



Message **Transcript** Gospel Blueprint

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Thank you so much for choosing to worship with us this morning. Would you please help me welcome our Broomfield Campus who's worshipping along with us? So great to have you. And as a reminder to both campuses, as you know, next week being resurrection Sunday, it will be packed in all of our services. So I'll just tell you a couple things. Number one, be praying for all those who are coming, as they hear of the gospel, that many would respond and give their lives to Jesus Christ. Secondly, is this, make room for our visitors. If that means that there's visitors and you need to be an overflow seating or something like that, make that available, come early, parking will be a premium, and just encourage you come prayed up and expectant for all God is going to do. For us, it's like the Super Bowl Sunday of services that we have every year, but I got news for you. We got lots of stuff to talk about today too, and we're going to have a great time celebrating Jesus.

So with that, would you pray with me this morning? Lord Jesus, we give you all the glory, honor, and praise for who you are. Lord, we just celebrate the fact that we get to come into your presence, and sing praises to you, and love you, and hear your word, and pray to you, and respond as you lead us. So Lord, thanks for you live in active word, that every time your word is open and faithfully proclaimed that you speak deep to our hearts. Lord do that today. Lord, we ask you to have your way with each one of us, to change us and to mold us in the conformity with the image of our Lord Jesus Christ. And for that in advance God, we give you all glory, honor, and praise. And all God's people agreed by saying, Amen.

If you're going to build a house from the ground up, one of the necessities that

you will need is a blueprint. A blueprint is a tool, a guide, a map. It shows you where everything's going to be. It makes sure that the foundation is set properly, it makes sure that everything in the house gets put in its proper place, it makes sure that the electricity aligns with the plumbing, which aligns with the foundation and everything else that's going on in the house. Builders wouldn't think to just say, "Well, I've done this before. All we need is some lumber. Just throw the refrigerator in. It'll find its way there." You need to have a plan. The gospel of Jesus Christ is so simple and yet it's so profound. In John 3:16, it says, "For God so loved the world so much that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him would not perish but would have eternal life."

It's clear, it's simple, and yet it's so profound. And would you like to know that God has a design for the gospel? There's a purpose behind why God did what he did, and it's more than simply getting sinners out of hell into heaven. That's part of the gospel, that's a benefit of the gospel, but God has a design or a blueprint for the gospel that helps us understand what he wants us to be, not only when we get to heaven but what we need to be in this life. So if you're a person who's trust in Jesus Christ and you're saved, but you ask this question, "I wonder what my purpose is? What's my purpose. What's God want me to do?" If you've ever asked that question, Peter's going to answer that question for you, because God has a design in the gospel for you to discover what his blueprint is, not only for your life but for the lives of all of us collectively.

So with that, I invite you to open up God's word this morning to 1 Peter 2. We're going to be in verses 4 through 10. And as you know, Peter's been telling us that as we come to the gospel, we need to be repenting of our sins and craving his word because of the kindness he's bestowed to us. And now he says this, "And coming to him as to a living stone, which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For this is contained in scripture, behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious cornerstone, and he who believes in him will not be disappointed.

This precious stone then is for those of you who believe. But for those who disbelieve, the stone, which the builders rejected, has become the very cornerstone, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense. For they stumble because they are disobedient to the word and to this doom, they were also appointed, but you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession so that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. For once you are not a people but now you are the people of God, you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy." And in these few verses what Peter is spelling out for us is God's blueprint, his design for the gospel. What do we need to know about God's blueprint?

Because if we see his blueprint, if we get the picture for what he's trying to build, then we'll know how we fit in. And the gospel blueprint tells us this, that the gospel connects believers together for God's purpose. Notice what he says. He says, "And

coming to him..." This word coming to him does not denote when you first give your life to Christ, it's this idea of ongoing fellowship with him. It means once you've repented of your sins, you trust in Christ, you have this ongoing abiding relationship, "As you are continually coming to him," he says, "as like, or as to a living stone, which has been rejected by men but is choice and precious in the sight of God..." It's interesting that Peter is using this word imagery of a stone. He's talking about a building that God is going to build, and it's going to be centered on this living stone. Now, we've already read in this book in chapter 1, where we talked about the living word, and we've talked about the living hope, and now Peter talks about the living stone.

Why living? Let me tell you, Jesus Christ is alive. That's why he can't stop talking about that. And for most of us, when we come to church, we think about Resurrection Sunday as, "Oh yeah, he rose from the dead. That's at one time a year, we remember that little special event." Friends, nobody's ever risen from the dead eternally other than Jesus Christ, right? That's Jesus. He's overcome death, he's risen from the dead, he's our living hope, he's the living word, and now Peter refers to him as the living stone.

Interesting that Peter would use stone imagery. Remember when he was telling Jesus, "You are the Christ, the son of the living God." And he said, "Well, you will be called Peter, which means, the rock, and on this rock, I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against." Do you think that had profound impact on Peter, that he was referred to, as his testimony, as the rock that the church would be build

on?

And now he's saying, "But here's how we're coming. We're coming to the living stone. We're not coming to a..." What God builds with... God doesn't just build with bricks and mortar, God builds with people. Jesus is alive. God builds the church through his son. And notice what he says about the son, "He was rejected by men, but he was choice and precious in the sight of God." This weekend, traditionally in church history is Palm Sunday weekend. If you grew up in a traditional church, maybe you grew up waving palm branches coming into the church, or kids would come down waving palm branches into the church to recognize what it was like that day when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a colt, fulfilling scripture and fulfilling prophecy that the Messiah would come, and everybody was quoting Psalm 118, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

And yet what was happening just days later, these same people that were saying, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord," were the same people that were yelling at the top of their lungs, "Crucify him." He was the stone the builders rejected. The people Jesus came to save were the ones that were telling him, "Get lost." The people he came to save from death were the people that crucified him. He's the living stone, and while he was rejected by men, guess what he was, he was precious in this sight of God. Why? Because he's God's beloved, his one and only son, fully God and fully man for all eternity. That's who he is. Now, notice what it says next, because this is startling. It says, "You also as living stones." Do you get that?

We get that Jesus is a living stone. He's God of God, he's the king of kings, he's

the lord of lords. He put on flesh, but you also are living stones, which means you are what God is using to build what he's building on planet earth. You are the living stones. I'm a living stone, you're a living stone, we all collectively are living stones. Now, why are we living stones? Here's what the Bible says, "Prior to the gospel, you were dead in your transgressions and sin. You were dead. But because of God's grace and his mercy, you've been made alive in Christ for it is by grace you have been saved." When you are saved, you become a living stone, you become part of God's masterpiece, you become part of what God is going to use, which means that every single person who's trust in Jesus Christ is being used in God's spiritual building to build something.

And notice what he says about this. He says, "And you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." Now, that sounds really churchy, doesn't it? I mean, when you read that at face value, it's like, "Oh great, I get to wear a robe, and be a priest, and do good works, and that doesn't very exciting." No, this is what the Bible would call the priesthood of all believers. It means this. It means that every single person who's been saved is being used of God to complete his mission on planet earth. And Peter's using the metaphor of a spiritual building with these living stones. God has brought you into his family, and part of his blueprint and design is to use you and use us collectively for his purpose to get the message out.

It's nothing wrong with asking the question, "What's my purpose?" It's just a selfish question, right? You would have to go back to the designer of the house when you're saying, "Why would they put the refrigerator there? Why didn't they put the

laundry room on this floor? Why did they do it?" You have to go back to the designer and ask, "What were you thinking when you did that?" When you go back to the designer of the church and you ask, "Why did you save people and use them as your purpose?" His answer would be, "Because I bought you with a price, and you're my plan A of getting the message out to the world, and you're the most, most important on the planet, my church in getting done with my purpose. I didn't just save you to get you to heaven, I'm building you into a spiritual house so that I can do good works through you."

You say, "Well, who's that?" Every single one of us. And while we can see it on the authority of God's word, that all of us who are saved are called to that, most of us don't believe that. Most of us believe, "No, that's for that special few that become pastors, or teachers, or go into ministry, or join a para church organization, or do something a little extra with their time when they have more spare time." But for the majority of us, we're saved, we get it, we're good people. No. Everybody's number one plan, by God's design, is to be part of his spiritual house called the church.

Why do you go to church? Because God wants you here. Why are you the church? Because that's what God designed you for. That's where you thrive the most, is in a local church. Now, what does he say? He says, "As a spiritual house..." This is the same thing. I mean, Peter's talking about a spiritual house. Paul does the same thing in 1 Corinthians, where he talks about the body of Christ. He uses the body metaphor to talk about the church as well. But he says in 1 Corinthians 6:19 and 20,

"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the holy spirit? For you're not your own, you have been bought with a price, therefore honor God with your body." Why? Because when you become the living stone, the reason you become alive is because the holy spirit has come to indwell you, the third person of the Trinity, the everlasting God, and he now wants to do a work through you, the living stone, through you, the one who has been bought, through you, who has eternal purpose in the mind of God.

It means every single person who's come to Christ is part of God's spiritual house. To do what? Notice what he says. He says, "For a holy priesthood." Now, when we think holy priesthood, many time we think denominations and we think Roman Catholicism. That's not what he's talking about. The priest were set apart, the priests were cleansed, the priests were anointed, and most importantly, the high priest, guess what he had, he had access to God. Prior to Jesus dying on the cross, no one had direct access to God other than God's one and only son Jesus Christ. But do you do not know that when Jesus breathed his last and died on the cross, that that thick temple curtain ripped, from top to bottom, indicating all who know Christ now may enter because the high priest, once for all, has offered the perfect sacrifice and everyone, anywhere, at any time, that knows Jesus is now a priest who has been cleansed, who has been anointed, who has been covered for service, and now can come directly to God and offer sacrifices to him.

That's who we all are. It's the priesthood of all believers, right? That's the DNA of who we are, every single one. "Well, Pastor Jeff, you don't understand. I mean this week I was totally sinful and I don't know that God would..." No. Let me tell you about

what happened at the cross. At the cross of Jesus Christ all your sins were forgiven.

Amen.

They're all gone, and you have complete access. It's not as if some Christians get a hotline, some Christians get special phone privileges with Jesus, other people get dial up internet service, and other people have to write a snail mail. No, everybody gets the same access because the same blood was shed for every single believer. Amen?

Amen.

So what does it mean to offer up spiritual sacrifices? Because that sounds like hyper spiritual too. Let me give you five spiritual sacrifices that I read about in God's word. And the first is this, the first spiritual sacrifice is the offering of our bodies. Think about Romans chapter 12 in verse 1. Here's what he says. "Therefore, I urge you brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship." Offering your bodies, what does that mean? It means your life. It means my body is a temple of the holy spirit. What I look at, what I eat, how I spend my time, who I spend my time with, how I steward my... My body is not my own, my body belongs to God. That's why in the second verse of Romans chapter 12, it says, "Therefore, do not be conformed any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing your minds to be able to test and approve what God's will is, his good, pleasing, and perfect will."

It means when I come to Christ, God's design is this, "Your life's no longer your own, it's mine. Your body doesn't belong to you, I've giving it to you on lease, it's mine.

I want you to live every moment as if you live for me." When we live our lives in such a way where, "Hey, God, this is yours. I mean, this is your temple. I'll do with it whatever you want me to do. Wherever you tell me to go, I'll go, whatever you tell me to eat, I'll eat, and wherever you tell me to sleep, I'll sleep. My life is yours God." That's a spiritual sacrifice that's honoring to the Lord, right? We're all called to do them. How about a sacrifice of praise? If you turn your Bible over to Hebrews chapter 13, we'll do a few of these right out of there.

Hebrews chapter 13, starting in verse 15. He says, "Through him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God." That is the fruit of lips that give thanks to his name. It's praising God with our lips. His praise will ever be on my lips. It's not enough to come to church and read the words on the screen, it's not enough to read the Bible. I'm like, "Yeah, I know you're good." It's different between reading it, knowing it, and then speaking it, "God, you are worthy, God, you are great, God, you are good, God, thanks for all you've done in my life. I just want to tell you from my heart and with my lips, that you are all that you say you are." It's a sacrifice of praise.

So when we come and we sing in church, we're not singing in church because we're gifted singers, we're not singing in church because we like the music, we're singing in church because we're giving a sacrifice of praise because Jesus Christ laid down his life and we are singing from our hearts, which is different than just talking to somebody. Singing's different than talking. Did you know that? I mean, if you're ever in a meeting this week and you don't believe me, start singing in the meeting, it changes the meeting, right? Singing is from a depth of your heart that says, "You're worthy. I'm

not even good at this, but I'm telling, you're worthy. I'm giving you extra effort to tell you that you're worthy." That's the sacrifice of praise. That's what we're all called to do as a priesthood of believers. How about this? How about a sacrifice of good works.

Verse 16 of Hebrews 13. "And do not neglect doing good." Doing good. Now, we're not saved by good works, but we're saved for good works. Our good works don't get us into heaven, but once we have access to God in Jesus Christ, we want to do good works. Why? So that other people will see them and give praise to our father who is in heaven. Our good works aren't to be noticed so that people will think we're good, our good works are to be noticed so that people say, "Wow, whoever their God is, that's a God that's worth serving," right? It's a sacrifice of good works. Do you see why they call these sacrifices? Because they all get us out of our comfort zone. To tell God that my body's not my own, to tell God, my voice is not my own, to tell God that my good works and what I'm going to spend my time doing, "I was going to do this, but I need to do this because it's a good thing to do," it's all a sacrifice.

All those things bring praise and glory to God. How about a sacrifice of generosity? After he says, "And do not neglect doing good," and what? "Sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased." What's sharing? Sharing is being generous. God, everything I have is yours. I'm just stewarding all that you've given to me. I'm being as lavish and generous to you as I can possibly be. And first and foremost, where that's going to be? Is your church, because that's the holy house that you're building, and that's what you care about the most, and that's what you're getting your purposes done through. So I'm just being as lavish and generous with my resources as I possibly

can to you. That's a sacrifice.

If you don't believe it's a sacrifice, start giving more. You'll believe it is a sacrifice, but there's blessing in every single one of these sacrifices. There's a blessing, and you start doing these and it's not like, "Oh, I got to give to the church, I got to do good works again. I mean God asked..." It's not like that. Why do we do it? Here's the motivation. A dead savior hanging on the cross is the motivation. Because of his death, we've been made alive in Christ, because of his resurrection from the dead, we have life. You're not going to outgive God with your sacrifice. Trust me. I mean, you're not going to do good works and be like, "Hey father, look at me. I mean, compared to Jesus, look at what I just..." I mean, you're never going to do that. Jesus did the greatest work that'll ever be done in human history. We're doing this as service unto the Lord because of all that he's done for us.

And then finally, if you flip back to Roman's chapter 15, I'll give you a final one. I call it a sacrifice of ministry. You could call it a sacrifice of service, but in Roman's chapter 15, in verse 16, Paul was talking and he said, "To be a minister or a servant of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles by ministering or serving as a priest..." There's that word we're talking about. "... the gospel of God so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the holy spirit." What was his offering to the Gentiles? Was the gospel. It's the gospel. One of the sacrifices that we can give is sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with those who don't know him. It's ministering the gospel to those who do know him. It's the gospel. It's that God in Christ was reconciling the world to himself. That's a sacrifice.

This week, you have a great opportunity because people are the most receptive, at any time during the entire year, the week before Easter, to come to church. Give the sacrifice of ministry, tell other people about Jesus, tell them where they can learn about Jesus. You tell them about Jesus. Bring them to church where they hear about Jesus. Let them grow in Jesus. That's a sacrifice of ministry. Those five things are what priests do. And we're a priest, unto God, to his service because the blood of Jesus Christ declares that that's who we are in his name. And here's God's design, here's his blueprint. Don't miss this. He's died for us and rose from us to bring us into this family as a spiritual priesthood, to connect all of us so that we can be used for his glory.

So if you ever ask a question, "What's my purpose?" Here's your answer. Your best purpose and your highest and best will always be discovered in the local church. You say, "What? I'm a dentist." Hey, let me tell you. That's not your highest and best. That's what you do for a living. That's your missionary clothes that you wear to earn an income to do your highest and best. Your highest and best always takes place in the church. "Wait, but I'm a coach. I..." No. Coach is what you do for a living where you get paid. To be a missionary in the church, your highest and best is in the church, and when you discover your spiritual gifts and start using it, that's when you'll be full. You will never find satisfaction in a job, you will never find satisfaction in a relationship apart from Christ. You will always find satisfaction in Christ and in his church, and you will discover what your highest and best is.

Because some of you are hearing me wrong. Some of you think that means, "Oh, I got to be a pastor. I got to sing on the worship team." It does not. It means that some of you have gifts of encouragement to the body of Christ that God wants you to use, it means some of you have financial resources that God wants you to use, it means some of you have gifts of encouragement that God wants you to use, it means some of you have gifts of leadership in the church that God wants you to use. Everybody's gifted for the church. Your gifts by design were not given so that you could live off to the side and be successful. That's worldly wisdom. Your gifts were given by Christ to serve his spiritual dwelling. That's why we say is a church. We talk about abide, thrive, and multiply.

Abide means to grow in Christ, it means to seek his face, it means to submit to him, to pray, to worship. God and I are growing together. We're growing together. But if I'm going to thrive in my relationship with Christ, I got to be connected to other believers in a group. I've got to be in worship on the weekend. Hey, I've got to be using my gift to serve other people. That's how I thrive. Then when I multiply other believers and show them how I do it, guess what I'm doing, I'm bringing them into the church so I can teach them how to thrive.

We leave out the thrive part so much. We abide with Christ and lead people to Christ and we tell them why we hate the church, and then we lead them to Christ and guess what they do, they abide in Christ and they hate the church too, and then we got generations down the road with all these Christians who are saved that hate the church, and we wonder why our nation is going to hell in a hand basket, it's because

there's no Christians that are thriving together, and the church is not on the forefront, giving the message to the hope that's in the world, which is the righteousness of Christ. Amen?

Amen.

So if you want to thrive in your relationship with Christ, plug into the church. Now you say, "Well, Jeff, you're just saying that because you're a pastor." No, I'm saying that on the authority of God's word. And Brave is a church, it's not the church. You're like, "Well, I don't like your church." Well, then don't come to this one, pick another one and go all in there. Give your best to Christ's church. You're going to give an answer for it someday. That's what he's saying. The gospel connects believers together for God's purpose.

And just so we can talk about connection here, he's not just talking about the people at Brave Church, he's talking about all believers everywhere. It means when you hear about people who have been beheaded for their faith, in the Middle East, because they're living for Jesus, you should mourn over that. It means when you see Muslims that don't know Jesus Christ, you should mourn for that, it means when you see Hindus in India that don't know Jesus Christ, you should mourn for that. You should be coming alongside other brothers and sisters in Christ outside of our local fellowship and caring for them. And yes, I'm not even talking about overseas, I'm talking about the churches right down the street that do things different than we do. You should love them, and encourage them, and build them if they're centered on the foundation of

Jesus Christ. Amen?

That's what the priesthood of all believers is about. We're all on the same team. And what does the enemy always try to do? He always tries to separate us individually from the other believers even within the church. And then outside the church, what does he try to get us to do? "Our church is better than your church. Look at what your church..." I mean, he separates us that way. No, we're to be united. Why? Because Jesus Christ design by the gospel, in his blueprint, was to bring us all together for his purpose, which is discovering our highest and best to serve him and him alone and to build up other believers in Christ. Amen?

Amen.

That's the gospel. The gospel makes us alive. Now, here's the problem of the sacrifice of praise. I mean it costs us something. I mean, I heard the story about the chicken and the pig on the farm that were having a discussion and they decided they should do something for their master and the chicken suggested, "Hey, let's give them a ham and eggs breakfast," to which the pig said, "Hey, you're just giving him an egg, for me, that giving my life," right? We are called to be what? Living sacrifices.

Your life is not your own. You are called to give it all up for Jesus. "No, pastor. That's just the pastor." No, everybody's called to give it all up for Jesus. Here's the question. Are you willing to give your entire life to Jesus Christ? "Pastor Jeff, you missed a point. I've already trusted Christ. I trusted him 10 years ago. I know that I know if I die today, I go to heaven." I'd be like, "Great. Now that you know that you

know that you go to heaven, does Christ have the entirety of your life? Are you willing to go wherever he sends? Are you willing to become whatever he becomes? Or do you live with your little appetites and desires that hinder you from being God's best, that also hurt other people in the body of Christ because you're not giving them their best and that's who you are?" Are you willing to give him everything?

And only an individual can answer that. I mean, all of you can look at me with your face and say, "I'm in." God knows your heart. And here's the litmus test of your heart if you actually do the things he's telling you to do. Anyone who hears these words of mine and puts him into practice is like a man who built his foundation on a rock. The storms came and the winds came and he did not move because his foundation was sure. Is Jesus Christ the foundation of your life? Because here's what I know about the devil and here's what I know about Jesus, both of them try to accelerate you and take you to high places. But the devil will always do it taking you apart from Christ so that when you get there, you have to cling on to that one thing that got you all the success.

It's either your money, your job, your family, your career, that if you ever let go of that to be with Jesus, you'd feel like a failure. But when Jesus elevates you to the high place, he takes you there in such a way that he can take anything away, and you still got Jesus, and you're still as high as you ever were, right? That's the gospel. Jesus Christ called you into fellowship with himself so that you could be used by him for his purposes. Amen?

Amen.

Let me tell you a second thing that the gospel blueprint clarifies. The gospel clarifies the centrality of Christ and the destiny of all people. Now, Peter's going to quote from three places in the old Testament. I'll give you the verses as we go. The first one is from Isaiah chapter 28 in verse 16. Isaiah 28:16. He says this, "These sacrifices that are acceptable to Jesus Christ, for this is contained in scripture..." Here's Isaiah 28. "Behold, I lay in Zion, a choice stone, a precious cornerstone, and he who believes in him will not be disappointed. He who believes in him will not be put to shame." Why? Because Jesus Christ is central to anybody knowing God. That's the whole point. Anybody who's put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ will never be disappointed. Anybody. If you've come in here this weekend and you say, "You know what? I've had a little bit of Jesus and a little bit..." you need to get all in with Jesus.

Nobody that goes all in with Jesus will ever be put to shame, nobody that goes all in with Jesus will ever be disappointed. Jesus calls everybody to go all in with him. Why? Because he's the cornerstone. Now, if you study different scholars, they'll give you different understandings of what cornerstone means. Some people will say, "It's the keystone. It completes an arch. It holds the whole arch together, and the keystone is that one place that gets put in the middle of the arch." Other people will say, "No, it's a capstone on a pyramid. It's the highest place. It's the unique piece. And when Christ comes back, it forms the rest of the pyramid." Some people say, "No, the cornerstone is, just like what he says, it's the cornerstone. It's the end stone on which all the apostles and prophets built their ministry."

Hey, whichever way you want to go, I'm cool with it. Here's what it means. Jesus

Christ is the most important stone in the building. Amen? There no other stone that matters. Take out Jesus and the whole building falls apart. You need Jesus Christ. That's why when you come to church, you need to hear somebody that opens the Bible and preaches Jesus Christ because if Jesus Christ is not being heralded, there is no hope for what is being said. And some of you that come in here today and you're looking for healing in your marriage, or you're looking for hope in your finances, or healing in your physical bodies, and you're like, "What can you tell me to give me all that?" I don't know what God would do with all those things, but I do know this, that if you have your faith and hope firmly rested on the bedrock of Jesus Christ, regardless of circumstances, you will never be disappointed, you will never be put to shame. Not only in this life, but also in the life to come.

It's Jesus Christ and him alone. He is the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the father except through him. That's why Jesus said, "What does it profit a man to gain the entire world and yet forfeit his soul?" Have you ever thought about that scripture? I mean the older I get, the more and more I think about it. I mean, what if God granted you, just say, 150 years and you never age? And during that time he said, "And I'll give you all the money you ever want, and you can buy whatever you want, and you can live wherever you want, and you can do whatever you want, and every relationship you have will prosper, and everything you do will prosper, and everybody will say you're awesome for that 150 years, but you're going to do it apart from Christ, and when you die, you're going to spend eternity in a crisis place called hell."?

Jesus would say, "What good is that?" And here's the reality, nobody's living 150 years and nobody's going to have a perfect life even apart from Jesus. So why not give your life to Jesus to make sure you'll never be put to shame. In Christ and in Christ alone, we have life, and have life in his name. Apart from Christ, there is no life. You can be super religious, you can come to church every single weekend, you can follow the Bible, so to speak, and do good works, and still not have a relationship with Christ.

Jesus Christ is the cornerstone. He's chief, he's central, he's the visible one, right? That's what Isaiah was prophesying and Peter says, "It has been fulfilled in Jesus." Then he is going to quote Psalm 118 verse 22. He says, "This precious value then is for you who believe." But for those who disbelieve, what does he say? "The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the very cornerstone," right? We've already talked about this, that Jesus Christ, the very one who came to save his own people, was the very one that was rejected by his own people, which has now become the chief place, the cornerstone. And then he quotes Isaiah 8 in verse 14, "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. For they stumble because they are disobedient to the word and to this doom, they were also appointed." So this rock that Jesus is, not only has the power to save and be central in a person's life, but it can also cause stumbling in those who disbelieve who he is. Why?

Paul says it very clearly in 1 Corinthians 1:18. He says, "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God." For those of us who believe, we would say, "It's God's power. I wouldn't trade this for the world." But to those who don't believe they would say, "This

is foolish. This is rubbish. Who could believe this stuff?" But notice what he goes on to say in verse 22 and 23 of chapter 1 of 1 Corinthians, "For indeed Jews ask for a sign and Greek search for wisdom." Jews were looking for a sign. Jews were saying this, "Just give us a sign. That'll be enough. I mean, we should see some miracle, that'll be enough."

Do you know how many signs did you saw? I mean, when Jesus was born, there's a star right over where he was. I mean, what Jesus did is earthly ministry. People were seeing that didn't even have eyes. I mean, people were being raised from the dead, 5,000 people were being able to eat from a sack lunch, Jesus walked on the water. I mean, what more did they want to see? Jesus healed people, paralytics got up and walked, and what were the Jews saying? "Just give us a sign. That'll be enough." It's like the people today, "Just give me a sign, just show me. If God shows up..." God's showing up all over the place, God's as alive as he's ever been, right? That's what the Jews were looking for. That's what they were looking for.

Greek search for wisdom. What were Greeks looking for? "This just needs to make sense to us because we're super smart people. I have five PhDs and I'm so intelligent. I'm more smart than even the smartest person in the whole world. So just give me wisdom." Okay? Really? I mean, this is the God that created the whole universe out of nothing, this is the God that created your life out of nothing. You've ever seen a child born, and they come into the... I mean, how did that get created? I mean, this is the God that gives us life, and takes care of everything, and makes sure you

have enough moisture in your eye every six seconds that you blink so that you can keep seeing. I mean, God is in charge of everything. I mean how much more wisdom do you want?

And yet what did he say about this gospel? "But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews, a stumbling block, and to the Gentiles, foolishness." Hey Jews, you want a sign? Here's your sign. Jesus Christ dying on a cross publicly for your sins. You want a sign? You want to see God at work? Look no further than the cross of Jesus Christ. Amen?

Amen.

You want wisdom? Hey look, no further than the cross, that God in his infinite wisdom, sent his only begotten son to die on the cross for your sins so that you wouldn't have to live in this world anymore but could live with him forever. Wisdom and signs are found in the cross of Jesus Christ. And no matter who you are, you must come that way. But for those who say, "I don't believe that," what does the cross become? It becomes a stumbling block. They stumble over the very one that came to save them. They stumble and fall.

And what does 1 Peter tell us? 1 Peter tells us this, that they stumble because they're disobedient to the word. The word of God came and died and people are disobedient to the word. They say, "We don't believe that. We don't want to believe that. We don't want to submit to that. That's not good enough for us." And to this doom, they were also appointed. What does that mean, "... to this doom, they were

also appointed"? For anyone who doesn't trust Christ, here's your future appointment. Every non-believer can put this on their calendar, and every believer can put this on their calendar. Just don't put it on the date because you're going to be wrong, but here's the truth, Jesus Christ is coming back in all of his glory. For those of you as Christians, put down this on your calendar. Coming King, Messiah, savior, and beloved rescuer. He's coming for you.

Non-believer write this down on your calendar, judge, king, and ruler, who will throw you into hell the very second he sees you. Write that down on your calendar. That's what every non-believers are pointed to. And the fact that they're pointed to it doesn't mean that God chose that for them. Everyone that goes to hell goes to hell on their own volition because they never repented and trusted in Jesus Christ. Amen? The cross is the stumbling block. I even find that, as Christians sometimes, we can share Jesus, and his love, and all this stuff, but the one place we don't like to talk about the gospel is the cross, and the resurrection because it's an offense to people. Without the cross and the resurrection, we have no good news. I have nothing else to tell you about today. I would close this book, walk out the door of this church, and never ever come back if Jesus didn't die on the cross and rise from the dead.

It's the centrality of my message, it's the centrality of our hope, it's in Christ and in him alone. And it clarifies the centrality of Christ and the destiny of all people. Everybody's destiny will be set based upon what they believe about the Lord Jesus Christ. And why is this important? I'll tell you what, because death is just so real. Death doesn't stop working. I got a phone call from my mom yesterday about a friend of hers

that had, had a heart attack and actually was on life support, and actually yesterday they took her off life support, she died. But prior to taking her off life support, her son was in the room.

I hadn't talked to her son in 30 plus years. I mean we were little kids. I mean the last time I probably talked to him is when we were in grade school together. So I pick up the phone and I start talking to him, and I can tell, he's just torn up, and I can also tell that I'm not sure how strong his faith in the Lord is, and I just said, "Hey, can I pray for you?" And just prayed this prayer for him, for his mom, for what was going on. I got done praying, he's like, "Thank you. That was a really nice thing that you just did for me." I mean, it wasn't like "Oh, thanks brother," or anything. But he was devastated. I mean, he didn't know what to do. He was the one that was going to make the decision whether to leave the machine on or not, and I was just praying for his wisdom and what he needed to do, because death is real, and it's painful, and it doesn't matter who it is that's going through it, it's a perversion of everything that God intended, right?

And that's why we need to be careful. We need to read the entire scriptures, and we need to get a picture of who this Jesus Christ is. And we really need to come to grips with that he's central in all of it. And if you take the time and study God's word, you'll see that the whole Old Testament points to Jesus, and the whole New Testament points back to the fulfillment of all that he did, and that he's coming again. And if you read it all, then you get a better picture.

For the most of us, we just see little piecemeal things in the gospel and that's why we never pick up on the fullness of it. I was thinking about this, this week when I

was preparing this message. When I was in 4th grade one time, my teacher passed out a test and here's what she said, "Here's your instructions. Write your name on the top, read through all the questions first before answering, and then turn it back in." That's what we were taught. So I put my name on the top of the paper, I read question number one, and I answered it, and I read question number two, and I answered it. I read question number three, and I answered it, at which time two or three people got up and started turning their tests in. And I'm like, "Wow, they're pretty fast."

And I read question four and answered it. Pretty soon more and more people were turning them in. By the time I got to question 20, most of the people had turned their test in and I read question 20, which said, "Please don't answer any of the questions. Just turn your test in."

[crosstalk 00:38:13].

My teacher had said, "Read all the questions before answering." Now, being the attorney that I am, I said, "I read the questions before I answered." So I was arguing. But the point is, there'll be no arguing with Jesus. He's made it crystal clear that he's the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He gave a sign in all of his wisdom, dying on the cross for your sins, and rising from the dead. And just because you're at Brave Church today, either in Broomfield or Inglewood, does not mean you're a believer. It means right where you're at, you can admit the fact that you're dead in your sins, and you can believe that Jesus died and rose for you, and you can confess him to be your Lord and savior right here now, as you sit, and your eternal destiny will change. Amen?

That's who we are in Christ. It clarifies the centrality of that for all believers. And then finally this, the gospel completely transforms our identity and mission. The gospel of Jesus Christ completely transforms our identity and mission.

A very familiar verse, in light of those who are going to hell, he says, "But that's not you." Why? "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession." Now, what does that mean? You're a chosen race. What do most people think about when they think of race? They think skin color. We're not talking about an earthly race here, we're not talking about the color of your skin, we're not talking about the shape of your face, we're not talking about what part of the planet that geographically you grew up on, we're talking about a heavenly race of people, we're talking about divine attributes that were given to us at the moment of salvation. My race is heavenly, my race is chosen before the foundation of the world according to Ephesians 1 in verse 4. That's my race. That's who I am.

Now, if you're filling out job application this week, you may want to put down your skin color if they asked you your race, but you could write down kingdom of God and you would be correct. That's your chosen race. What race are you? Chosen. That's the race I am. And I'm part of a family with everybody that has been chosen in Christ in that way, right? You're part of chosen race. You've been welcomed into this race, and it's not an earthly race, it's a divine one. It's a heavenly one. Who chose you? God almighty did if you're a Christian. That's why Paul says in Ephesians 3 in verse 20, "For our citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly await savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly bodies and conform them into the image of his

heavenly body."

I mean our nationality, first and foremost, is not American, or German, or anything like that, our first and foremost nationality is heavenly. We're part of a heavenly kingdom. That's why we pray for his kingdom to come because that's our home, that's our nationality, right? We're a chosen race, we're a royal priesthood. Now, we talked about holy priests that were set apart for spiritual service. This royal priesthood means this, royal means to be sent out because you're part of the family. Picture this, in some of those movies where you've seen someone knighted, where they kneel down and then they dub them with the sword on each shoulder and then they send them out for royal service. Why? Because they're representatives of the king. You are either divine princess or divine princesses for the king, the Lord Jesus Christ, who've been sent out into the world as missionaries for him to proclaim the good news of Christ.

That's part of the team that you're on. You have royal blood running through your veins. Make no mistake about it. Sometimes the enemy robs us of our identity and we think of ourselves as impoverished, and poor, and we're nothing. No, you have royal blood running through your veins, you're a daughter of the king, you're a son of the king. It's who you are. You are a chosen race, you are a royal priesthood, you are a holy nation. Notice this, holy nation. Church, we don't talk about holiness nearly enough. And the reason most churches don't talk about holiness is because it offends people and they never come back to church anymore, right? Holiness means that I align my life with the Lord's character, not my own. It means if I have things in my life that are

fleshy and God points those things out, I change my life to align with him.

It means when the word of God is open and preached in its fullness, you'll hear about a gossip, but instead of saying, "Oh, I wish my neighbor would've been there," you'll say, "Oh God, that was me this week. Here's what I said. God, forgive me." When you hear about somebody that's not generous you'll be like, "Oh, I know that guy in church. He makes a lot of money. How come he didn't give?" You'll think, "God, I'm not being very generous. How do I reorient my life with you?" You'll hear about people that use filthy language, and you'll be like, "Man, that guy curses all the time on the golf course." Instead of hearing it that way, you'll start hearing it personally like, "How do my lips reflect your goodness?" Do you see what I'm saying? Holiness requires a part of God's family to respond to him so that they reorient their life to who he says they are rather than who they want to be.

See, people that live for this world will say this, "Well, I just enjoy that. I enjoy eating this way, I enjoy drinking this way. I'm just having fun. I enjoy spending my time. I enjoy." And God would say, "Who cares what you enjoy? I died for your sins and I'm holy. I care what I enjoy and you're not living the way I want to." And then everybody leaves the church. "I'm going to go somewhere that's nicer." Holy nation. Now, I don't know when this started. It was a number of years back because I've been a sports fan pretty much my whole life. But if you've ever heard people talk about groups of fans according to a nation, like Broncos nation, Rockies nation, when did this all start? It's not a nation, it's a fan base, right?

We're not fans of Jesus, we're living stones being built by him to be used for him. We're God's nation, we're a holy nation. Righteousness exalts a nation but sin is an abomination to all people, right? We're a holy nation. That's who you are. And then what are we? We're a people for God's own possession. That means this. You have unique value, and more importantly than this, it means this, he wanted you.

Yeah.

It means this, he still wants you. It means this, you're a prized possession to him. Think about your most prized possession on the planet, multiply that by infinity, and that's how God thinks about you. "It's mine. Your mine. You belong to me. You have significance." In the same way he said about Jesus several times in the planet, "This is my beloved son who I love. In him, I am well pleased." Hey, listen, your identity in Christ when you trusted him is new. And because Christ is on the inside, you are his beloved sons and daughters in whom he's well pleased. Before we move on, I got to say this, because for some of you are like, "I get it, but not this week, man. You should have been with me last night. I mean, I was partying so hard. I mean, I don't even know if God still loves me anymore because... I mean, I know I'm supposed to be, but I didn't live it out last night."

Let me tell you something, on the authority of God's word, when you trust Christ, you have a new identity, the old is gone, the new has come. "But Pastor Jeff, I got drunk last night." No, you sinned last night, but it didn't change your identity. You're still holy, and blameless, and loved, and cherished, and honored by Almighty God.

[crosstalk 00:45:13].

See, we don't get resolute in our identity. We start looking at our identity based upon our sinful patterns. That's what we did when we were unsafe. If you look at your sinful patterns as a saved person and define yourself by them, you'll never grow. It's your identity. I'm a new creation, I'm beloved, I'm adopted, I'm chosen, I can't sin my way out of the kingdom, I know who I am. That's who I am. You don't have to believe that about me, I know that about me. And when you start living that way, it means, yeah, I still sin, but when I sin, I say, "God, that went against my identity. That wasn't what I was supposed to do. I'm living for you. Thanks for forgiving me on the cross of Jesus Christ. I turned from that again. Thanks for giving me all over again." I'm rooted in my identity.

Amen.

I don't feel like you guys are listening. This is so important because I find Christians all the time that say, "Yeah, I get you," until it comes to you personally. And personally, when you sin, the enemy speaks volumes in your life. "Yeah, you call yourself a Christian, look how you're acting. You call yourself a Christian, you don't even know the Bible. You call yourself a Christian, you don't even act like one. You call yourself a Christian, you still swear, you still have an eating disorder, you still have a drug problem. Look at you. It didn't take it. You're not..." Yes, it did take. On the authority of Jesus Christ, it is finished. When you trust him, you're new. Own it, believe it, have it. Will you still sin? Yes, but I'm not living there, that's forgiven at the cross so I

can move on.

What am I? I'm a chosen race, I'm part of a chosen race, I'm part of a royal priesthood, I'm part of a holy nation, I'm part of God's own possession, and a people that belong to him. That's why, first and foremost, in our life, that's how we have to live. There's nothing wrong with being patriotic. I'm fairly patriotic and I enjoy people that are, but I can't stand when people are more patriotic than they are Christian. It drives me crazy. Seriously, your patriotism is going to trump the kingdom of God? I don't care what side of the aisle you sit on, that's a waste of your time.

That's right. It is. Yeah.

I really love sports. I mean, I can appreciate the fact that you root for other teams, I can appreciate the fact that you're zealous for your teams that you root for. But when I need somebody that loves sports more than they love the kingdom of God, it's worthless to me. I like going to Broncos games. I hope they win all their games this year, but if they lose, let me tell you what it's like for me at my house on a Sunday night, I sleep fine. I do okay. I'm over it. I'm not calling in talk radio for five days saying all that needs to change because you ruined my life. It's football. It's not that big of a deal, kind of a big deal, but not that big of a deal, right?

You see what I'm saying? I'm all for people saving more money, and growing, and seeing God flourish you in your resources. I'm all for God favoring you, and that's good, and I like that. But for people that are all about what they can get, and how much favor they have, and where they are on the socioeconomic scale ahead of the

kingdom of God, waste. It's a waste. Who cares? Compared to the incomparable riches in Christ, you have nothing, and you have nothing apart from what Jesus gave you anyway.

Amen.

And boy, I care about your friends. I think it's good to have good relationships. It's wonderful to have good relationships. I have good relationships, but I can't stand being around people whose friendships trump what they do in the church. "Well, I have this group of people over here. We're so close to them. Yeah, church, we don't have time for..." Seriously? You don't have time for the group of people Jesus Christ died for but you can pull your own little... I can't stand that. And oh, I love people that are gifted and talented, and more gifted and talented than me because they're all over the place, and I love that, but I can't stand when I'm around people that talk about how gifted and talented they are all the time, and how their gifts are benefiting them.

Use your gifts to benefit Christ. Do you see the difference? It means you go all in for Jesus because your identity's changed. You're not the same. Now, what's the purpose of being part of this chosen race, royal priesthood, holy nation and God's own people? So that you, that's all of us, may proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. That means this, listen, every single one of you who is a Christian used to be in darkness. "Well, it wasn't that dark." It was dark. "Yeah, but I came to Christ at 4:00." It was dark. Every Christian comes out of darkness into the light, and how much darkness is there in the light? There's none because the light casts out all darkness. It means all of you have a story, all of you

have a testimony from when you came out of the darkness, right?

Some of you lived in the darkness longer, so that story's a little bit longer than some of the rest of us. It doesn't matter. All of came out of darkness into the light. And so what we're doing is proclaiming the excellencies of him. And so even if you say, "Well, I don't know the Bible well enough to proclaim his excellencies on his sovereignty and talk for an hour on his sovereignty or on thankfulness, I can't do that," then do this, tell your story about how God rescued you from darkness and transferred you into the kingdom of his beloved son. That's all you got to do. Just your story. You have a new identity, you're not the same. You've been bought with a price, so honor God with your body, for once you were not a people, once you were outside the kingdom, but now you are the people of God. Once you had not received mercy, but now you've received mercy.

Every single one of you is saved by God's mercy. God took compassion on you. You say, "Well, God saved me when I was four." That's cool. God took compassion on you when you were four and made you aware of the gospel.

Yeah.

And he took you out of darkness and placed you into his marvelous light. Praise God for that, right? You all have a story to tell. Can you tell your story? Because for many of us, even after our story, we still try to live in our old identity, which is why we have no story to tell. When I was in high school, one of the things we did, when I was a freshman and sophomore, is we wore jerseys when we came to school on Friday.

Because as a freshman, sophomore, if you wore your football Jersey on Friday, it indicated that you were special. It indicated that you were part of the team, because that way everybody would know that you're part of the team, and then you could walk around and act really cool.

But when you got to the varsity level, nobody did that anymore because if you were good enough, they'd see you play, right? And so you take off the old and you start wearing who you are. Have you ever noticed there's people that are my age that still haven't taking off their high school Jersey? You ever see those people before? I mean, they're the same as they were. They're trying to live that life, and you laugh at them, but many of us do the same thing with our Christianity.

[crosstalk 00:51:38] good.

We say, "Yeah, that's what I used to be and I'm not that way anymore." Take off what you used to be, put on who you are in Christ, and start that way to the full, abiding in him, giving your best to the church so you can multiply quality disciples for the kingdom of God. You do that, here's a promise, you'll always be filled with joy, you will always be filled with hope. Doesn't mean you won't have bad circumstances, doesn't mean you won't have hard times. As matter of fact, I'll guarantee that you will. But what you will have is you will have hope in Christ and you'll have fulfillment in the depth of your soul. It's your identity, it's who you are, it's not who you used to be, and you all have a story, and God wants you to tell your story.

And most of us, when it comes to telling our story, we start thinking about, "Well,

mine's not as good as their story." Every time I hear a story of someone who recognized that they were a sinner and trusted Jesus Christ, I don't care if they're five or 95, it warms my heart, because I realized, behind the scenes, it was God doing the work who chose them before the foundation of the world to be wholly and blameless in his sight, to make them a living stone to be part of his purpose and his blueprint in this world to clarify that Jesus is the Lord of their life, and to use them on mission to win many more to Jesus. Amen?

That's the blueprint, that's what you've all been called to. That's who you are, that's who we are in Christ. So I'm just going to invite you on both campuses to stand. And Lord, as we come to you today, Lord, we don't want to be remiss that if anybody's here today and say, "I don't know if I've ever trusted Christ," that you could pray again, right now. Jesus, I believe you're the Lord. I confess you as my personal Lord and savior. Come into my life, now and for always. And Lord, for those of us who know you, Lord, we give you all the praise and glory. Build us and root us in our identity that we could live for you, in Jesus name. Amen.