

**The Believer's Privileges, Part 4: Security and Affection**

Scripture: 1 Peter 2:6–8

Code: 60-20

**INTRODUCTION**

The story is told of a university student who had a rather lofty view of his intellect. On one occasion he said to a pastor, "I have decided that I do not believe in God." "I see," the pastor replied. "Could you please describe for me the God you do not believe in?"

The student proceeded to sketch a caricature of God as unfair-- as being anything but a God of goodness. After listening to that portrayal of God, the pastor wisely replied, "Well, we're in the same boat. I don't believe in that God either."

Most people, including many who call themselves Christians, have a warped view of God that views Him as less than good, kind, and benevolent. Their view of God is based on the common difficulties of life in a fallen world--the circumstances and conditions that plague our existence. But those who see beyond what is physical recognize God's goodness and mercy. The God of the Bible is not an unkind, ungracious, unmerciful, overbearing deity. Christianity affirms the God of whom the psalmist said, "The goodness of God endureth continually" (Ps. 52:1, KJV). In all of life there is an overpowering sense of the goodness of God.

**A. God's goodness in creation**

Those who truly experience the goodness of God are His children. Many choose to reject God and thereby reject His goodness, but we who by grace have come to God through Christ understand that He is good. God is in Himself an infinite and exhaustible treasure of all blessedness. His goodness is seen throughout creation--its vastness, beauty, variety, and intricacy of design. The immense variety of natural delights God has given and preserved in a fallen world shows how good God is. God could have created a brown world filled with ugly people who all look alike and eat dirt! But God is good and has filled the days and hours with wondrous beauty.

**B. God's goodness in mercy**

The goodness of God was demonstrated when man blighted God's created delights. He did not dispense unmixed wrath at once and rid earth of our kind. God tempers His judgment of the ungodly with mercy. He allows the rain to fall on the just and the unjust. "Mercy triumphs over judgment" (James 2:13). God gives happiness to man, though man must suffer the sorrow that his sin produces.

**C. God's goodness in redemption**

Beyond the goodness of God demonstrated in creation and His benevolence toward all mankind is His goodness shown in the redemption of sinners. As Christians, we above all creation know the goodness of God.

In 1 Peter 2:4-10 we see the goodness of God as expressed in the spiritual privileges of believers. Peter recounted eleven great privileges that are granted to believers by God's grace. They are not something we deserve but gifts of grace from a good God--the Father of lights, from whom comes every good and perfect gift, and in whom there is no variableness or shifting shadow (James 1:17).Review

**I. THE CORNERSTONE OF OUR PRIVILEGES (v. 4)**

**II. THE KALEIDOSCOPE OF OUR PRIVILEGES (vv. 5-10)**

**A. Union (v. 5a)**

## **B. Access (v. 5b)**

By giving us access through Christ, God has given us an open door into heaven. He has cried out for us to come into His presence, and given us admission to His presence at the throne of grace. The writer of Hebrews said, "Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace" (4:16). Lesson

## **C. Security (v. 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 shall not be disappointed.'"

As Peter turns the kaleidoscope once more, the beautiful colored stones of spiritual blessing rearrange themselves to show us our security Christ. As believers, we have the confident conviction that we are secure in Jesus Christ forever. The key idea in verse 6 is that we will not be disappointed, ashamed, or disillusioned by finding out that the One in whom we have put our hope has failed us.

Peter began his demonstration of the believer's security by pointing to Scripture: "This is contained in Scripture." Because Peter did not quote word for word, he did not use the formula "it is written," which is often used by New Testament writers to indicate a quotation from the Old Testament. It was not Peter's intent to specifically quote Scripture but to refer to the truth of its teaching regarding Christ.

### **1. A living stone**

Peter's first reference to the Old Testament in affirming the security of the believer is taken from Isaiah 28:16, in which God says, "Behold, I am laying in Zion stone, a tested stone, a costly corner stone." According to Peter, the stone of Isaiah 28:16 is Christ.

First Peter 2:4 speaks of Christ as "a living stone." He is the foundation of the spiritual house upon which we are built as living stones. He is also a living stone in that He has risen and is therefore alive.

The truth of Isaiah 28:16 respecting Christ is also affirmed by Paul in Romans 9:33. It was a very familiar and important Old Testament text (to the writers of the New Testament). It spoke of the Messiah--the coming Christ of God. It promised that when the Christ came, He would be the cornerstone of the new Temple of God.

At the beginning of Peter's reference to Isaiah 28:16 is the word "behold." God was calling attention to the stone--He wanted undivided attention to be focused on it. Of that stone God said, "I am laying [it] in Zion." Zion here refers Jerusalem, the city that occupies Mount Zion. Figuratively Mount Zion represents the New Covenant of grace, while Mount Sinai represents the Old Covenant of law (cf. Gal. 4:21-31).

### **2. An elect stone**

First Peter 2:6 says that this stone is "a choice stone." That means its elect--chosen by God. Both Isaiah's and Peter's analogy of stone would have set Jewish readers to thinking about the construction of the Temple in Jerusalem. First Kings 6:7 tells us that the Temple stones were prepared before they were brought to the site. They were shaped and cut at the stone quarry in accordance with a precise diagram of how the Temple was to be built. Each stone would then be marked with a number so that each would be put into its proper place.

The Lord has used a similar process to build the New Covenant Temple (the church) : all the stones (individuals) are elect--previously prepared for that destiny. They fit together according to a perfect pattern designed by the Spirit of God, who builds the Temple and organizes each stone according to its elect position.

### **3. A precious stone**

#### **a) It is irreplaceable**

Not only is Christ an elect stone, but He is also "precious" (1 Pet. 2:6). The Greek word translated "precious" in this passage is translated "highly regarded" in Luke 7:2. It means "valuable," "costly,"

without equal," or "irreplaceable." Christ is irreplaceable.

b) It is important

The most important stone in any building of Peter's time was the cornerstone. The Greek word *akrogoniaion* (translated "corner") literally means, "at the extreme angle." A cornerstone set all the angles of the building of which it was a part. It set the direction of the walls of a building both as they went out horizontally and as they went up vertically. All the angles of the building were kept in symmetry by the one cornerstone against which all other stones were compared.

c) It is perfect

To build the Temple we know as the church, it was necessary that the cornerstone be perfect. That perfect, elect, prepared cornerstone is none other than Jesus Christ. He is the stone that sets all the angles of God's spiritual Temple so that the church will be the perfect household of God. Just as the human builders of Peter's time tested their cornerstones, God has tested His and found Him perfect.

4. A trustworthy stone

Peter's final affirmation in verse 6 is that "he who believes in Him shall not be disappointed."

Because of the perfection of God's chosen cornerstone, one of our great privileges as Christians is that we will never be disappointed by trusting in Christ.

We are rightfully confident in Christ because He is the perfect cornerstone who binds the church together. The Greek word translated "disappointed" carries the idea of having one's confidence misplaced, or having one's hope in someone or something disappointed. But the Lord Jesus Christ will never let us down.

a) Isaiah 50:7--"The Lord God helps Me, therefore, I am not disgraced; therefore, I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." That's the confidence of one who believes in the true God.

b) Isaiah 54:1-10--"Shout for joy, O barren one, you who have born no child; break forth into joyful shouting and cry aloud, you who have not travailed; for the sons of the desolate one will be more numerous than the sons of the married woman," says the Lord. 'Enlarge the place of your tent; stretch out the curtains of your dwellings, spare not; lengthen your cords, and strengthen your pegs. For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left. And your descendants will possess nations, and they will resettle the desolate cities.

"Fear not, for you will not be put to shame; neither feel humiliated, for you will not be disgraced....

For your husband is your Maker, whose name is the Lord of hosts; and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, who is called the God of all the earth. For the Lord has called you, like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, even like a wife of one's youth when she is rejected,' says your God. 'For a brief moment I forsook you, but with great compassion I will gather you. In an outburst of anger I hid my face from you for a moment; but with everlasting loving-kindness I will have compassion on you,' says the Lord your Redeemer.... 'My loving-kindness will not be removed from you.'"

c) Romans 8:28-39--"We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified" (vv. 28-30). To those who doubted the glorification of believers, Paul said, "If God is for us, who is against us?... Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?... Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God" (vv. 31-39).

d) Isaiah 28:16--"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." The Hebrew text literally reads, "He who believes in it will not be in a hurry." That means believers will not be in a hurry to run in fear because God has failed them. God promises that believers have no reason to be confused,

ashamed, or disappointed because the object of our trust, the Lord Jesus Christ, will never fail.

#### **D. Affection (vv. 7-8)**

"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, and to this doom they were also appointed."

In verses 7-8 Peter again turns the kaleidoscope of our spiritual privileges, and we find ourselves viewing the marvelous privilege of having affection for our Lord.

##### **1. Love for Christ**

###### **a) A privilege of believers**

"This precious value"--the value of Christ as the cornerstone--belongs to those who believe. Indeed, "the love of God has been poured out within our hearts" (Rom. 5:5).

First Peter 2:7 could be translated, "To you who believe He is precious." Christ is precious not only to God as His cornerstone, but He is also personally precious to believers. The disbelieving have no such affection for Christ. They reject Him, and He therefore becomes to them a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. But to a believer, Christ is the most precious thing in life.

###### **b) A test of faith**

Affection for Christ is a bottom-line characteristic of true Christianity. It is where true Christian life begins. Every Christian is characterized by affection for Jesus Christ.

(1) John 8:42--Jesus said, "If God were your Father you would love Me." A Christian is identified not by a past decision, but by a present love for Christ.

(2) John 14:15--"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."

(3) John 14:21--"He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him." Christianity is about loving Christ and obeying His commands.

(4) John 14:23-24--"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words." Salvation, obedience, and love for Christ all go together.

(5) John 16:27--"The Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed." Believing in Christ and loving Him are inseparable.

(6) Matthew 10:37--"He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me." The saved have a surpassing and compelling love for Jesus Christ.

(7) 2 Corinthians 5:14--Paul said, "The love of Christ compels, because we are convinced that one died for all, therefore all died" (NIV).

##### **2. Rejection of Christ**

###### **a) Rejecting the appointed stone**

After affirming the affection for Christ that exists in every believer, Peter then quoted the prediction of Psalm 118:22: "For those who disbelieve, 'the stone which the builders rejected, this became the very corner stone'" (1 Pet. 2:7). The world's assessment of God's cornerstone was that He didn't measure up to their expectations, so they got rid of Him. The Greek word translated "rejected" means "to disallow after close examination." Christ was closely examined by the religious rulers of His day but they rejected Him. The Story with a Surprise Ending

The account of the rejection of Christ reads like a story with a surprise ending. The Jewish people were eagerly anticipating the kingdom to God. The rulers of Israel were waiting for the cornerstone of that kingdom to appear--the promised Messiah of God. Every Jewish mother hoped she would be the one to bear the Messiah. Four hundred years followed the writing of Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament. During that time no prophet appeared in Israel, and the nation longed some word from God. Then John the Baptist appeared and heralded the imminent approach of the Messiah. The

nation was ecstatic.

Finally Jesus appeared and presented Himself as the cornerstone on which to build God's new Temple, the church. The religious leaders examined, scrutinized, and questioned Him. Like a literal stone, Jesus was picked up, turned over, and measured. But He didn't fit their building plans. They wanted a political, earthly deliverer. So they threw Him away--God's approved stone! The majority of Jewish people continue to do that today. The One so eagerly awaited for so long remains rejected. To the leaders of Israel, Christ was worthless. But they were wrong. To God and to believers, Christ is precious. Peter affirms in verse 8 that those who believe in Him will never be disappointed. But recognizing the preciousness of Christ is an experience only for those who believe. Those who disbelieve view Him as a rejected stone--and their rejection was prophesied in Psalm 118:22. Yet the very stone they rejected became the cornerstone of God's building.

#### b) Stumbling over the appointed stone

Christ became not only the cornerstone, but also "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense" (v. 8). Peter quoted from Isaiah 8:14-15, where Isaiah predicted that the Messiah would cause men and women to fall in judgment.

A "stone of stumbling" was a stone that caused someone to fall while walking along the road, while a "rock of offense" was a mass of rock like a cliff that could crush a man. The commentator R.C.H. Lenski adds, "Both terms reveal the destructiveness of Christ.... This stone is not one against which the disbelievers strike merely a foot and are thrown down and rise up more or less hurt, but one against which they strike with the entire body in a dreadful crash which knocks out their brains" (The interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1945], p. 96).

Thus the same stone approved by God as the cornerstone, which is precious to believers, is both a small stone (Gk., lithos) and large stone (Gk., petra) of devastation to unbelievers.

#### c) Being crushed by the appointed stone

Luke 20:18 says, "Every one who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust [lit. "grind him to powder"]." Peter tells us that men and women stumble over Christ "because they are disobedient to the word"--the gospel (1 Pet. 2:8). Unbelief and disobedience are terms closely associated with the unsaved, just as belief and obedience are closely associated with the saved.

To you Christ is either the cornerstone or the "rock of offense" (Gk., petra skandalou) --the rock against which men are crushed. He is a rock of judgment for unbelievers because they reject the gospel and refuse to obey it. First Peter 2:8 concludes, "To this doom they were also appointed." The unbeliever gets exactly what his choice demands--judgment. It is not the unbeliever's disobedience or unbelief that is appointed. The penalty for unbelief is what Peter refers to as appointed. Conclusion Believers are privileged in having an affection for Christ. But as there has been since the time of Christ's appearing, there is a vast number that reject Him. For them He is an unacceptable stone, not fit as a cornerstone for the religious temple they want to build. So they throw Him aside and end up stumbling over Him, crushed to powder by Him in judgment. Their disobedience becomes their appointed destiny of doom. But by God's goodness and grace, Christ is not a stone of stumbling or rock of offense to believers. To them--to us--He is a precious cornerstone and beloved.

### Focusing on the Facts

1. What is the key idea of 1 Peter 2:6 (see p. 3)?
2. Why did Peter use the phrase "this is contained in Scripture" to introduce his reference to the Old Testament (1 Pet. 2:6; see p. 3)?
3. What does "Zion" refer to in 1 Peter 2:6 (see pp. 3-4)?
4. How does the building of Solomon's Temple illustrate the way in which God's New Testament temple--the church--is built (see p. 4)?

5. What are three reasons that Christ can be called "a precious cornerstone" (see pp. 4-5)?
6. What connotations does the word "disappointed" carry in 1 Peter 2:6 (see p. 5)?
7. What has God promised according to Isaiah 28:16 (see p. 7)?
8. What two kinds of people are contrasted in 1 Peter 2:7-8 (see p. 7)?
9. What is the most precious thing in the life of the believer (see pp. 7-8)?
10. The saved have a \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ for Jesus Christ (see pp. 8-9).
11. What does the Greek word translated "rejected" in 1 Peter 2:7 mean (see p. 9)?
12. What was the surprise ending to the coming of Jesus Christ (see p. 9)?
13. For the unbeliever, God's cornerstone (Christ) is both a stone of \_\_\_\_\_ and a rock of \_\_\_\_\_ (see p. 10).
14. What two closely associated words are descriptive of the unsaved (see p. 10)?
15. Why is the unbeliever appointed to judgment \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Peter 2:8; see p. 11)?

### **Pondering the Principles**

1. If you are a believer, you are a part of a spiritual building that is built on Jesus Christ, measurement conforming to Him because He is the cornerstone. Thomas Watson wrote, "Our graces are imperfect, our comforts ebb and flow, but God's foundation standeth sure. They who are built upon this rock of God's eternal purpose, need not fear falling away; neither the power of man, not the violence of temptation, shall ever be able to overturn them" (All Things for Good [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1986], p. 127). Take time now to praise God for His work in your life, both in bringing you to Him and preserving you for Him.
2. The eighteenth-century American theologian Jonathan Edwards wrote, "The greater the view and sense that one has of the infinite excellence and glory of God in Christ, and of how boundless is the length and breadth, depth and height of the love of Christ to sinners, the greater will be the astonishment one feels as he realizes how little he knows of such love to such a God, and to such a glorious Redeemer" (Religious Affections [Portland: Multnomah, 1984 abridged edition], p. 132). Christ's love for His people seems at times to inspire only a paltry return. However, the Puritan Thomas Brooks noted, "As a man rises higher and higher in his apprehensions of Christ, so he cannot but rise higher and higher in his affections to Christ.... The daily mercies and experiences that [he has] of the love of Christ, of the care of Christ, of the kindnesses and compassions of Christ working more and more towards [him], cannot but raise [his] affections more and more to him" (Heaven on Earth [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1982 reprint], p. 243). What or who would people say is the great love of your life? Cultivate a deeper relationship with the One who loves you so deeply by spending time in His Word.

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