

The Stumbling Stone and the Chief Cornerstone

Servants' Meeting
May 6, 2012

Overview

- References
- The perspective of Jews and Gentiles
- The Lord needed to offend
- Why did the Jews stumble?
- The Jews and Us
- The Chief Cornerstone

References

- Stumbling Stone and Rock of Offense:
 - “As it is written: ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.’” (Romans 9:33)
 - “and ‘A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense.’ They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.” (1 Peter 2:8)

References

- Chief Cornerstone:
 - “having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone” (Ephensians 2:20)
 - “Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, ‘Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.’” (1 Peter 2:6)

Jews and Gentiles

- Perspective of the Jews
- Perspective of the Gentiles
- “And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.” (Matt 21:44)

Getting their Attention

- The Lord needed to offend
 - “I am” (John 8:58)
 - “Working” on the Sabbath
 - Healing the paralytic (Matt 9:1-8)
 - Letting His disciples pluck heads of grain (Matt 12:1-8)
 - Healing man with shriveled hand (Matt 12:9-16)
 - Healing the woman who was bent over with a spirit of infirmity (Luke 13:10-17)
 - Healing the paralyzed man (John 5:1-15)
 - Healing the man born blind (John 9:1-41)

Getting their Attention

- **Pointed out their hypocrisy**
 - “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” (Matt 21:33-46)
- **He was a threat to them**
- **He claimed exclusive knowledge of the Truth**
 - “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6-7)
- **By associating with sinners**
 - Anointed by sinful woman (Luke 7:36-47)
 - Tax collectors and sinners (Matt 9:10-11)
 - Visited Zacchaeus’ home (Luke 19:1-10)

Getting their Attention

- **Offended foreigners**
 - The Canaanite woman (Matt 15:22-28)
 - Tested her reaction
 - Because she humbled herself and was broken by the stone, her request was granted
- **Breaking traditions and customs**
 - Not washing before eating (Matt 15:1-14)

Why did the Jews Stumble?

- Rigidity (healing is unlawful?)
- Pride (“are you teaching us?”)
- Knowledge vs. Understanding
 - “because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him” (Acts 13:27)
 - “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.” (John 5:39)
- Expectations

The Jews and Us

- Are we similarly **rigid**?
 - Can I only get along with a certain kind of personality?
 - Am I a servant only at church, in a specific setting, with a certain age group, and in a certain way?
 - “For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more;
 - and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law;
 - to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law;
 - to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.
 - Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you.” (1 Cor 9:19-23)

The Jews and Us

- St. Peter, the apostle unto the Jews, preached to Cornelius, a Gentile (Acts 10:25-29)
- “Mufrood”

The Jews and Us

- Do I suffer from **pride**?
 - How difficult is it for me to accept criticism?
 - Is it hard for me to accept direction and guidance?
 - Do I call myself a teacher or a servant?
 - Am I slow to publically take blame for something?
 - Do I view those who disagree with me as my enemies?

The Jews and Us

- Do I suffer from **pride**?
 - **Must I lead in order to be satisfied?**
 - In Sunday School class, in any capacity at the church, at work, at school, at home?
 - “And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, ‘If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.’” (Mark 9:35)
 - “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.” (Phil 2:3)

The Jews and Us

- Is it difficult for me to **apply** spirituality and virtue?
- Is knowledge by itself enough?
- Do I acquire new virtues?
 - Forgiveness
 - Obedience
 - Humility
 - Patience and long-suffering
 - Wisdom and discernment
 - Offenses cause me to grow...

The Jews and Us

- Do I have unrealistic **expectations**?
 - Of family
 - Of others
 - Of myself
 - Of God
- “Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again but expecting different results.”
–Albert Einstein, Ben Franklin, Mark Twain (attributed)
- Am I able to adjust these expectations as I mature and my relationships grow?

The Chief Cornerstone

- References

- “having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone” (Ephesians 2:20)
- “Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, ‘Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.’” (1 Peter 2:6)

The Chief Cornerstone

- “The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone” (Psalm 118:22)
 - The Lord who was rejected by the Jews (the original builders) has now become the accepted chief cornerstone by the Gentiles
- Cornerstone is where two walls meet:
 - Jews and Gentiles
 - Old and New Testaments
 - Prophets and the Apostles
- The Church, then, focuses everything she does on the Lord Christ: He is the reason for her existence and He is her goal

The Chief Cornerstone

- “The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone” (Psalm 118:22)
 - The Lord who was rejected by the Jews (the original builders) has now become the accepted chief cornerstone by the Gentiles
 - “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,
 - having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,
 - in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,
 - in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” (Ephesians 2:19-22)

The Chief Cornerstone

- “And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.” (Matt 21:44)
 - “Whoever accepts this stone will be humbled by it, but whoever rejects it will be crushed by it. When therefore any one falls upon it, it lies as it were low; it then wounds: but when it shall grind him to powder, then it will come from above. See how in these two words, it shall wound him and grind him to powder: he strikes upon it, and it shall come down upon him: are distinguished the two seasons, of the humiliation and the majesty of Christ, of hidden punishment and future judgment. He will not crush, when He comes, that man whom He does not wound when He lies in a contemptible appearance...” –St. Augustine

The Chief Cornerstone

- “Whoever you are who art obstinate against Christ, you have raised on high a tower that must fall. It is good that you should cast yourself down, become humble, throw yourself at the feet of Him who sits on the right hand of the Father, that in you a ruin may be made to be built up. For if you abide in your evil height, you shall be cast down when you can not be built up.” –St. Augustine

The Chief Cornerstone

- The believer, too, is called “a temple of the living God” (2 Cor 6:16), a “temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor 6:19)
- “Likewise greet the church that is in their house.” (Romans 16:5)
 - Is the Lord a cornerstone in our lives?
 - Are we being built up and maintaining ourselves as holy temples?
 - Are our homes places that honor the chief cornerstone?

The Chief Cornerstone

- “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock” (Matt 7:24)
 - Hearing is not enough
 - Abiding, living, and applying shows that we are building on the rock

Review

- The Stumbling Stone and the Chief Cornerstone:
 - The perspective of Jews and Gentiles
 - The Stumbling Stone
 - The Lord needed to offend
 - Why did the Jews stumble?
 - The Jews and Us
 - The Chief Cornerstone
 - Rejected and accepted
 - Being broken and being ground
 - We are temples and our homes are temples