

Harris Creek Baptist Church  
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Series: Forged  
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Watch Where You're Standing

1 Peter 2:4-10

**As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture, it says,**

**“See, I lay a stone in Zion,  
a chosen and precious cornerstone,  
and the one who trusts in him  
will never be put to shame.”**

**Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,” and, “A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for. But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.**

Well, I am very distracted because there's someone wearing a Longhorns shirt in the front. This is going to be hard; it's been a hard weekend, right? *[Laughter]*

So, recently we had an electrical issue at our house; there was a cord that was hanging down outside. It was hanging out from the attic, and it had stopped working. I'm not an electrician and I had never been in our attic, so I thought, “I am the perfect person to solve this problem. I'm going to go up in our attic and I'm going to find this cord and I'm going to replace this cord. It's easy.” So I go up in the attic. If you don't know this, attics are extremely hot in the summer, so I'm up in the attic and I'm already incredibly uncomfortable. I'm really nervous because I know that, in attics, there's one rule: you have to stay on those board things—those pieces of wood. You have to walk on the wood. So, I'm uncomfortable and I'm nervous and I've got a phone in one hand as my flashlight and there's all these other boards flying at my head, so I'm hanging onto those with one arm; I've got my phone in my other. I'm just taking it really slowly because I've got to walk from one end of the house to the other end of the house. Eventually, I make it over there and I call my wife and I'm like, “Hey, can you pull on the cord so I can make sure that I can find it?” She starts pulling on the cord and I find the cord, which I think means I'm an electrician now. I'm like, “I got this thing figured out; this is great.” I've got all this newfound confidence, so I'm like, “Well, as an electrician, I should probably know what other cords are up in our attic.”

I just kind of start walking around our attic; I'm going from one end to the other to the other until eventually—boom! This happens *[shows picture of leg-sized hole in the ceiling]*. I'm lying on these boards; my whole leg is through the ceiling; my wife is screaming. I pull my leg out and look down and it's our living room. She just happened to be standing right underneath it, so she

sees her husband's leg. She's got no idea if I'm okay; she's screaming and I'm not responding because I'm just *so* angry at this moment. Eventually, I get down and go into our living room and I'm just staring up at this hole in our ceiling. I'm like, "Nate, what were you thinking? What were you thinking? You knew the rule: just stay on the boards. Just stay on the boards; that's all you had to do. Just stay on the wood." But here's what happened—I first started and I was very nervous. Every single step I took, I took with extreme intentionality, but the safer I was—the more it was going okay—the more I thought I was okay. The more comfortable I got, the faster I walked and the faster I walked, the more careless I walked. The more careless I walked, the more danger I put myself in. The problem was I thought I knew what I was doing. When you think you know what you're doing, you put yourself in extreme danger.

What I learned that day was where you stand matters. Where you stand matters. It's true for you and your attic and it's true for your life as well. There are a lot of things in this life that you can stand on that will hold you—and there are a lot of things in this life that you can stand on that will not hold you. To put it more clearly, there is Someone you can stand on that will hold you and there are a lot of things you can stand on that will not hold you—because what you stand on matters.

This morning, I want to talk to two different groups of people. The first group of people I want to talk to are non-believers; you're here today and you don't know Jesus. You've never really placed your life and your trust upon Jesus and you're not standing on Jesus. Maybe you're watching online. I'm so glad you're here. I'm so glad you've tuned in and that you're maybe somewhat open to who Jesus might be. I'm glad you're here, but I'm concerned for you, because I'm afraid that whatever you're standing on cannot hold you. One day, the winds will blow; the rain will pour; your foundation will be found lacking.

I'm also talking to another group of people: I'm also talking to a group of people who are believers in Jesus. You started off your walk with Jesus with extreme intentionality; you knew the one rule: to walk with Jesus. Walk with Jesus; walk with Jesus. The more you walked with Jesus, the more you got comfortable walking with Him. The more comfort you felt, the more you felt like you knew what you were doing. You felt like you knew where to walk. The more comfortable you got, the more careless you got with your walk, and you haven't even realized that, as you've been walking, you've walked away from the firm foundation of Jesus. You've placed your trust in something else and you haven't even realized it, but it's because you got careless with your walk. We've got to figure out what that thing is that you're standing on; what's the foundation for your life?

I think we know how to find out what the foundation of your life is. We've all got to figure that out this morning; what's the foundation for your life? I think the right question to ask is, "What's the one thing that, if it was taken away from you, you would not be okay? What's the one thing in your life where, if it was taken away from you, you would not be okay?" Maybe that's your spouse; maybe for you, that's your finances. Imagine if everything in your bank account was just gone. Maybe for you, that's your health. Maybe that's your career; maybe that's your beauty. Think about that: what is that thing for you where, if it was gone, you would not be okay? That's the thing that you're standing on. If it was removed from your life, you'd fall flat on your face because that's what you're standing on.

Today, we're going to talk about how where you stand matters. We're going to do that by being in 1 Peter 2. We're continuing on in our sermon series called “Forged” here at Harris Creek. We're calling this sermon series “Forged” because this was written during a time of extreme persecution for the church. The Roman Emperor Nero was over the entire Roman Empire at this time, and he saw Christians as his enemy. He would isolate Christians imprison Christians and crucify Christians; he did everything he could to make life for a Christian absolutely miserable. Last week, JP said there wasn't a single person on Earth who claimed to be a Christian for the social benefit at this time. Because there was no social benefit. Being a Christian didn't mean a promotion; being a Christian meant persecution. The life of a Christian was simply not a very good one at this time, but Peter was writing this saying, “Hey, stay strong in your faith; stick together as the body of believers, because, as this world gets worse and worse and worse, you need to stick together all the more.”

He also says, week one, we talked about how, on earth, we are the elect exiles. We're going to be exiled by the world, but we're also elected by God. Last week, we looked at our need for holiness. This week, we're going to look at where to stand and how where we stand changes who we are.

I Peter 2:4—let's get reading. Verse 4 says this: **“As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—** again this is a theme all throughout the book, we are the elect exiles. Jesus was exiled by the world but accepted by God. We are going to be exiled by the world but accepted by God. Verse 5, **you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says, ‘See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.’”**

The language here is a bit odd because this is a bit of a *rocky* passage. There's a lot of stone imagery used here. [laughter] Anyway, he uses this phrase twice; he says, “living stone.” You notice that phrase doesn't make a whole lot of sense? It's an oxymoron. You have never in your life ever seen a stone that is alive. This is a theme for Peter; in fact, in chapter one, he says that you have been given a *living* hope. Later, in chapter one, he says that you've been given a new birth through the *living* Word of God. Now, he says here that Jesus is the *living* stone and now we are also like *living* stones. What he's doing? Over and over again: he's emphasizing that your hope is alive. The Word is alive; Jesus is the living stone that is alive and, therefore, we are alive. Why is he emphasizing this? He's putting such an emphasis on that phrase “living” because the believers at the time who'd be reading this book were facing down death every single day. He wanted to make sure that, as they were staring down death, they knew that, on the other side of death, was life. They had a *living* Hope because they had a *living* Stone that they could place their trust in. As they place their trust in Him, they also would become living stones.

What does that mean? What are stones used for? For building things. This passage says that Jesus is the Cornerstone—in that, when we make Him our foundation, God takes us, and He shapes us, and He builds us into two things. This is the first thing we can learn from this passage:

1. *Our Savior is the stone on which we are shaped.*

Let me show you what that means. Verse 5, once again: **“You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”** Now this is really shocking language, but we can't fully understand this and appreciate this because we're not Jewish people. The readers of this would have been absolutely shocked by what he's saying, because Peter says that we are shaped into a spiritual house, which can be translated as “temple” and “to be a holy priesthood.” We're shaped into two things: a temple and a priest. This is radical language because the temple was a holy place; it was a sacred place. The temple was the physical building that God had asked His people to construct so that He could dwell with them in that specific physical location. He asked them to build a building so that He could be present in that location.

If you want to learn your Bible this morning, here's just a bit of a history lesson. There are three temples in the Old Testament; the first temple is in Exodus 25. There, God gives Moses a lot of instructions on how to build what was actually called the Tabernacle, so “temple” is a bit of confusing language, but it was called the Tabernacle. This is the place where God dwelt with His people in this physical location. The next temple was in 1 Kings 6, when Solomon built a more permanent and present location. It was a really ornate building and, once again, God would be present with His people. Unfortunately, this would be torn down by the king of the Babylonians, King Nebuchadnezzar. You flip ahead a couple of more pages in Ezra 5, where you get the third temple. Does anyone know who rebuilt this temple? Zerubbabel; it's Zerubbabel. Say it with me: “Zerubbabel.” You just got smarter. Zerubbabel built the third temple; Nehemiah built the walls; Ezra brought the law back; Zerubbabel built the third temple. This temple would stand until 70 A.D, when the Romans would tear it down.

But now, there's this dramatic shift in Scripture. While there's these three temples in the Old Testament, now we have a fourth temple. Now, in 1 Peter 2, Peter's saying that temple, that physical building, is no more because *you* are now the building. You are now the place where God would dwell. This is radical language because the listeners here would go, “What do you mean? What do you mean, ‘We are the temple?’ What do you mean, ‘God dwells with us?’ You mean the God who spoke to Abraham is in me? You mean the God who led Moses out of Egypt is in me? You mean the God who would only be present with priests is in me? No, he's not; God is not accessible to me.” Peter's going, “No, He is! The same power that rose Jesus from the dead is in you. The same power that split the seas is in you. The same power that shut the mouths of lions is in you. The Holy Spirit is alive and active and He's *in* you. The temple is no more because you are now the temple.” I think for so many of us, as believers in 2023—we think the Holy Spirit is some consolation prize. He is not a consolation prize; He is alive and active and within us today. Although we've gotten used to that language, this would be brand-new language for them. He's saying that, if Jesus is your foundation, the Holy Spirit is in you and you are now a temple.

We're not just shaped into a temple. What else does he say in verse five? What else do we become? It says, **“you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”** If Jesus is your foundation, what are we now? We are now a temple, and we are a priest. Once again, this is scandalous because not everyone could become a priest. For me, I felt the calling to be in ministry in high school and I wanted to be a pastor, so I was a religion major at Baylor and interned at Harris Creek then I went to seminary, and I became a pastor. I chose to become a

pastor and now I am a pastor. It didn't work that way back then; you couldn't just choose to become a priest. First, you had to be a Levite and then, secondly, you had to come from the line of Aaron, so really, the priesthood was in your bloodline.

What Peter's saying here is, “Yes, the priesthood is in your bloodline; it's just not Aaron's blood. It's Jesus's blood. Once you take Jesus's blood to cover all of your sins, you are now transformed into a priest—not just a few of us, but all of us.” Not just me on this stage, but you guys all out there. We are now a holy priesthood, so if that's who we are, we need to know what we should do. So what was the role of a priest? What the priests do in the Old Testament? One of the main roles of the priest, was to offer up animal sacrifices as an atonement sacrifice for the sins of the people. We don't need to do that anymore. Why? Because God sent His one and only Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. That sacrifice for sins is no longer necessary. But here, Peter says that, as the role of priests, we are to offer spiritual sacrifices. Now I want to make it clear: we do not make these sacrifices for our forgiveness but *from* our forgiveness. As we have seen, the atoning sacrifice of our sins—we want to make sacrifices unto God.

What are those sacrifices? It says “spiritual sacrifices”; that is confusing to me. Good news: the New Testament outlines five different sacrifices for us to give. You thought that was an Old Testament thing; it's not just an Old Testament thing. I learned this this week; there are five sacrifices in the New Testament. Here's what they are; this is what you are to do; this is your job description as a believer in Jesus, as a priest. The first is that you are to sacrifice your body. Romans 12:1 says, “**Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice.**” This could mean a lot of different things. This could mean, on Tuesday morning, you don't want to wake up for BetterMan but you choose to wake up early for BetterMan and you offer your body as a living sacrifice. Or you get home from work and you're exhausted and you don't want to serve your spouse, but you serve your spouse anyway. Or you have sexual desires within you, and you choose not to listen to them because you're offering your body as a living sacrifice. So one, as priests we offer our bodies as a sacrifice.

The second sacrifice in the New Testament is this: it's finances. Paul says this from jail in Philippians; he says, “**I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.**” Now, here's what I was going to say; here's what my example was going to be. I was going to say, you know, you can sacrifice your finances; you can go a day without coffee, and you can take that money and you can give it to God. That is such a low bar. Can you imagine Peter writing to the church and him saying, “Guys, just go without a latte one day?” That's not what the Bible calls you to. I think a more accurate calling might be something like this: if you're shopping for a car, find the car you want to buy and then buy two models below it. Then, you take that money and just go be generous with it. This should feel like a sacrifice to you; you should feel the effects of your giving of your finances because we're priests. This is what we do; we're used to sacrificing our body; we're used to sacrificing our finances.

There's a third one. What's the third one? The third one is our praise. Hebrews 13:5 says, “**Let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God.**” This is thanksgiving to God. Something I've learned from JP is that every single day when he wakes up, he writes either three or five things he's thankful for. I can't remember which one. [*Audience member says “five.”*] It was five.

Okay, he's listening; there we go. He writes down five things that he's thankful for. Why? Because he's a priest and he wants to offer a sacrifice of praise.

What's the next one? Service. Hebrews 13:16 says, **“And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”** What does this look like for us? On Friday night, we had a couple invite us over to their house and they had Chuy’s fajitas brought in. Those will be served in heaven, so if you don't like it, you get over it, because it's going to be there. They had us over to their house and gave us a meal. That's what it looks like, right? Before that, on Friday afternoon, my garage door had broken. My neighbor noticed that I was messing around with it and, even though I'm an electrician, that's like a little above my pay grade. So he goes, “Hey, you need some help with that?” He came over and he fixed my entire garage door. A couple days before that, someone else from our church came over to our house and fixed the hole in my ceiling. Why did he do that? This is what priests do; we offer up sacrifices of service. This is just what we do.

What's the fifth one? What's the last one? The fifth one is souls—the sacrifice of souls. Paul says this in Romans 15:16: **“He gave me the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”** Have you ever thought about that before? When you share the Gospel, when you find those college students to disciple, those people become an offering unto God. You're sacrificing your time to pour into them so they might know God and they become a sacrifice unto God. See, that's just what we do as believers; we sacrifice our body, our finances, our praise, our service, and souls, because why? We make Jesus the foundation of our life, and if He's the foundation of our life, He gets to decide how we build our life. He shapes us into two things: a temple and a priest. So, point number one, the first thing we can learn is that our Savior is the stone on which we are shaped.

Let's keep reading. Let's see what it says next in verse 7. **“Now to you who believe, this stone is precious.”** Now here is a shift in the passage, **“But to those who do not believe, ‘The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,’ and, ‘A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.’ They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.”**

Here's what I think he's saying, I had a buddy who was at one of his friend’s land. He was on his friend’s four-wheeler, and he had another buddy, and they were both on the four-wheeler. Neither of them owned the four-wheeler or the land, but they were just driving around the land. On this land, there's this river or creek that flows through it. They're sitting on this four-wheeler, looking at this river, and they look at each other and they go, “You think we can drive through it?” Since they're dudes, they're just like, “Yeah, I think we could drive through it! Let's do it!” So, my buddy's behind the wheel. He hits the gas and tries to drive through this creek and about halfway through the whole thing submerges. It was just done. You know what didn't matter? The fact that they thought they could make it through the river. Just because they thought they could make it through the river didn't mean they actually could.

I think that's what Peter's saying here. He's saying, “Hey, there's this huge rock in the road of your life called Jesus, and if you think you can avoid Him, you're not going to be able to.” Even if you don't think He's the Savior of the world, that doesn't change the reality that He *is* the

Savior of the world. He's going to be this stone in the middle of your path. He will either be the great foundation of your life or the great frustration of your life because you will either stand upon Him or stumble over Him. It doesn't matter if you think you can avoid Him; you can't because the reality of Jesus is that He isn't going anywhere. This is the second thing we can learn from this passage:

2. *Our Savior is the stone on which the world stumbles.*

If you're looking at your Bible, you can see there's a couple of quotes in this passage. One of the quotes is from Psalm 118: **“the stone the builders rejected has become the Cornerstone.”** This week, I was thinking, “Why does Peter use so much stone language in this passage?” It really feels like overkill—like the rocks and stones; it's just kind of a lot. I think as I was researching, I think one of the reasons why Peter uses so much stone language is because Jesus used this language. I think Jesus used it in a way that just engrained this type of thinking and speaking into Peter's brain because here's what Jesus did one time: Jesus told the parable in Matthew 21 and he closed the parable by quoting Psalm 118. He said, **“the stone the builders rejected has become the Cornerstone.”** I can just imagine Peter being there that day and hearing that and just being so confused by Jesus, going, “What does Jesus mean, ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the Cornerstone?’ What does that mean?” That happens in Matthew 21.

Flip over to a couple pages later, in Matthew 26, the disciples are with Jesus at the Last Supper. The Last Supper actually occurred during the Passover feast. We know really exactly what the disciples and Jesus were doing during that time because there were very strict rules for the Jewish people during Passover. One of the things that they would do during the Passover meal is they would sing the Hallel. Now, the Hallel were Psalms 113 through Psalms 118. They'd sing them progressively throughout the meal. We actually see this in Matthew 26. Maybe you've seen this before; maybe you just tossed this verse aside, but it says, **“When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.”** What did they sing? We know exactly what they sang right before Jesus was going to be arrested. We know for a fact what this song was: it was Psalm 118. This is what they sang together: **“I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation. The stone the builders rejected has become the Cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. The Lord has done it this very day; let us rejoice today and be glad.”**

Again, I can just imagine Peter is going, “Man, here it is again. Jesus had just summarized the parable by saying, ‘The stone the builders rejected has become the Cornerstone,’ and now we're singing it again. This has to mean something, but what does this mean?” Well, in a few days' time, he would know exactly what it would mean. That night, Jesus would be arrested and then the next day, as Peter saw Jesus's bloody body beaten up and hanging up on a tree, he saw the Stone that was rejected. Then three days later, as Peter went to run to the tomb to try to find Jesus's body, what did he see? He saw a stone that had been rolled away because the Cornerstone had walked out. Peter got to see what the Lord had done; it was marvelous in his eyes. The Stone that the world had rejected had now become the Cornerstone. Peter just grabbed hold of this message.

In fact, flip over a couple pages later. In Acts 4, he's speaking to the Sanhedrin: the Jewish religious leaders. What does he say? He says what Jesus told him. He said, **“Jesus is, ‘the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.’”** Then, flip over to 1 Peter 2 once again. What's Peter's message? The stone the builders rejected has become the Cornerstone. This is so important to Peter because he's saying, “I heard Jesus say it and I saw it be fulfilled. I saw people try to reject Jesus, try to shut up Jesus, try to ignore Jesus, but they could not ignore the reality of Jesus. All these people didn't believe Him to be the Savior of the world, but just because they didn't believe Him to be the Savior of the world didn't mean He wasn't the Savior of the world.” Peter's saying that Jesus is alive and with us and for us and you will either believe in Him and be filled with hope or ignore Him and be filled with hurt. Whether or not you think Jesus is Savior doesn't change the reality that He is the Savior. In your life, you have two choices: you will either stand upon Jesus or you will stumble over Jesus—because he ain't moving.

We've all seen this before; we've all seen this with a family member or a friend or maybe you've seen this in your own life—where someone in your life has rejected Jesus and just chose to go on their own way, only for that way of life to lead to addiction and anger and despair and divorce. Because there is no life apart from Jesus. You can try it; you can do whatever you want to do, but the reality is that the more you live your life, the more you'll see the truth of what Jesus has spoken. Peter's saying here that trying to live apart from Jesus is like beating your head up against a stone. It's not going to work because Jesus will either be the great foundation of your life or the great frustration of your life. You will see his words to be true. You'll either believe Him or you'll live your own way and find it out on your own—because point number two, the second thing we can learn is that our Savior is the Stone on which the world stumbles.

Let's finish this passage—verses 9 and 10. This is what Peter says: **“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession.”** If you came in this morning bummed and discouraged, if you came in this morning feeling not accepted by the world, if you came in this morning feeling like you've got too much sin that God wouldn't ever want you—let me tell you what that phrasing means. “God's special possession”—that phrasing is really describing, imagine if your house was on fire and you could only grab one thing from your house. That's what Peter's saying. Peter's saying that God—if He could choose anything in this world to take home—it's you. That's how badly He wants you. Even though you've been bad, He wants you so much. He cares deeply for you because you are His special possession, that you may **“declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”** We've gone from darkness to light because Jesus went from light to darkness. As He came and took on our shame, He's now given us brand-new names. This is the third thing we can learn from this passage:

### 3. *Our Savior is the stone on which our title is secured.*

You see, you don't earn these titles because you deserve to be a priest or because you deserve to be chosen or you deserve to be holy; you receive these names because you place your life upon the living Stone. He remakes you into a new people—but I want to point out something important here about these names. It doesn't say that you were a chosen person or a royal priest or holy Nate [laughter], it says, **“you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.”** These

are plural words. Even going back to verse 5, it doesn't say that you are like a living stone but **“you also like living stones are being built into a spiritual house.”** These are plural words.

I think this is so important for us as American Westernized people to believe. I think this is what we think our life with Jesus is like [*Nate uncovers a concrete slab with a small rock on top of it*]. Did that just *rock* your world or what? I mean, wow. I think we think this is what our life with Jesus is like. This is the Stone of your life—this is Jesus. He's your sure and steady foundation. This is Jesus, the big Cornerstone, and then this is you. This is little-old-you and this is what your life with Jesus looks like. You take your life, and you place your life upon his life and you go, “I did it. It's me and Jesus. This is what it's supposed to look like. I don't really need anybody else. I certainly don't need a Life Group. I don't really need the Church. I'm fine on my own. I've got this whole thing figured out—don't have a whole lot of sin in my life—it's just me and Jesus.”

This isn't what the New Testament describes at all. This isn't what Peter describes at all. He's not saying that *you're* a chosen person; he's saying that *you guys* are a chosen people. This isn't what the Christian life should look like, although this is the American Christian life. This is not a biblical Christian life, because the Christian life looks like this: it's not just you. It's your neighbor [*adds a rock on top of the concrete slab*] and your co-worker [*adds another rock*] and that crazy guy in your life group [*continues adding*] and it's your uncle and your spouse and your kids and you've got all these people where you've all chosen to place your life upon Jesus. You're trusting in Jesus. As you trust in Jesus, you encourage one another, pray for one another, and steady one another because your life should not just be you and Jesus. You are a chosen *people*, a royal priesthood, a holy nation; you're called to be in community with one another. If you're not in community with one another, you're missing out on the biblical New Testament definition of church.

Now, that's one mischaracterization of the Church. I think, today, there's also another one. Here, it says that we are a holy nation and a royal priesthood. Now that's all of us; it's not just a few of us—it's all of us. But I think some of us have been raised with the perception of the Church as the pastor being the foundation of the Church [*points to the concrete slab*]. It's the pastor and then there's all these little stones. We rely on the pastor to do the ministry; we rely on the pastor to know the Bible; we rely on the pastor to feed us the word of God. That's not what Scripture is saying. Scripture says that Jesus is the Foundation and then all of us are the royal priesthood, so that's why, here at Harris Creek, we talk about all the time—we want to equip the saints and empower members for service. All of us are called to ministry because I think where our church could get unhealthy is if we think JP's the foundation. We're going to trust in him to do all the ministry and we're just going to rely on him. Now I'm not saying that we on staff at Harris Creek don't want to do ministry; we will, and we want to do ministry—but the Church doesn't function to its best way if only a few of us are doing ministry. The Church is best ministered to when the entire Church thinks of themselves as ministers because all of us are in the game because all of us have the Holy Spirit. We're not relying on a person other than the person of Jesus. All of us have been given this job of ministry; all of us are equipped and empowered for service because the Holy Spirit is in your life. When you make Jesus the foundation of your life, He gets to define your life and He said that you are a holy and royal priesthood. So, in summary, point number one: our Savior is the Stone on which we are shaped. Point number two: our Savior is the Stone on which the world stumbles. Point number three: our Savior is the Stone on which our title is secured.

I don't know if you know this, but the NFL starts today. This is the first Sunday of the NFL season, which means I've been getting ready for it for a while. I was recently watching a Netflix series called "Quarterback." This is not an endorsement; there is not the best language from certain quarterbacks. It follows around three different quarterbacks—into practice and at games and in their house and through media discussions. You really get to see all of their life. Now, I'm a Minnesota Vikings fan and one of the quarterbacks that it followed was Kirk Cousins, who's the Minnesota Vikings quarterback. You really get to see everything; you see the whole season play out. Last year, they had an amazing season and they made it to the playoffs. They were projected to win; it was a lesser team that they had just beaten two weeks before. The camera's following throughout the whole game and, honestly, he just didn't play that well. The whole team fell short, but this was the moment that they had worked for the entire year. They put in blood, sweat, and tears for this moment only for them to fall flat on their face in front of a national audience. After that game, the media was just hammering him, saying, "He's not any good," saying, "He fell short again," saying, "He choked." The cameras are following him in the car as he's driving home. He's honestly just really discouraged.

The cameras follow him into his house, and you would think what would happen when he goes into his house—he's got two sons—they would tiptoe around their dad because their dad had just failed. They had just watched their dad lose in one of the biggest games of his career. That's not what happened. The cameras followed him into his house, and he goes to his two sons, and he tucks them in to sleep at night. After they had just watched their daddy fail on a national stage, he tucks them in, and he starts singing to them "On Christ the solid rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand." I'm watching it at that moment, as a dad, and I'm tearing up because I want to be that dad. I want to be that man.

Think of a lesson that Kirk was telling his kids in that moment. He's saying, "I lost the game. All is not lost. A lot of people don't have a very high opinion of me; it's not their opinion that matters. I didn't perform very well today. It's not my performance that matters because my foundation is not winning a game; my foundation is not what people think; my foundation is not my performance; my foundation is Jesus' performance and, last time I checked, the grave is still empty. Death is still lost and my sins are still forgiven and if Jesus is alive and with me and for me, I've got no reason to fear, because on Christ the solid rock I'm standing!" *[Applause]*

You know, you learn a lot about your foundation in the lowest moments of your life. I bet you've had this happen to you before—where the rains came down and the winds were blowing, and your foundation was displayed. In the lowest moment of Kirk's life, one of the lowest moments of Kirk's life, his kids learned what his foundation was. Your kids know what your foundation is. If I were to ask them this morning, "What's Dad's foundation?" would they say, "He's really in a good mood when work is going well, and he's really upset when work isn't going well?" Or would they say, "Mom always seems to be stressed out all week until she gets a glass of wine and then she seems to start feeling better." Or if I asked your roommates, would they say, "She's only ever happy when she's talking to a boy. When she's in a relationship, she feels good about herself and, when she's not, she just feels distraught."

Or, if I ask them, would they say, "They seem to be content in each and every circumstance. It's confusing to me because, when I watch their life, it's like they've got this hope that just won't die. It's like they've got this living Hope because they've placed their trust in the living Stone."

Friends, that's the only place that can hold you. The rest of this life is sinking sand; the only place that can hold you is on Christ the solid Rock. Friends, you've got two options in this life: you can stand on someone that will hold you or a lot of other things that will not. Let me pray you would be found standing on the risen Jesus today.

Father, thank you that your hands hold us through every season of our life. We can know that our ground isn't shaking, that the foundations aren't removed because our foundation is in you. You're not going anywhere; you've promised to be with us each and every single step of the way. You are alive and with us and for us from now until eternity. Father, I pray that all of us in this room—that two things would happen: through the power of your Holy Spirit, would we just be even more resolved to stand upon you? Or, Father, I pray that, through the power of the Holy Spirit, there'd be some people who would start moving their feet? That they'd move their feet from standing on their career or their finances or their beauty or their social status or their relationships—whatever that thing is that they're afraid to lose in this life—I pray they'd move from standing upon that thing to your Son and your salvation and your steadiness. Father, I just pray for the people in this room today who have found themselves stumbling over Jesus. They've tried to do this life on their own but they've fallen flat on their face. God, I pray that they would know that you aren't standing over them to shame them, but you're standing over them with an outstretched arm, waiting to pick them up, dust them off, give them a hug, saying, “Welcome home.” Father, I just am so grateful that, in each and every season, we have reason to rejoice. We have reason for hope, because our hope is alive, because our hope is in an alive person—it's in the name of Jesus, who is alive and with us and for us. We pray, amen.