

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

Hope For The World

PART

2

TITLE

Our Promised Cornerstone

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 28:16-17; Matthew 21:33-42; 1 Peter 2:4-8



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Providence family, it's great to see you this morning. If you're a guest here, we're glad that you're here. If you have a Bible, if you want to turn with me to Matthew 21, as well as 1 Peter 2. Matthew 21 and 1 Peter 2. If you don't have one in your hand, there's lots of Bibles on the chairs near you. And as I say each week, if you don't have one of your own, please take that home as a gift. That's why they're there.

We're in a series, as we lead up to an amazing time of celebrating Christ's birth, on hope, hope for the world, and hope is vital to life. We all know this, that when we feel hopeless, it feels very different in life than when we have hope. It's absolutely vital. And the reason is because when hope goes missing, something always fills its place, and it's hopelessness. And hopelessness is not simply a lack of hope, it is something that fills our heart. Sometimes it's called despair. It's not just a lack of something, it's the presence of something. And what's interesting about hopelessness is it has a pretty limited creative imagination, in terms of prompting certain responses from our life. When you're hopeful and you have to make plans, you have a pretty wide imagination of what could be decided in the realm of righteousness, of what's a possibility of how to make things better than they are right now. But when you're hopeless, it's interesting, is that your imagination is typically limited to either quitting, sinning, or settling.

And some of us, we're going through such a really hard time right now. It's really fascinating to hear from so many of you. There's been a number of people within our church family who have lost a loved one this week. There are people whose marriages are hurting right now. Maybe that's some of you. There are folks, right now, I know some of you, you're killing it in Raleigh financially, and for others, they're being killed in Raleigh financially. There's a lot of difficult things that happen.

And here's the fact, is that where hopelessness comes from, is you basically begin to add up the different factors in your life that are not positive. And if there's nothing positive added to it, you think, "Man, it's just going to be terrible." And so in all of those cases, whether it's relational, financial, physical, is you say, "I might as well just quit on life, quit on the job, quit on this relationship, quit on something, or settle on the basis of my own convictions, or sin against God, because that's the only thing that I can see that might make this better."

And this is why our hope is just so important, and what the Bible shows us about hope is how it's built; it's on the back of promise. Is that when you're able to stack up, even in difficult times, a number of difficult factors, but then you can say, "Plus the promises of a faithful God, who's not going to let those promises fail." All of a sudden, there's a glimmer of hope, even just a glimmer. And this is one of the beauties of Christmas, is that when we celebrate the birth of Christ, what we're doing is we're considering the ways that Jesus came to be with us, so that He could forever add, and we could forever add, His promises to our equations.

And so last week, we looked at the fact that He's the light of the world, and a good way to see what Jesus is for us is simply to see what He says about Himself. And so we're looking at different things that Jesus said. "This is who I am. And if you're with me, then this is what's available to you." And this morning I want to look at this idea, that Jesus said that He is our promised cornerstone. Cornerstone. So let me pray.

Father, would you please speak through weakness and bring glory to Jesus Christ? And I pray today for those

who are here, who are living their life, or trying to live their life in peace, and yet the foundation under their feet is shaky. I pray for those who are longing, but do not feel accepted by you. I pray for those who are feeling lonely. And I pray for those who are lacking a purpose that is worth the limited number of their days. And would you help us to see, from your Word, that all these things are available to us because Jesus is our promised cornerstone? So help us I pray, in Christ's name, amen.

In ancient building projects, they used stone. They didn't have steel or iron at the time. And so in order to add strength they added stone, and so most walls were built out of stone, most homes and structures were built out of stone. And there's always a first stone laid, and the very first stone that was always laid even received a special name, it was put on the corner, and it was the cornerstone. And most of us, we kind of know that. We're like, "Oh, it's a cornerstone." We sing songs about that. And it's a cool name for a business that's in architecture or something, like, "Oh, this is Cornerstone." And we get it all. But sometimes, we miss out on the impact and the value of what Jesus is doing.

You see, He could pick any metaphor that we're familiar with on the earth in order to tell us something about Himself. And He looked at our usage of something called cornerstone and He says, "Let's work with that." It's a beautiful thing. It's an unbelievable thing. You see, the first stone that was laid was always this stone in the corner. And it was always first because the dimensions of the house or the structure were always projected off of its dimensions. It was also the most precisely cut and labor-intensive stone, because its lines, however true they were, however plumb they were, became how true and plumb the walls of the house. You can rightly say, in terms of how it was used, is whatever the cornerstone was was indicative of what the house would become on top of it.

As a result of that, they always chose a stone that was strong. It was always the strongest stone, it was a tested stone. They would test it for any fissures. They would see how strong it was, because if there was any lack of integrity or compromise in the cornerstone, it would compromise the integrity and strength of the house or the building. And because it was the most precise, most expensive, strongest, and most labor-intensive, it was the most precious, the most valuable. Nobody built anything to last without one.

And one of the things you find when you read the Bible is that God is a builder. You're a builder. We're all building something, right? It may not be a cabinet or a house, but we're all building something. And the reason that you're a builder is because you're made in the image of God, who's a builder. And one day, God, in Isaiah 5, through the use of a metaphor, He aired, He voiced His grief in the people whom He was building. This is what Isaiah 5 says. "My beloved has a vineyard on a fertile hill. He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines. He looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes." Or sour grapes. And that's the metaphor; that He wanted to plant something, and then work very hard in order to create this fruitfulness from the vine. He had hope of what it was going to produce, but it didn't produce what He hoped it would produce.

And then all of a sudden God says, end of parable, "Let me tell you what I see. I built you as my people to be righteous and holy, and marked by love and worship and admiration for who I am. And instead, the fruit

that I keep seeing in your life is idolatry and immorality and bloodshed and injustice.” Speaking to Israel. It was a very serious indictment, and it also was a very serious expression of His concern. That He had put His hands to something. In that something, He had hoped to see this kind of fruit, and instead it was sour grapes.

And so God did something that was just absolutely remarkable to me, is He announced a new construction project. In Isaiah 28, God says, “I am the one who has laid a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of sure foundation. “Whoever believes in Him will not be in haste.”” Haste, or have regret because of their hurry; have shame because they were in haste. It’s really interesting. You notice it’s “He has laid”, He says it’s past tense. This is the power of God’s promises, is they’re so certain that He can talk about their completion before their beginning. Before Christ came to the earth, He says, “I’m going to lay a stone in Zion. It’s the tested stone.” They’re going to test it for its strength. Is it going to be precise? And it’s going to be precious, because it’s the cornerstone.

200 years after this, God re-echoed this promise through another prophet named Zechariah, and there He added one element so that we could know, how are we going to get this cornerstone? Is it going to fall out of heaven? Is there just going to be a rock that falls down on the earth? We’re like, “All right, that’s where we’re supposed to build our life.” No, He gives us a promise of what to look for. He says, “Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is He, humble and mounted on a donkey.” You’re supposed to look for someone who’s going to enter as a king into Jerusalem, but instead of a white horse, He’s going to be on a donkey. “And from Him shall come the cornerstone.” And it’s interesting, is we would think, “Wow, this king who’s righteous, who’s having salvation, He’s humble, He’s mounted on a donkey. Everyone’s going to love Him!” But the Old Testament says, “Not everyone’s going to love Him. Some people are going to love Him, and some people are going to reject Him.”

And we read of this prophecy in Psalm 118:22, where He says, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.” And so in the fullness of time, in the fullness of time, God Almighty, His perfect time, He sent Christ to the earth, just as He promised. He gave Him the name Jesus because the name Jesus means savior. And Jesus, He grew up. He became a man, and He began a very public ministry where He did miracles, He healed people, but He also taught with authority, and He made remarkable claims about Himself. Things like, “I’m the light of the world, I’m the glory cloud, I’m the Son of God. I’m the cornerstone.” And this comforted a lot of people, and it infuriated a lot of people.

And so, just a few days before He was crucified on the cross to pay for our sin, He needed to enter Jerusalem. And how would He enter Jerusalem? He entered on a donkey. Many of the people, they exclaimed, “Hosanna!” Which means, “Save us! You’re the king, you’re the one! We know it!” And there’s worship and adoration. And yet this very thing as well, just as was promised, the Pharisees and the scribes, the chief priests, their anger and fury was ignited as the people were giving Him praise, because they rejected Him. And so Jesus told a parable after He entered Jerusalem, just a couple days before He went to the cross. This is what it says, I ask you to turn to Matthew 21. We’re finally there. Verse 33.

“There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard.” Now, when was the last time that we heard about

someone planting a vineyard? It was God in Isaiah 5. And he “put a fence around it, and dug a winepress in it. He built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. And when the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. And these tenants took a servant and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same thing to them. Finally, he sent his son. Sent his son to them, saying, “They will respect my son.” But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, “This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.” And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.”

“When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” He gives his listeners an opportunity to speak into His story. “They said to Him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him the fruits in their seasons.”” End of parable. And then Jesus says, “Have you never read in the scriptures, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces... When it falls on him, it will crush him.””

Now, you keep reading from the story, and we’re told that the chief priests and these Pharisees, they started to become more discerning, and they said, “You know what? He’s saying this about us. He’s actually placing us in the story, and we’re represented by the tenants who killed all of his servants, including his son.” And so their fury was further ignited. Just a couple days later, Jesus is bound, He’s falsely accused, He’s condemned, He’s crucified on the cross for our sin. He dies on that cross, so they put Him in a grave, and on the third day, He rose from the dead.

When He rose from the dead, He appeared, and we’re told in 1 Corinthians 15, to at least 500 people, including His apostles. One of them was Peter. And these people, they started to preach that Jesus rose from the dead. Our greatest fear of dying, someone has conquered it! And you can trust in this someone, and you can share in His victory over death. You get to Acts 4, and people aren’t so happy that they’re talking about the fact that Jesus rose from the dead. So they order them to be quiet. And what does Peter say, filled with the Holy Spirit in Acts 4? “This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else.”

Peter, near the end of his life, he wanted to give explanation to the church, to us, as to what this cornerstone meant to us. And so he writes, in 1 Peter 2:4, “As you come to Him, a living stone rejected by men, but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture,” and he quotes Isaiah 28, “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame.” So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone, a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.”” And they stumble because they disobey the Word, as they were destined to do. But you are a chosen people, “race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

So, what does it mean that Jesus is our cornerstone? Three things. First, that “Jesus alone is the unshakable foundation of life”. He is the cornerstone whose dimensions of holiness, and righteousness, and love, and authority, and perfection dictate the dimensions and decisions of everyone who builds their life and trust in Him. There is a misnomer, in particular in places like the South in America, that have had the gospel or a Bible for a very long time. There’s a misunderstanding of what Christianity is, and it is a deadly misunderstanding. It basically goes like this.

My life is going pretty well, and we sort of imagine our life like a living room, the sort that has all the paint colors, they all match, and we got a nice couch, and we have everything going for us. We have a job, and we even have religion, and we have people in our church who know our name, and we have a place to come to, and we have kids, and we have all these wonderful things, but we need something else. We need an accent pillow for the room. An accent pillow that sort of gives a spark of color. And not only that, when we’re dis-comforted or when we’re tired, we have something soft on which to lay our head. So there’s all kinds of people who actually view Christianity and Christ Himself almost like a throw pillow that we add to our almost completed life. That has nothing to do with Christianity. Nothing. Coming to Jesus is not hearing the teachings of Jesus and then thinking or saying, “I want to adopt that as part of my life.”

Verses 4 and 5 tells us more what coming to Christ is all about. He says, “As you come to Him, a living stone,” He’s the living stone. “You yourselves like living stones,” we were dead in our transgressions and sins. We were dead stones. Our heart was like a stony, dead place before Him. And then suddenly, we put our trust in Jesus Christ because He rose from the dead after dying for our sin, and suddenly we’re told that we were born again. We were given a new heart, not of stone but of flesh. It says that each one of us were reborn. We were literally given a new operating system in our heart that wanted new things, that desired new things. This is what it means to be born again. We became a living stone, like Jesus is and has forever been a living stone.

And then He says to us, “And you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house.” What does it mean to come to Christ? To come to Christ means it’s to shift the center of your gravity upon Him. Those of you who are my age or older will remember this. I don’t know if they still do it today, but when we went to camp, or small group or something, somebody invented these trust games, right? Because we don’t trust each other, so we need to learn to trust each other, because then we’ll start sharing with one another. And so they had this thing, it was like a trust circle, if you remember this, right? It was just a terrifying thing for anybody who was insecure about themselves, right?

And they’re like, “This is what we want you to do. We want you to work. We’re going to get 12 of us, we’re going to form a circle, and you’re going to stand in the middle and close your eyes, and we’re all going to look at you. And then what we’re going to do is we’re going to walk a little closer to you so that you can close your eyes and just fall. We just want you to fall. And we’re going to catch you. One of us will catch you. And then we’re going to take you and we’re going to push you to the other side. And so you’re just going to go back and forth all over the circle, right?” And this was supposed to build trust.

But what was happening in that moment, if you think about just the physics of what's happening, right? Is that when you're upright, the center of your gravity is upon yourself, but then suddenly when you lean far enough, and you just lean over right now, you would fall over. You become vulnerable. And in that little circle, once your circle or your center of gravity left your feet and foundation, it either fell upon someone else's foundation and their center of gravity, or else you fell. And this is what it means to trust Christ. It's not to add a throw pillow into your almost completed life. It is to take your entire life, and stack it up on the cornerstone of Christ, and allow His lines of authority, instruction, His love, His mercy, His compassion to dictate the dimensions, relationships, and responsibilities, and decisions of our life. This is what it means that He is our unshakable foundation. Trusting Him is literally building our life upon Him, yielding to His Word, relying solely upon Him.

Some of us are so concerned because our faith trembles. Let me give you some really, really great, comforting news today. Your salvation is not based upon the strength of your faith, it's based upon the strength of the Savior in whose faith is being rested. If you have remarkable, strong faith in a functional cornerstone that has fissures throughout, it's a false cornerstone, but you think it's important, that can't hold you up, it cannot save you. And even if you have limited faith, just like the dad that said, "I do believe, help me with my unbelief." And you place that upon something that's strong enough and unshakable enough, you won't fall to the ground. And that is the gospel of Christ. He says, "Come to me. Even in the weakness of your faith. Place it upon me in sincerity, and I promise you, on the basis of my integrity, I am a precious stone, I am a tested stone, I am a strong stone, the strongest that there is, I promise you."

And so let me encourage us. This is one of the most important things you can learn today, and that is to discern our functional cornerstone. We all have one. I want you to know you have a cornerstone. There's something upon which you stand that has dimensions and angles that are running up and you're building your life on top of that cornerstone. Every one of us. If you don't know Christ, you have a cornerstone. If you know Christ, He may be your cornerstone. Or, if you know Christ, He is a cornerstone, but you are placing your energy and your effort and your trust upon a functional, compromised cornerstone.

Many of us, we love Christ, but we also love other things, like our comfort. Many of us, our comfort becomes the dimensions of our decisions. Many of us, our religion becomes the parameters of our decisions. Legalism becomes the parameters and dimensions of our life. Our family, our desire to be wealthy, our desire for sex, our desire for money. I don't know what it is. Every one of us have something where we're like, "This is Christ, and all of these other cornerstones, they all look functional." And many of us, what we learn throughout life is this, is that there's only one that's unshakable. And how you know what your functional cornerstone is, or you can identify the ones that are compromised, you just simply wait for a storm.

That's what Jesus said. "Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, and it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, the floods came,

and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

Providence, listen to me. The floods in your life are not your biggest problem. A compromised functional cornerstone is your biggest problem. And the storms in our life expose whatever that is. If you need your basketball or football team to make you happy when you go to bed, it is a functional, broken cornerstone. If you have to have a certain amount of money in your bank account in order for you to have hope in your heart, it is a broken, functional cornerstone. The storms will reveal the fractures of those stones. Is Jesus your cornerstone?

What you find is this, this is really amazing. This is the whole Christian life. Every one of us have functional cornerstones that's not Christ. And the Christian life is God exposing those things to us, deconstructing it as a cornerstone, and stacking that up upon Christ. Your desire for comfort is not necessarily a bad thing, unless it's your God. But once you put your desire for comfort up on the cornerstone of Christ, and allow His lines, and His dimensions, and His authority to dictate and determine your comfort, then all of a sudden comfort is in a safe place. He's the only one who is unshakable as a foundation.

Second, “Jesus alone can make us acceptable before God”. This is what it means to have a promised cornerstone. He makes us acceptable before God. Every one of us wants to be accepted before God. Everywhere I go in the world, we find people who want to be accepted by God. You can go to India today, or any day, you can go to the Shipra river, this is what this is, and people have a functional savior, a functional cornerstone, and that is they believe that they can simply dip in this dirty river, that their sins will be forgiven, and they will become accepted by God. We may not bathe in rivers like this, but every one of us has done things in our life apart from putting our faith in Christ in order to be acceptable to God.

There's only one person who's lived their entire life totally acceptable to God. It's Jesus. Which is why in verse 4 it says, “In the sight of God He is chosen and precious.” And we get to build our life on the lines of this acceptance. This is what verse 5 is all about. “You... Like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house... To offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable,” you see that? “Acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

This is a theological term called federal head, right? We have a federal government, there's a head of it, a president. And his or her decisions, doesn't matter what it is, affects all of us. Well, if you flip that over, now all of a sudden, Jesus is our cornerstone. You stand on this cornerstone and He's our federal head. And what does that mean? It means this. It means that whatever's true of the cornerstone, its lines and dimensions become true of those who build their life upon Him. And so God the Father looks at the stone multiple times and says, “This is my beloved Son.” When we put our trust in Christ, He looks at us and He says, “And this is my beloved.” He says of Christ that He is holy, righteous, and blameless, and when we put our trust in Christ, He takes away our sin, He gives us His righteousness, and God looks at us and He goes, “What I see is holiness, righteousness, and blamelessness.” This is the only way to be accepted by God. It's the only way to be acceptable to God.

But don't you see what it says in verse 6 and 7? It's enough. “Whoever believes in Him will not be put to



shame.” I promise you, you put your faith in Christ, one day you’re going to stand before Him, you’re going to say, “He was right. He accepts me because of Christ.” This is such an honor, which is why it says, “So the honor is for you who believe.” Think about how honoring this is to people who have not deserved it. None of it is actually true of us outside of Christ. But you stand on this cornerstone, and its lines become yours.

And so let me urge you to trust Christ, and build your life upon Him today. One of the things you’re going to find as you walk with Jesus, this is so true, is that He becomes more precious the longer you walk with Him. Some of us have to take medicine in order to stay alive. When you have to take medicine to stay alive, it’s really interesting how precious that medicine becomes to you, isn’t it? And Jesus is like that medicine. You stand upon that cornerstone, and what you find is a greater appreciation that swells throughout your life, which is why we come and we worship, and we have an expression where we can tell Him, “We love you, we’re thankful, we cannot believe what you’ve made available to us.” Some of us need medicine to stay alive. Listen to this. Acts 4 says, “There is no other name given among men by which we may be saved.” He’s the only medicine. And for those who see Him as such, He becomes precious.

But not everyone does. And even Jesus recognized this, in the parable that we read. Verse 44 of Matthew 21 says, “The one who falls on this stone will be broken into pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.” Now, you may look at that and go, “Boy, it just looks like everything’s bad. I can either be broken or I can be crushed. Now, which one of those do I want?” But if you understand spiritual brokenness, this is a long category Jesus spoke a whole lot about, and this is what He’s saying. He goes, when you see the beauty of Christ, that He genuinely is the cornerstone of life, what happens is it breaks your heart. It humbles you. It causes you to say, “I can’t trust in myself anymore.”

And suddenly, it produces repentance and faith, where we come to Him, and then all of a sudden we live just as He was, humble, riding on a donkey. All of a sudden, we start looking around going, “How could I ever be proud of myself?” And so we become spiritually broken, spiritually humbled. But in becoming spiritually broken and humbled, we have life. And so the very stone that we look at that breaks our heart is the one that saves us. The other option is this, is for us to reject Him forever, and that stone is going to fall on you, and going to crush you forever. He is the dividing line in every one of our lives for eternity. And so I urge you today, put your trust in Christ. Call out to Him in faith, say, “I believe I need you. Would you save me?” And He will.

Third, and finally, is “Jesus alone can connect us and give us a worthy purpose”. When we come to Christ, we come with dead hearts and He makes those alive. He calls this new birth. Being born again. But it’s interesting, He doesn’t simply leave us in isolation. It says in verse 4 and 5, it says that He connects us together to one another to become a spiritual house. In other words, this is His plan. He’s the master builder. He’s creating a people. What you don’t see in our life is every one of us don’t have a different cornerstone called Christ. There’s one. Our life, your life is never supposed to be looking like there’s a cornerstone. And I have one stone stacked on top of it in isolation of all the rest of the people who call upon Him in faith. There’s one cornerstone, and He brings all these stones together, fits them together so that we have a community of people in order to eliminate loneliness in our life.

And then, now that we're a people, He gives us a purpose. And that's what verse 9 is all about, when He says, "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." One day, we're going to learn that the central activity that was supposed to be a part of every day of our life, whether we were at work, whether we were resting, whether we were eating, whether we were parenting, whether we were... It doesn't matter what we were doing. Your life and my life was built to proclaim the excellencies of the excellent one. And any other investment of your life is a compromise of your purpose.

And so let me give you two applications, and then we're going to take the Lord's Supper. First, let's meaningfully connect to the church. I know many of you are, so this should simply be an echo of God's instruction in your life. But some of us, you stay in church long enough, and you'll find that church is a mess. And it really shouldn't surprise us very much, because Satan hates the church, the world doesn't understand the church, and the Christians inside of it mistreat the church. So why in the world would you ever want to be a part of something like that? It's because God says the church is where you find God's family on the earth. The Apostle Paul says it this way. "You are members of the household of God... Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone." And so, are you meaningfully connected?

Second, last application, is let's declare the excellencies of Christ. To find a way to bless people, so that we can tell them excellent things about the excellent one. That's what we want to do every day, and that's what we want to do intentionally even this week and next weekend. We've set aside a few days here at Providence next weekend, December 8, 9, and 10, in order to be intentional, to be thinking about, "Okay, on these days, I'm going to try to bless somebody."

Let me just say something. I know that the designation of days is arbitrary, and it's not intended to be a restriction. It's intended to be intentional. And so live in the freedom that you have. If those three days, they stink for you, bless someone on another day, okay? If you're out of town, or you go, "I can't participate." Just find a way, every one of us. It could happen today, okay? And if you need some ideas of some things that maybe you could do, maybe for a neighbor, or a friend, or a co-worker, we would love for you to go to [pray.org/bless-weekend](http://pray.org/bless-weekend), and simply look at those over and see. But who is it that you could bless? Who is it that you could share with? Who is it that you could invite here on Christmas Eve?

And that leads us to the last thing we want to do, and that's to take the Lord's Supper. And to do that, let me encourage you to consider what it cost to lay this foundation, this cornerstone. The Father had to send His Son as a propitiation, and the Son had to be willing to be crucified. And Jesus was willing. He allowed His body to be broken, His blood to be spilled so that an invitation could be given. And for those of us who have put our trust in Him, He's given us a way called the Lord's Supper to be able to remember and proclaim those things. But there's a strong warning the New Testament gives when we do this. And so we're not supposed to do this haphazardly. It actually says there's a possibility that we could do this in a way that we actually eat and drink judgment upon ourselves. So we definitely want to avoid that. So let me tell you how to avoid that. There's two ways.

One way that you can eat judgment upon yourself is to try to deceive other people in telling one another that, “This is important to me” when it’s not. What that means is, is that if you’ve never put your faith in Jesus Christ, His life and His blood, which is the reality behind these symbols, then the Bible tells me to tell you not to take it, for to take it is to tell other people that you treasure Christ. And so it’s totally fine for you not to take it. Maybe just sit and think about what you’ve heard. Or better yet, call out to Him in faith and trust Him.

There’s another way for us to eat judgment upon ourselves, and that is for us to be a believer in Jesus Christ, but to be in a season of life when we are in unrepentant sin. Which means we know we’re sinning, we know God is grieved, but we’re not going to leave it because I keep wanting to do it. Another way to say it would be if you woke up from a whole night of sin, and you came to church, and there’s no grief in your heart, and there’s every intention to return to that sin when we leave this room, I would encourage you not to take it. Because to take it is to say, “I believe in the integrity of the lines of the cornerstone that’s going to run up, and it’s supposed to affect the integrity of my own life of faith and love.” And so we never want to take it unless we’ve first confessed our sins. So let me give you a moment right now of quiet. You pray to the Lord, you talk to Him, and confess your sins to Him.

Father, thank you for sending Jesus. I thank you for giving us a promise that if we confess our sins to you, that you’re faithful and just to forgive us of all of our sin. We thank you for that promise, and we stand upon it now. Thank you for the hope that it gives. And we pray this in Christ’s name. So, on the night that Jesus was betrayed, He took bread, He broke it, and He gave thanks. And He was saying that it was symbolic of His body, that it would be broken for us. So if you enjoy a relationship with God, and you’re standing on a foundation, a real cornerstone of Jesus, and you know it’s only because of Christ and His willingness to give His life for you, then take and eat in remembrance of Him.

Then Jesus took a cup, and in that cup was some kind of wine or looked just like blood, and then He talked about His body being broken. He talked about His blood was going to be spilled, and that blood wouldn’t be wasted on the ground, it would build a new covenant. It would begin a new covenant, a new work. That new work would be to build a new people, people who are marked by forgiveness. Our sins will be removed from us. And so if you know the joy and the peace of a clear conscience that your sins are forgiven, and you know it’s because of Christ, then take and drink in remembrance of Him.

Father, thank you for sending Jesus. And Jesus, thank you for your willingness to come, to lay your life down in order to set that cornerstone upon which we can build and live our life. There’s no other name like your name. There’s no one else like you. And so Jesus, we praise you for who you are, and we praise you that who you are is personally beneficial to all who put the trust in you, including us. So help us now to sing, with a full heart, as an expression of faith of the things we’ve heard. We pray all of this in Christ’s name. Amen. Would you stand? Let’s sing.



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