

Cornerstone [A Stumbling Stone] Discussion Guide

Summary

This sermon continues a series on Jesus as our cornerstone, focusing on the difference between stumbling over Jesus and standing on Him. Jonathan draws from Romans 9:30-33, Colossians 2:20-23, and Proverbs 3:5-6 to explore why the people of Israel, who had every advantage in knowing God, missed the Messiah, while the Gentiles who were not even seeking righteousness found it through faith. The core issue was that Israel was pursuing righteousness through performance and rule-keeping rather than through trust in God, turning Jesus into a stumbling stone instead of a cornerstone.

The sermon challenges listeners to examine where they have replaced relationship with Jesus with religious performance. Whether it is checking off spiritual disciplines, maintaining a polished image, or striving to earn God's approval, these efforts can actually become obstacles to genuine faith. Jonathan asks us to name the areas where we have been stumbling and to consider what it would look like to lay down our striving and simply trust Jesus as the solid foundation He already is. True transformation begins not with trying harder, but with trusting more deeply.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for bringing us together today. We come with open hands and honest hearts,

asking You to meet us right where we are. As we dig into Your Word and talk with one another, we ask that You would quiet the noise of our own striving and help us hear Your voice clearly. Show us the places where we have been depending on our own understanding instead of trusting You. Give us the courage to be honest with ourselves and with each other. Holy Spirit, lead this conversation and do what only You can do in each of our lives. We trust You with this time. In Jesus' name, amen.

Ice Breaker

What is one hobby or skill you tried really hard to get good at, and how did that effort go?

Key Verses

- Romans 9:30-33
- Colossians 2:20-23
- Proverbs 3:5-6
- Isaiah 28:16
- Isaiah 8:14
- 1 Peter 2:4

Questions

- Jonathan described the difference between obeying God out of relationship and obeying rules to earn relationship. How would you describe that difference in your own words, and which one do you honestly find yourself leaning toward more often?
- Romans 9:30-33 explains that Israel stumbled over Jesus because they were pursuing righteousness through their own efforts rather than through faith. In what ways

do you think that same tendency shows up in the church today?

- The sermon pointed out that Israel did believe in God, but they believed in Him as someone whose approval had to be earned rather than someone who had already given it. How does that distinction challenge or encourage you personally?

- Colossians 2:20-23 warns that religious rules can look wise and disciplined but still fail to address the deeper issues of the heart. Have you ever experienced a season where you were doing all the right things outwardly but felt distant from God inwardly? What was that like?

- Jonathan pointed out that Peter stumbled over Jesus repeatedly during the Gospels, but everything changed when He stopped trying to prove Himself and started simply trusting. What do you think made that shift possible for Peter, and what might make it possible for you?

- Proverbs 3:5-6 says, 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.' What does it practically look like to seek God's will rather than depending on your own understanding in a specific area of your life right now?

- The sermon challenged listeners to name the good thing that has become a distraction from the best thing. Can you describe what that kind of distraction generally looks like in a person's spiritual life, and why it can be so hard to recognize?

- Jonathan said that trust is not about adding something, but about putting something down. What do you think is the hardest thing for people to lay down when it comes to their faith, and why?

Life Application

This week, set aside a few quiet minutes each day to honestly ask yourself this question: 'Am I trusting Jesus today, or am I trying to earn something from Him?' When you notice yourself striving for approval, performing for others, or checking boxes out of obligation rather than love, pause and name it. Then take that specific thing to God in prayer and ask Him to show you what trusting Him looks like in that moment. The goal is not to add another spiritual discipline to your list, but to practice the simple, daily act of placing your full weight on the cornerstone that will not crumble.

Key Takeaways

- Jesus is the cornerstone that either stabilizes or causes stumbling depending on how we approach Him. Those who trust Him are never put to shame, while those who pursue righteousness through their own efforts stumble over the very foundation they need.
- Religious performance and rule-keeping can look like genuine faith from the outside, but they are no substitute for a real, trusting relationship with Jesus. The law was never meant to be the destination; it was meant to show us our need for a Savior.
- The Gentiles found what Israel was searching for not because they tried harder, but because they received it by faith. Righteousness is not achieved through effort; it is received through trusting Jesus.
- Peter is a powerful example that stumbling over Jesus is not the end of the story. The moment we stop trying to prove ourselves and start simply trusting, everything changes.

- Walking on solid ground begins with trusting God with all your heart and refusing to depend solely on your own understanding. It means following the One who is the path rather than trying to figure out the whole path yourself.

Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for being the cornerstone that does not crack under the weight of our failures. Thank You that You do not ask us to earn our way to You, but simply to trust You. As we leave this conversation today, we ask that You would keep the things we have discussed alive in our hearts throughout the week. Where we have been stumbling, give us the grace to stop and stand. Where we have been striving, give us the courage to lay it down. Remind us that You are already the foundation, and that our job is not to build something worthy but to step onto the stone You have already laid. We trust You, Jesus. We choose You as our cornerstone. In Your precious and holy name, amen.