏

If your life has been built on unstable foundations—

- success
- religion
- pride
- control
- fear

Christ calls you today to build on Him.

The cornerstone rejected by men still holds all who come.

The cross still saves.

The blood still cleanses.

The risen Christ still establishes lives.

Come to the Cornerstone.

Align your life with Christ.

Because what is aligned with Him will stand when everything else shakes.