
Spiritual Formation Part 21

Discipleship Tools www.discipleshiptools.org

The Foundation of our Christian Faith Part 4

1 Kings 5:1 to 9:9; 2 Chronicles 3:3 to 5:1; 6:1-7:22; Psalm 118:18-27; 127:1; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:4-10

Moving Away From the Cornerstone

The problem is that many Christians have failed in their spiritual formation. They have gotten, weak or even apostate and others are on the verge of betrayal against our Holy Cornerstone. Understanding that He is our Cornerstone gives us a navigational rendering on how to lead and manage our church in a healthy, biblical way.

Understanding that He is our *chief cornerstone* means Jesus is the Chief, the Head of the corner. It means our Lord is our All in All—we can trust in Him (1 Cor. 15:20-28)! How wonderful and comforting to be able to allow Him to be our haven of rest, our continual comfort. At the same time, a warning is given in Scripture to those who reject the Living Stone in the Bible. They will *stumble* and *fall*. Stumble, meaning disobedient, refers to condemnation and judgment because a person is so “self willed” and prideful, he or she is not willing to acknowledge God as his or her Lord (Mal. 2:8; John 11:9; Rom. 9:33; 14:20; 1 Cor. 10:32; James 3:2; 2 Peter 2:8).

Fall in Romans and Matthew refers to Isaiah (Matt. 21: 33-46; Isa. 8:13-15; 28:16). Peter and Paul both used this image (Rom. 9:33; 11:11; 14: 4, 21; Heb. 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:6-8), that those who reject Jesus as the Messiah will be judged. God’s Kingdom is portrayed as a rock, and we will be cursed by it if we fight against it (Dan. 2: 34-44; Matt. 16:27; Rom. 2:6; Rev 20:12-13; 22:12). He still gives us His grace—until it is too late and we are called to account. God gives us ample prevision and time to turn from our evil and wayward ways to His True Word, His best Way (Jer. 23:22-23). He patiently accommodates us (to a point) to give us the time to realize our disobedient conduct, gives us the room to make mistakes, and still calls us back into His arms of love and care. Do not be the one who rejects the Living Stone and causes your church to run askew and away from His call and purpose! We are called to allow our faith to empower our obedience because obedience is what pleases God. Disobedience, from a lack of faith, is detestable to Him and causes us to be lost over dangerous ground. This comes down to “apostasy,” which is the abandonment of one’s religious faith, or skewing it far away from its core precepts.

Have you ever considered that God suffers from our sins? And, in the midst of our sin, He is patient? Yet, one day, His patience will come to its fruition; His judgments, which will be honorable and blameless, will come about. Remember that *God’s wrath* refers to the judgment that is coming; it will be a reality (Is. 65:2; Joel 2:11; Mal. 3:2). This is something we Christians need not fear as Christ covers our sin for us (Zeph. 1:14-18; Nahum. 1:6; Mal. 3:2; Rom. 1:18; 3:9-23; 6:23; 2 Pet. 3:9-15; Rev.19:15). God

loves holiness and love, and both produce justice. He hates sin and discord. Without love expressed in holiness, there can be no justice or hope for the righteous and faithful. There is hope and assurance when our trust is in Christ and His righteousness. He is our hope, even when the very foundations of the universe are collapsing around and under us. When our hope is in Christ, nothing can shake us (Luke 12:32-34; 1 Cor. 7:29-31; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Heb. 12:25-29; Rev. 6:16).

Remember this very important point: sin and wrong desires, factions, and immorality bring us only “darkness (Rev. 16:12-21).” Darkness refers to having no peace, contentment, or happiness; chasing evils and pleasure, even our wants, only leaves us destitute of what is really important. This can be in a family, in a nation, in the world, and even in the Church. Thus, a defiant heart will only bring pain, chaos, strife, disillusionment, dysfunction, discouragement, distress, and grief. So, who wants that? Remember, He will equip us with what He requires for us to live a triumphant, purpose-filled life (Is. 57:15-21; 59:1-21; 59:15-18; 65:1-15)!

We are falling away from the Truth and are rebelling against Him when we continue to do this without repentance. We are betraying our Lord and deceiving the ones we are supposed to be leading further into His depths! The problem with this situation is that most of the leadership in these churches who are failing do not realize that they are, nor do they comprehend that their decisions and the things they chase are moving them away from the Cornerstone and into apostasy. The plumb line from which to gauge where we are is His Word. I am not just talking about moving away from essential Christian doctrine, although this applies. Rather, I am pointing to our not communicating doctrine in love and care and not disciplining others so they can know Him more. It is just as bad to have good doctrine and not communicate it as it is to reject good doctrine. The end result is the same ~~the~~ Church of Perfidy. Then the person in such a church will not know truth, His will, His call, or recognize opportunities and precepts so he can then act upon them. We become the church of the “pew-sitter” who not only does nothing in a church, but also gets nothing from the church.

When we are not properly lined up with His Cornerstone, we are betraying our Lord. In Scripture, this is called *committing adultery*, meaning to betray God as if to say, *Jesus is my Savior, but I do not need to trust in Him, and I do not need to obey His precepts and morals. I am saved by Christ alone, by faith alone. However, I will not allow to touch my daily life. I can do as I see fit* (Judges 17:6; James 2: 14-26). This is called *antinomianism* in theology, meaning anti-law. It is an unbiblical belief that denies the righteousness of God and sees our grace as allowing total freedom in all that we do or can do as a license to sin; thus, we do not need to be obedient to God, His precepts, civil law, or any moral standards—nor do we need to bear Fruit. God says this is evil as it portrays evil as being good (Jer. 23:14; Rom. 2:22; 6:1-2; 14-15; 13:8, 10; Gal. 5:14; 6:2; Gal. 5:22-25; Jude 4; Rev. 2:22).

Questions

1. How would you deal with a plague or a drought or an earthquake or a disease or something else?
2. What do you need to do to prepare for Christ's return?
3. How have you or do you seek to battle God, by thought or inaction? What about factions in your church? When we come against one another, are we actually battling God?
4. What does it mean to you that Christ is our *chief cornerstone*? How can Jesus be more of the Chief, the Head of the corner in your life? What about your church?
5. Have you ever considered that God suffers because of our sins? And, in the midst of our sin that He is patient?
6. In your experience, how have you seen a defiant heart bring pain, chaos, strife, disillusionment, dysfunction, discouragement, distress, and grief? So, who wants that?
7. What have you done to receive Him and remain faithful?
8. Why do these people remain defiant and wicked instead of repenting? How do you think they will curse God?
9. What does it mean to not defile yourselves with the filth of sin or be exposed to evil and manipulators? How do Christians find themselves being ashamed of their faith in Christ?
10. This people who refuse to repent or seek Christ are in a battle of command and control! How do you think so?
11. What can you do to better hold to your faith without being sucked into the latest theories and fads of Christianity that ironically can distract us from Christ?
12. What needs to happen in your life for your faith to better empower your obedience? How can the fact that your obedience is what pleases God?

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9