
Living on the Rock

Various Passages



don't know how you feel about this world, but if we're to believe the headlines, we probably should say: "Stop the World! I want to get off!"

We read: the economy is collapsing, jobs are lost, earthquakes, hurricanes, war, the Titanic (if you reading about that, better get rid of that old stack of papers), etc. No wonder I suggest we'd probably be better off ignoring the Front page and Business Section.

If we get our security from Sacramento, Washington, the Red or Blue, our assets, etc. it is no wonder we're in trouble. And we ask why are people depressed?

But wait a minute! If we just get the right person in office or the wrong one out, if we just pass the right laws or overturned the wrong ones, things will have to get better. Yeah sure. How's that been working out for you so far? So ...

I. Security in an Insecure World

- A. Introduction
 - B. Confidence in Our Salvation
 - C. Confidence in Our Walk
 - D. Conclusion
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Introduction: ... that's why I don't recommend reading the news. The more of this negative stuff we take in, the more we are likely to fall under it's influence and live under the circumstances. I guess Paul didn't read the Jerusalem Advertiser because he said:

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (Philippians 4:8).

Jesus had even stronger words regarding how we are to respond to the negative nature of the world around us. He commanded:

"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?" (Matthew 6:25).

But, you say, "That sounds fine, but life was a lot simpler in Jesus' day. If He understood what we're dealing with He'd have known that if we can keep our stress levels down to simple anxiety, rather than full blown panic, we're actually doing pretty well."

The problem with this thinking is it rejects Christ's requirement for us to set aside anxiety. And if this is what He commands then it is possible to live accordingly. But how? It is that question and the resultant responses to the answer I intend to address this morning.

It all starts with one simple question. What is the source of our security? We all answer this one quickly with a theological truth, the Lord! But whether we live accordingly demonstrates the likelihood of our living without anxiety and being a testimony to God's glory.

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it” (Matthew 7:24–27).

B. Confidence in Our Salvation: So, true security comes from knowing who we are in Christ and who are Father is. If we live these truths, not just believe them academically, we build our house on rock.

“The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold” (Psalms 18:2a)

And Christ is that rock. He is:

1. **The Human Cornerstone:** The fact is we were created to be in relationship with God. One reason we are unstable is we can't fully function outside of that relationship. But it is only through Christ that we are in relationship with God as Father

*“For it stands in Scripture: “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”
So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone...” (1 Peter 2:6–7).*

2. **A Living Stone:** One of the most vital truths of the Gospel is it is validated through the resurrection. We serve a living God. Christ is alive. He not only paid for our sin, but in doing so He provides restoration with God now and in eternity.

“As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:4–5).

We are secure because we know where we are spending eternity.

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare

a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also” (John 14:1–3).

The point is, our security is in God/Christ, not in ourselves or anything of this world. This is why we can have confidence in the midst of chaos. A. H. Leitch puts it this way:

“ In John 10:29, in a continuation of the passage on Jesus as the great shepherd, Jesus said: “My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.” Paul wrote that “the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable” (Rom 11:29); and again he gave assurance to the Philippians, “I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil 1:6; cf. 2 Thess 3:3; 2 Tim 1:12; 4:18). On the basis of such promises, ... it is maintained that “once saved, always saved”; that those whom God has elected and upon whom He has poured out His Spirit effectually will persevere to the end.¹

And so we have full assurance of our destiny. Consequently, since we have confidence in our salvation, we should have ...

C. Confidence in Our Walk: What is the basis of that confidence? First, we know that God has plans for us both in that we are saved ...

“ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

... and called to His service and glory.

“ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified” (Romans 8:28–30).

Consider, before creation God had already selected us as His children. And before the earth was in place, He already had a “honey do” list for us. Why should we be fearful about the circumstances in which we find ourselves? Do we really believe God is running around in heaven pulling out His “hair” and wondering what He is going to do next?

Keep in mind, while we can create problems for ourselves, if we really understand that over our lifetime we are being conformed to the image of Christ, then we can experience assurance in God, or as Paul put it ...

“ And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6–7).

Again, remember our security is not grounded in ourselves, but in God who saved us.

¹ Tenney, Merrill C., general editor, The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1980.

“Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy ...” (Jude 1:24).

Now this doesn't mean we don't have a responsibility to walk in God's ways and to bring Him glory,

“Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony” (Colossians 3:12–14).

... but our salvation isn't tied to our works

“... in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:37–39)

This means even we can't separate ourselves from God's love. Praise His Name! So now, remind me why we should be anxious, insecure. After all because of who we are in Christ, as He Himself said ...

“... you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world ...” (John 15:19).

D. Conclusion: Academically we know we're secure. The challenge is to live accordingly, but we also know that God, His Spirit, will provide us with what we need to do so.

“Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it” (John 14:13–14).

And so we can find two major truths from these teachings. First we have a secure hope and second, we are blessed with the opportunity to offer this same hope to others.

1. A Secure Hope: Having a secure hope should make a significant impact on how we choose to live on a daily basis. As we are in danger of falling into a “pit” of despondency, we can say with the psalmist:

“He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure” (Psalms 40:2).

When we are about to be overtaken by anxiety we have the choice of reminding ourselves of these truths, giving ourselves an opportunity to experience the peace God intends for us.

“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7).

But, the primary purpose of our faith isn't to make our lives easier. It is to bring God glory and to advance His kingdom.

“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

2. A Secure Testimony: Which brings us to the second truth. Just as we are secure in our salvation, we can offer the hope of this security to the lost who live in a chaotic, insecure world. We can explain that there is no hope outside of God in Christ.

“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

“Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: ‘Whoever believes will not be in haste’” (Isaiah 28:16).

I do have to put here the usual caveat. No matter how erudite our arguments, we can't argue anyone into heaven. No one is lost or saved based on our presentation of the Gospel, or the lack thereof. It is God who draws and saves the lost.

But, as we experience God's peace, in the midst of circumstances, people should see something different in us. And as they are tossed to and fro by life's joy stealers, the door may open for a conversation about what makes the difference for us.

This isn't about “God has a wonderful plan for your life,” unless by that we mean a plan that pays for our sins and brings peace between He and us. We can tell of the rock on which our security is grounded, a rock that is a cross on which Christ shed His blood for us. And there is another rock, one in which a tomb for a wealthy man was carved. But that rocky tomb is empty and so we have another foundation stone upon which to build.

And so we end up where we started. The message we received and believed becomes the message we offer to others. We can pass on Jesus' words and ...

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it” (Matthew 7:24–27).

The question they must address is: What foundation are you building upon?

And finally, as for us, we have build on stone, but are we living as if we have build on sand? Let us ask the Spirit to empower us to live on the rock and therefore to be able to say with Paul ...

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:4–7).

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Introduction:

(Philippians 4:8; Matthew 6:25; Matthew 7:24–27)

B. Confidence in Our Salvation:

(Psalms 18:2a)

- 1. The Human Cornerstone: ~ *1 Peter 2:6–7*

2. A Living Stone: ~ *1 Peter 2:4–5; John 14:1–3*

C. Confidence in Our Walk:

(2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:28–30; Philippians 1:6–7; Jude 1:24; Colossians 3:12–14; Romans 8:37–39; John 15:19)

D. Conclusion:

(John 14:13–14)

1. A Secure Hope:

(Psalms 40:2; Philippians 4:7; 1 Corinthians 10:31)

2. A Secure Testimony:

(Acts 4:12; Isaiah 28:16; Matthew 7:24–27; Philippians 4:4–7)