

**Romans**  
**Human Responsibility (Part 2)**  
**Romans 9:30 – 10:21**  
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*Tom Pennington, Pastor-Teacher*  
*Countryside Bible Church, Southlake, Texas*

Scripture presents countless word pictures of our Lord Jesus Christ. You can think, even as I say that, maybe your favorite. But there are word pictures like, “The Alpha and the Omega, The Bread of Life, The Water of Life, The Light of the World, The Rock, The True Vine,” from which we gain the strength and health in life we need, “The Way, The Truth, and The Life,” and on and on it goes. But this morning, we come to what I think is one of the most beautiful, most profound, most powerful word pictures of who Jesus Christ is to us that is found anywhere in Scripture.

Just to remind you of the context because it’s been a couple of weeks since we’ve been in Romans, here in Romans 9, Paul is considering the question of why so few Jewish people have believed in their Messiah. This was important because someone could say, “Listen Paul, if the gospel you preach that the Messiah has come, that He has brought an end to sin by the sacrifice of Himself is true, then why have so few Jewish people believed? Maybe your message is wrong or maybe God is not keeping His promises to His Old Testament people.” This was a big issue because, frankly, if God wasn’t faithful to them, how do we know He will be faithful to us? How do we know Romans 8 is true for us if God changed His mind about the Jewish people? And so this is important.

Now Paul's first answer to this question of why so few Jewish people have believed is the answer of “Divine Election.” We studied it at length; it begins in chapter 9, verse 6, and runs down to verse 29. We learned here that, from the very beginning, God never intended to save every physical descendent of Abraham--that was never His plan. God chose Abraham and not his contemporaries. God chose Isaac and not Ishmael, and God chose Jacob and not Esau, and so it goes throughout human history. But election is not the only answer to this question.

Paul's second answer, as we’re discovering here, is “Human Responsibility.” When people don't believe in Jesus and His gospel, they are personally responsible for that unbelief. Now we’re

looking then at the primary factors that contribute to the Jewish responsibility for not believing the gospel, that's the context. But as I told you, we're kind of stepping back from that and reminding ourselves this is true not merely of the Jewish people who haven't believed, but of Gentiles who hear the gospel and don't believe either. So with that in mind, we're looking at those primary factors; we're studying just the first factor and it's this. It comes from a failure to understand the clear purpose of God's Law. This is what he explains at the end of chapter 9, verses 30 through 33.

In this brief paragraph, Paul is struck by the fact that two very unlikely outcomes have actually happened. Outcome number one, the Gentiles who were not pursuing being right with God have attained it; that's verse 30. And the Jews, who made it their life's ambition to pursue righteousness, completely failed to arrive at that destination, verse 31. And that is true for two reasons, verses 32 and 33. So let me just remind you of what we've seen so far as he unpacks this failure to understand the clear purpose of God's Law.

He, first of all, makes the point that many Gentiles have gained righteousness, a right standing before God, apart from keeping God's Law. Verse 30, "What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith." This happened to many of us; maybe you were living your life, maybe you were living out your fallenness, you were pursuing sin, you had no interest in God, no interest in pursuing God; you were just enjoying life as fallen people do. And then you heard the gospel; you heard the gospel and God Himself, through the work of His Spirit and His Word, called you to Himself and you believed. And suddenly you, who weren't seeking a right standing before God; boom, in a moment you have it! That's what he says.

Secondly, he makes the point that no Jews have gained righteousness through the law. Not one, except of course our Lord Jesus Christ, has ever demonstrated perfect obedience to the law, and in so doing, gained a right standing before God by his obedience. That's just a fact, and he says that in verse 31, "Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at *that* law." I told you last time that the picture of that word 'arrive' is someone who's running a race and who is desperately straining every muscle, making every conceivable effort to reach the finish line, but

never arriving. The Jews never arrived at the goal of a right standing before God based on their obedience to God's Law. That is simply a fact, that's what Paul says. But why is that true?

Well in verses 32 and 33, he gives us two reasons. We looked last time at the first reason. The first reason they didn't arrive at a right standing before God was because they stumbled over the means. They misunderstood the means by which we are made right with God. Look at verse 32, "Because *they did not pursue it* by faith, but as though it were by works." Now Paul's point here is that the Jewish people, as a group, obviously not all Jewish people. There are some of you here who are Jewish in your background and you believed in the Messiah; you've come to embrace the gospel. But as a group, he says, and Paul can say this as a Jewish person, he says, "They missed the whole point of the Old Testament Scripture." The point of the law wasn't to earn our way into God's favor; rather, it was to show us our sin and our utter lack of righteousness and then to drive us to the Messiah as our only hope of real righteousness.

It was to say, "Here's the standard, you're never going to meet it; you better look somewhere else; and then we turn and we see one who kept it for us, the Lord Jesus Christ, and who died for our breaking of it." That was the point, but they missed it entirely; they didn't understand what Paul teaches us in Galatians 3 about the law. They thought that to gain a right standing before God, all they needed to do was just try harder to keep God's Law and they could earn their way into heaven. They missed the clear biblical fact that you can only be justified by faith alone in the work of Christ alone.

Do you remember back in Romans 4, Paul gave us Old Testament examples. He said, "Look at Abraham, look at David; this is how they were made right with God." So it was just a total misunderstanding; they stumbled over the means by which we are made right with God. They thought it was their works rather than the work of the Messiah.

Now today, we come to a second reason that they never arrived at the goal, and it's a second reason that many today, who have some connection to the God of the Bible, never truly

experience salvation. The second reason is they stumbled over the Messiah; they stumbled over the Messiah.

We could sort of summarize the two reasons that people don't arrive at the destination of righteousness; that is a right standing before God. We could summarize it this way; in many cases, they take the wrong route. They're on the wrong road! They're pursuing a right standing based on their own works rather than faith in Christ's finished work. And the second reason, the one we're looking at today, is they stumble over the Cornerstone.

Now, in this text, we're going to look at, there's a stone and this stone, in verses 32 and 33, is a person; He is the Messiah. This is clear. You'll notice verse 33, it says "...BELIEVE(S) IN HIM." We're talking of this stone as a person; and if you go to chapter 10, verse 11, Paul quotes this same passage again, "The Scripture says, 'WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.'" And if you look at the verses right before that, he's talking about Jesus. So the stone that we're talking about, in these verses, is no one else but the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.

So let's look at what Paul says about Jesus as the stone here in these verses just for a few minutes together. Let's read it together, look at the middle of verse 32:

They stumbled over the stumbling stone, just as it is written,

"BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND  
A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM  
WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

Now this idea of Christ as a stone is one of the most powerful and profound pictures in Scripture and it appears in both Testaments. I won't show you every passage, but let me give you a little list of them. First of all in the Old Testament, sort of the one of the leading passages is Psalm 118, verse 22. There we read: "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief

corner *stone*. “That passage is applied, as we’ll see a moment, in the New Testament, to Christ. The stone, which the builders rejected, has become the chief cornerstone.

Then in Isaiah, chapter 8, and in Isaiah, chapter 28, we see this concept of the stone. I’m going to skip those for now because we’re to come back to them in just a moment. In Daniel, chapter 2, verses 34 and 35, and 44 and 45, you remember there's that dream that Nebuchadnezzar has of the image of all the empires of the world. And then he sees cut out of a mountain without hands, this massive stone, and the stone hurls at that statue, representing the kingdoms of this world, and it crushes it to powder and the wind blows the powder away. That Stone is the Messiah who will destroy the kingdoms of man and establish His own kingdom, the Stone.

You come to the New Testament and you see the same idea. In fact, Jesus, in Matthew 21, verses 42 to 44, He quotes Psalm 118:22 and claims it for Himself. He says that “STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED,” that God has made the cornerstone; “That's Me; that's Me!” So it's not surprising then when you come to the preaching of the apostles in the early chapters of Acts, you see this same theme. Go to Acts, chapter 4; look at Acts, chapter 4, verse 10. “Peter,” verse 8, this is Acts 4, verse 8:

Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers and elders of the people, (Now don't miss that; he's talking to the leaders of the nation, verse 10.) Let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ (Christ is not Jesus’s second name. That's, remember, it's the Greek word ‘Christos’ which is the Greek equivalent to the Old Testament ‘Messiah.’ What he’s saying here to the leaders of the nation is, Jesus Messiah,) the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead--by this *name* this man stands before you in good health. (Verse 11,) He is the STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED by you, THE BUILDERS, but WHICH BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone.

Can you imagine the audacity of the apostle Peter standing before the leaders of the nation and saying, “Jesus is the Stone, and you’re the builders who rejected Him, but God has made Him the Cornerstone.”

He goes on to say in verse 12, because He's the cornerstone, because God's made him that, “there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.” Let me just say, if you’re here this morning and you're not in Jesus Christ, you're not a follower of Jesus Christ, the fact that God has made Christ the cornerstone means this, there is no hope for you outside of Jesus Christ; it's the only way you can be made right with God. He is the only way you can be made right with God.

So then when you come to the Apostle Paul's letters through the rest of the New Testament, the same theme occurs. In 1 Corinthians, chapter 3, verse 11, “no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus (Messiah.)” Ephesians 2:20, Messiah “Jesus Himself (is the chief) corner *stone*.”

When you come to Peter's first letter, in fact turn there with me, 1 Peter, chapter 2, in this text, Peter borrows from three Old Testament passages about Jesus as the Stone and pulls them together. He quotes from Psalm 118; he quotes from Isaiah 8, and Isaiah 28. But notice what he says, 1 Peter 2, verse 4:

(We have, those of us who have believed, have come to Jesus) as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, (and) you also, as living stones, are...built up (together) as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood.

In other words, he’s saying, “Believers are like a temple; Jesus is the corner stone, and the rest of us are like other stones in that great temple made to worship God.” And then he says, verse 7, “This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but,” (I'm sorry, go back to verse 6; I don't want to skip verse 6.)

For this is contained in Scripture:

“BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER *stone*, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.”

This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve,

“THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER *stone*,”

and,

“A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE”;

for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, (That is they’re disobedient to the gospel.) and to this doom they were also appointed.”

That is to the doom that comes to those who refuse to believe and who disobey the Word; that's what's been appointed.

Now with all that in mind, go back to Roman, chapter 9. Back in Romans 9, Paul is making one basic point; and that is that rather than put their faith in the stone and build their lives on it, Israel, as a whole, stumbled over the Stone. Notice verse 32, “They stumbled.” The Greek word literally means ‘to make contact with something in a bruising or violent manner, to beat against something or to stumble over something.’ This isn't like a little toe stub; this is a violent stumble that practically takes your life. Used figuratively, it means ‘to take offense at, to feel repugnance for or to reject.’

You say, “What's the relationship between stumbling and being offended?” Look, we all understand this. Maybe you’ve had an occasion as I have, to be walking in a public, maybe even a special sort of dignified occasion, and you're walking along trying to put on your best, you know, set of dignity and class, and suddenly you stumble. And you stumble pretty significantly;

you trip over something, and, you know, you look like you're about to fall to the ground and all sense of dignity is gone. What is the first thing we all do? What do you do when that happens? You look back! You look back at what tripped you, and you do so with this terribly angry offensive look like, "How dare you be so audacious as to trip me? It's your fault!"

You see how stumbling and taking offense go together, that's the idea here. When something trips us, we are offended by it. Verse 32 says, "They stumbled over," they tripped over and were offended by the stumbling stone.

Now Paul is borrowing that image from the Old Testament, notice verse 33, "Just as it is written." And then what follows are two Old Testament texts. Paul takes two passages from Isaiah and combines them into this verse. He combines Isaiah 8, verse 14, and Isaiah 28, verse 16. The first and last parts of verse 23 come from Isaiah 28; the middle part of verse 33 comes from Isaiah 8. So he kind of sandwiches it all together.

Let's go back and look at these texts in their context. Go back to Isaiah and let's start at chapter 28; Isaiah 28 and verse 16:

Therefore thus says the Lord GOD,

Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone,  
A costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed.  
He who believes in it will not be disturbed.

Now let me give you the context of this verse. Here it's addressed to the false hope of the southern kingdom, Judah, the false hope that they had placed in Egypt. They were being faced with a military threat from the Assyrians; and rather than putting their trust in God, they ran to Egypt as they so often did and said, "Let's make an alliance with Egypt and they'll protect us from the Assyrians." And that was a false hope; and so here in this verse, God tells them,



“Listen, there is a much more secure foundation for your hope than Egypt. It’s the Messiah who’s coming.”

Now notice what he says in verse 16, “I am laying (God Himself is putting this stone into place in a particular location) in Zion (that is, not in a physical place, but among the people of God.) a stone, (And then he says this, notice how he describes the stone; it is) a tested stone, A costly cornerstone for the foundation.”

Now, a tested stone in Hebrew is literally “a stone of testing.” Now that's important because when you understand that, it can mean two different things. A stone of testing may mean that the cornerstone itself has been tested and approved to function as a cornerstone. That's how the NAS translators take it. More likely it's the second idea, a stone of testing means the cornerstone is that against which everything else is tested. That's what cornerstone does; that makes perfect sense. It is the stone that tests everything else, that's the idea. That was the function of a cornerstone.

You see, cornerstones were absolutely crucial in building ancient buildings of importance and significance. You know, today, there might be a cornerstone in a building and it’s ornamental; it’s ceremonial. Maybe there's a little stone that has the date the building was built or in some cases it's hollowed out, and they'll put some memorabilia inside the cornerstone that represents what was going on at the time the building was built and so forth.

But in the ancient world, it wasn't like that. Cornerstones were crucial to the structure of the building itself. In fact, they were often huge! In fact, the cornerstone and the foundation stones of Herod's Temple, some of you have been there and you’ve seen them, those of you who are going with us this November, you'll see them. You can go down beneath an area of the temple there and you can see some of those original foundation stones, and some of them are as large as a railroad boxcar; they’re mammoth! And here's how it worked, if you needed to build a building, you started with a cornerstone.

So at the quarry where the stones were being cut and brought to the building site, there at the quarry, the best and brightest craftsmen were selected, and the cornerstone, then, was painstakingly and carefully prepared and squared; it may be huge, but it's carefully squared. In many cases even in the ancient world down to the fraction of an inch square, then that carefully prepared cornerstone was transported to the building site and with a lot of pomp and ceremony. Usually the city fathers were there and other important officials; it was placed into position there at the corner of that building, and it was put into place in a carefully plot of prepared ground. And once it was put in place, it simply couldn't be moved except with an army of men.

Now once the cornerstone was laid, the rest of the foundation stones were laid, but here's the key, the rest of those foundation stones were all squared and queued to that cornerstone. It became the measure of everything in the building. Then once the foundation was completely laid, then they would begin to erect stones on the foundation, and those stones were, in turn, squared to the foundation stones.

But Paul also quotes from Isaiah, chapter 8; go back there with me. Isaiah, chapter 8, notice verse 13:

It is the LORD of hosts whom you should regard as holy.

And He shall be your fear,

And He shall be your dread.

“Then He shall become a sanctuary;

But to both houses of Israel, (Now notice the comparison here. He's going to be a sanctuary for some, a place of refuge and safety; and for others in) both houses of Israel, (both the north and south, he will be) a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over, *And* a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

“Many will stumble over them,

Then they will fall and be broken;

They will even be snared and caught.”

Now what's going on here? Again, the context is another occasion where Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel, was being threatened militarily. And you know some things never change; it

was Syria and the northern kingdom, the northern tribes of Israel; there was a military federation of Syria and the northern tribes; and once again, the people were fearful, and they were looking at some other alternative, and God says to them, “Don't be afraid.” He says, “I will be a refuge; I will be a sanctuary for all who trust in me, and I will be a stumbling stone and a rock of offense to everyone else.” Now notice here in chapter 8 that the Stone is God Himself. The fact that the New Testament attributes this passage to Jesus is just another evidence of His deity.

Now, with that background, go back to Romans, chapter 9; Romans, chapter 9, verse 33. “Just as it is written, (And here's Isaiah 28.), BEHOLD I LAY IN ZION (And here's Isaiah 8.) A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE.” You see that valuable cornerstone, that God himself had laid among His people, became a source of stumbling and literally a rock of scandal. The Greek word is ‘skandalon’ from which we get the English word ‘scandal’ or ‘scandalized.’ So what's Paul saying here? He's answering the question, “Why haven't more Jews believed?”

And his answer to that is because Scripture itself, Isaiah tells us, that most of the people of Israel would stumble over their Messiah and reject Him! Why? Well, we're not told here, and I'm not going to take you there, but you remember the passage in 1 Corinthians, chapter 1, verse 23, where it says, that the cross, the message of the cross is “a stumbling block” to the Jews. The Greek word ‘skandalon’ again, it's a scandal; it's a scandal to the Jews that they trip over, they can't deal with! Why?

Because the concept of a crucified, dying Messiah, cursed on a tree, was unthinkable. It's the scandal of the cross, and that's exactly what Paul says in Galatians 5, verse 11, the cross is a ‘skandalon,’ a scandal, a scandalous idea that the Messiah, that God Himself, a crucified God-- what a scandal! And we just can't go there.

Why did the Jews, and let's make it more contemporary, why do so many religious people today still stumble, not over the concept of a ‘Jesus of their own making,’ many are comfortable with that, but over the biblical Jesus? Why do they stumble over that? Because if you rely on your own works as the means to be right with God, you'll never embrace Christ and His gospel of grace. If you think you can save yourself, you will never embrace the One who came to save

you. And in the end, if you reject God's only way, the stone He placed, if you stumble over that stone and reject Him, then you will bear, and this is Paul's point here in this context, you will bear the full and complete responsibility for it and no one else. On the other hand, and I love this, look at verse 33, "HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

Now Paul returns to Isaiah 28. He comes back to the other verse, and he quotes it here at the end of verse 33. The Greek word translated 'disappointed' means 'to be dishonored, disgraced or put to shame.' It's the shame and disappointment that come with being aware of the fact that your hope, your confidence, was misplaced, and it's not going to save you, it's not going to help you.

Perhaps you read the story a few months ago about those poor children in Mexico whose cancer was treated with fake chemotherapy. Here's what a government official, a Mexican government official, said, "We have results from a laboratory that pointed out that the chemotherapy that was given to the children was not really a drug but an inert compound; it was practically distilled water." Now, that is truly tragic! Those families believed that those drugs were real and that they were really helping their children, and yet sadly, several of those children died. Those parents were tragically disappointed because of where they had placed their hope.

But come back to Romans 9, verse 33. God promises, listen, if you're a follower of Jesus Christ, if you have repented of your sins, and put your faith in His life and death and resurrection as your only hope of being right with Him, God promises you that that one who puts his trust in Christ, the Cornerstone, will never be disappointed, never be put to shame, never be disgraced.

So what are the implications of this amazing picture of our Lord and of this passage? For the next few minutes as we prepare our hearts for the Lord's Table, let me just draw out several implications.

Implication number one, many still stumble over and are offended by Jesus Christ. It still happens today just like it did in the first century. Why? For the same reasons; His claims to be God offend many people's reason. "Ah, I don't know about that, I mean really God came and became man?" His sinlessness offends their guilt. The idea of One who is perfectly holy; it

offended the people in the first century, and it still offends people today because it just highlights their own guilt. His exclusive claims, and this is a big one in our day, His exclusive claims, “I am the way the truth and the life. No man comes to the father but by me.” Those offend our general cultural disposition toward inclusiveness. His death, and this is the key one, His death on the cross as our only hope of salvation--that offends the pride of many people. One author put it this way, “The fact that Christ died for our sins is proof positive that we cannot save ourselves. But to make this humbling confession is an intolerable offense to our pride. So instead of humbling ourselves, we stumble over the stumbling Stone.”

A second implication of this passage is that nothing in life or in death is more important than your response to Jesus Christ. God placed Him permanently and finally as the one and only Cornerstone! That means He is central! Your relationship to God rests entirely on your attitude toward and response to Jesus Christ and what He has done. He is the Cornerstone!

Many people, particularly in North Texas, love to speak about God, you know, it's still popular to have some sort of spirituality and talk about, you know, your relationship to God, and you know, “I believe in God, I have a relationship with God.” They talk about living a good life; doing the best they can, trying to help others, trying to be generous, and help, you know, with compassion and endeavors, being a spiritual person. Listen, all of that is fine and good, but let me just be very frank with you; all of that is meaningless if you don't have a relationship with the Cornerstone, if you don't believe in Jesus Christ as Lord.

As Lloyd-Jones put it, “The Lord Jesus Christ Himself, His life, His teaching, but especially His death upon the cross and His resurrection and ascension, are the foundation, the only foundation whereon man can be right with God and righteous in His sight.” If you're here this morning and you're not in Christ, let me just tell you, “There is no other way. He is the Cornerstone that God has laid, and you must respond to Him.”

And that brings me to number three. A third implication, there are only two possible responses to Jesus. Look at verse 33, you either believe in Him; that is, you put your complete trust in Him and build on Him as the foundation of your life, if I could kind of continue the image, rather than

stumbling over Him, you cast yourself entirely on Him as your only refuge, your only hope, and then you build your life on Him! Or, you reject Him either in antagonism or apathy. And make no mistake; both of those are rejection.

You see, the only other response to the Cornerstone than to believe in Him, is to trip over Him and fall to your own destruction. In fact, Jesus put it this way. I mentioned this verse earlier, Matthew 21, verses 42 to 44, “Jesus said to them, ‘Did you never read in the Scriptures?’” Ouch! You know, these are religious people. Didn’t you ever read this?

‘THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED,  
THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER *stone*;  
THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD,  
AND IT’S MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES’?

Jesus said, “You know that passage in Psalm 118 about the builders rejecting the Stone and His becoming Cornerstone? It’s me!” That’s what Jesus says. And then He adds this, “he who falls on the stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.”

What’s Jesus saying? He’s saying, “If you fall on this Stone, if you stumble over Jesus and reject Him, the Stone is going to be completely unaffected, but you’re going to be crushed, you’re going to be shattered, broken in pieces.” And someday at the final judgment, Christ will be like a Stone that crushes all who reject Him.

You see, it’s like this, whether pottery falls on a stone or whether the stone falls in the pottery, the result is the same. Whether you deliberately reject Jesus Christ in this life and stumble over Him and say, “No, no Jesus for me!” Or, whether you just ignore him and live in apathy and indifference, someday the Stone falls. The results will be the same. Jesus Christ, let me put it this way, Jesus Christ is either the Cornerstone on which you have cast yourself and your eternity

and on which you are building your life, or He will be the rock that crushes you. Those are the only two options.

Number four, true faith in Jesus Christ means He has become the Cornerstone of your life; He has become the Cornerstone of your life. If you're a Christian, it means your life is built on Him, and it means that you have an earnest desire that everything about your life be shaped and measured against Him. You want to think like He wants you to think. You want to speak like He wants you to speak. You want to work like He would be pleased with your work. You want to direct your family in a way that squares with what He wants. You want to live generally in a way that is consistently squared to Jesus Christ because that's what it means to be Christian. He is your Cornerstone.

Number five, and I love this one. No one who believes in Jesus will be disappointed, dishonored, or ashamed at the judgment. You know, maybe you have repented of your sins, maybe you have put your faith in Jesus Christ, in His life, His death, His resurrection as your only hope of being right with God. Maybe it's your heart's desire to please Him and to live for Him, but you don't fully understand the fullness of the gospel yet, and you still live in the spirit of fear about what comes after death and what it's going to be like when you stand before God at the judgment. Look at verse 33, here's God's promise, "HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM (The Cornerstone) WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." If your life is built on the Cornerstone, it will stand the judgment. You will not be disappointed; you will not be disgraced; you will not be put to shame. Jesus Christ, your Lord, simply will not let it happen, and God the Father will not let it happen.

I love the way Jude finishes his little letter. He says:

Now to Him (That is the Father.) who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our

Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

If your faith is in Jesus Christ, the Cornerstone, you will never be disappointed.

Let's pray together. Our Father, we have already, earlier in the service, confessed our sins to you, individually, personally. We have judged our sins before you; we have said about our sins in our prayer what you say about our sins, and we have sought your forgiveness. Father, we thank you that you are faithful and righteous to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And we thank you that, now as we turn to the Lord's Table, we can do so with clean hands and pure hearts, and we can remember that our lives are built on the Cornerstone and He is a refuge for our souls, the only refuge because of His substitutionary death in our place.

Father, receive the worship we bring. Our trust is not in ourselves, and our own works, but solely in Him and His work, and we celebrate that together now. Receive our praise and worship we pray. In Jesus's name, Amen.