

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

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In today's passage from his first letter, Peter references several psalms that use the imagery of stones, the most familiar being,

- ❖ "The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner".
- ❖ Jesus quotes this verse directly in the gospels, and it's alluded to frequently in the New Testament and the writings of the early Church Fathers.
- ❖ **But why? What makes this such an important idea?**

First of all, there's a whole lot of biblical freight packed into that one verse,

- ❖ With Psalm 118 being one of the psalms sung by pilgrims on their way to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem
- ❖ Also carried messianic expectations that Jesus fulfilled in surprising ways.

Still, the idea of Jesus as the cornerstone was a staple of the early Church's preaching because you wouldn't have needed to be a rabbi or even a Jew to appreciate what was being said – **the image of the cornerstone *itself* would've been universal**. You see, if you were building a structure with rocks and mortar, the *cornerstone* would be *the* reference point for maintaining its *form* and all its *lines*.

- ❖ So highly-trained stone masons would read the plans and then scour the quarry for the stone with just the right size and shape.

Now, as you can imagine, despite all the care and attention paid to the cornerstone, it didn't always work out.

- ❖ And since all the other rocks were odd shapes and sizes too, if you got the *cornerstone* wrong, the whole building would be unsound from the start.
- ❖ Depending on when you realized you had it wrong, you might be able to readjust the plans, but sometimes you'd just have to start over.

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With Jesus as the cornerstone, we won't be limited by our own resources, imaginations, or ambitions.

- ❖ None of the raw materials that make up our life will be wasted because we don't know how to use them, where to put them, or recognize them as precious.
- ❖ Instead, that He will bring all our cares, concerns, obligations, and desires in line to form them into the uniquely magnificent structure that God intends each of us to be.

The obvious question then is, how do we *know* if we've made Jesus the cornerstone of our lives? How do we *know* that *He's* at the center?

- ❖ First, consider 3 areas of your life: your time, your money, your media
- ❖ Then ask yourself, is Jesus the cornerstone that shapes and orders those things?

How do you spend your time? Do you make time for Jesus or find time for Jesus?

- ❖ Matter of priorities – is prayer non-negotiable, something that other things get scheduled around?
- ❖ Or do other things come first, meaning that sometimes Jesus gets squeezed out?

How do you spend your money? Easier than ever to track.

- ❖ Generous in giving to the needy, to the Church? Or are they an afterthought?
- ❖ The material world is good, but if the way we view it comes from the culture around us,
- ❖ we're going to have a distorted view of what we need and how our stuff defines us.

Finally, media – that is, what are you consuming?

- ❖ What do you watch, read, listen to?
- ❖ What's forming your mind on a daily basis?

Paul: Be transformed by the renewal of your mind, do not conform yourself to this present world

- ❖ Or put another way, “you are what you eat” or “consume” in this case
- ❖ If we only watch, read, and listen to the same things that everyone else does, our minds will be changed to look like and think like everyone else's.

Now, that doesn't mean that we can't enjoy good movies, good TV shows, and good songs – they can actually be really helpful, depending on how you consume them.

- ❖ You have to take them in with a critical eye – asking yourself,
- ❖ What's the message I'm taking away from this? How am I being formed?

Books, movies, TV, music, whatever – all have the potential to point us to Jesus, even if they're not necessarily Christian.

- ❖ Maybe they highlight something virtuous in a new way, maybe their lack of goodness helps us appreciate the gospel even more.
- ❖ Either way, if we're going to allow something to occupy space in our minds, we have to be thoughtful about what it's doing there.

Take some time to think and pray about these things, and, as you do, ask Jesus to show you if and where something's out of line.

- ❖ Don't worry if you find that there's an area that needs some work,
- ❖ And don't be discouraged if it's a struggle – construction is often that way.

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But as long as we're trying to line everything up with Jesus, we can be assured that no matter what happens along the way, when the work is done, the building will be bigger and more beautiful than we could've ever imagined.

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