

LET GOD ARISE!

Like a Master Builder Prayer Guide #3

Rev. Dr. Don L. Davis



Christ as Precious Stone

1 Peter 2.6

The Church's One Foundation

Samuel J. Stone and Samuel S. Wesley

The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord;
She is His new creation by water and the word:
From heav'n He came and sought her to be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her, and for her life He died.

Elect from every nation, yet one o'er all the earth,
Her charter of salvation: one Lord, one faith, one birth;
One holy name she blesses, partakes one holy food;
And to one hope she presses, with every grace endued.

'Mid toil and tribulation and tumult of her war,
She waits the consummation of peace forevermore;
Till with the vision glorious her longing eyes are blest,
And the great Church victorious shall be the Church at rest.

Yet she on earth hath union with God, the Three in One,
And mystic, sweet communion with those whose rest is won:
O happy ones and holy! Lord, give us grace that we
Like them, the meek and lowly, on high may dwell with Thee.

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The Living Stone, Rejected by Men but Precious in God's Sight

1 Pet. 2.4-10 - As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, [5] 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. [6] 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." [7] 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," [8] and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. [9] But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. [10] Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

The Precious Stone Is Laid in Zion, a Tested and Precious Cornerstone

Isa. 28.16 - 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.'"

Dan. 2.34-35 - As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. [35] Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Zech. 3.9 - For behold, on the stone that I have set before Joshua, on a single stone with seven eyes, I will engrave its inscription, declares the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day.



Unless otherwise noted, all Scriptures are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV)

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Zech. 4.7 - Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain. And he shall bring forward the top stone amid shouts of ‘Grace, grace to it!’”

Jesus Is Simultaneously a Sanctuary and a Stone of Offense

Isa. 8.14 - And he will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. [15] And many shall stumble on it. They shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken.

Jesus Realizes That He Is the Rejected Stone Who Has Become the Capstone

Matt. 21.42 - Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?’”

Mark 12.10 - “Have you not read this Scripture: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone?’”

Luke 20.17-18 - But he looked directly at them and said, “What then is this that is written: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone?’ [18] Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”

God Bears Witness of Jesus’ Identity, and Has Set His Seal on Him

John 1.33-34 - “I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ [34] And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”

John 5.36-37 - But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me. [37] And the



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Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen.

John 8.18 - I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me.

The Father Attests to Jesus' Identity in Purpose and Work

John 10.37-38 - If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; [38] but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.

John 11.42 - I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.

John 15.24 - If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father.

Acts 2.22 - Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know.

Acts 10.38 - How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

2 Pet. 1.17 - For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."



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God Calls Jesus His Son, “Beloved”

John 5.20 - For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel.

John 3.35 - The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand.

Luke 9.35 - And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!”

John 15.9 - As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.

John 17.24 - Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

Acts 4.27 - For truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel.

Ps. 2.7 - I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.”

1 John 4.9 - In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.

2 John 1.3 - Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father's Son, in truth and love.



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Matt. 11.27 - All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

Matt. 17.5 - He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."

Acts 3.13 - The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him.

Acts 4.11-12 - This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. [12] 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.

God Did Not Even Spare His Own Beloved Son for Us

Rom. 8.32 - He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ■

WITHOUT A doubt, I can identify and vividly remember the worst day of my life.

This was the day when we received a call from our daughter concerning our son who had been visiting her and his girlfriend in between punk-band gigs. I was startled on a Sunday morning to hear her frantic and terrified explanation that Matthew, our son, was in the throes of death. We received her call during the exact moment the paramedics were working to revive our son from cardiac failure. I can remember the sound of her shrieking and panic-stricken voice, set against the calm, collected voice of the police officer



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who took the phone from her and sought tell me what he knew. There we were frozen in shock some 500 miles away, and completely unable to do anything about our firstborn, who was truly precious to us in every way.

Due to an unknown yet deadly cause, our 26-year-old son's system had gone into shock, and for nearly an hour the trauma team sought to revive him, but to no avail. The dread, confusion, pain, and grief that flowed from those horrible moments have left a trail of pain like a greasy oil leak through our days, slow and stained. From that day to this one as I write, nothing can explain what it means to lose the apple of your eye, your heart's best, to death. No parent is ever meant to bury their own child, and no one can possibly be prepared for the loss of their child, even a grown one.

Through prayer, faith in the Lord and his word, and great family and really good friends, the Spirit of God has applied the Father's grace to us. While we may not know all of the reasons why he was taken from us, we know the One who knows all things knew and loved Matthew best. The fact that God knows all is sufficient for us in every way.

I share this personal and life-shaping experience because, at least for me, it has completely transformed the ways in which I read the Scriptures regarding the Father's love for his Son. I am a father; sinful, inadequate, and often times guilty of exasperating even my grown children. Nevertheless, I have striven to love these little ones who have shared my life since their birth. Like all fathers, I count my children precious, and love them no less, now that they are grown, one married, and both in graduate school at my alma mater, working for Ph.Ds in the same English department. I love them. I miss them. I am proud of them. They are dear to me, and I especially with Beth my wife still feel the loss of Matthew. He was, after all, our firstborn, and precious to us beyond words.



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Now, when I read about Jesus being the precious One to the Father, and ponder the Father's extreme sacrifice in giving his Son up on our behalf, I can express the inexpressible. I actually empathize with the Lord.

Of course, it is impossible as it is absurd for us to think that we can even begin to understand the profundity of the loss suffered by the Father in giving up his dearest and best for us. As Paul said, "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?" (Rom. 8.32). The heart of our passion for the lost, the very fuel of our fervency to intercede for them for the Kingdom's sake, is rooted in God's amazing willingness to not even withhold his only Son for us. God spared nothing, clung to nothing, gave up everything, his own darling Son, his most Precious Child, in order to redeem a world at war with him. This is the essence of our Christian faith, and the strength of its wonder to change, redeem, inspire, and transform.

No one has ever heard of a love like this.

More than once Beth and I have pondered an amazing anthropomorphic truth: the Father's grief over his Son's loss. Jesus is our Cornerstone, chosen and precious, elect and strong, given to us from the Father himself to ransom us from the Curse and to restore creation to God's rule. The price to be paid was the sacrifice of his own Son. Having lost a son myself, and having experienced the full range of emotion because of it—grief and consolation and pain and despair—I can only imagine the depth of the Father's loss in losing our Lord Jesus. Not only did he lose his Son, but he poured on his Son the full weight of his righteous wrath, not because of what Jesus had done, but what we ourselves had done. And all this, because of love.

To finish the task of the Great Commission we will need to stay focused, to remain hungry, to be inspired to see what it cost the Father to win his world



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back to himself. The key to urban missions and the vision of intercessory prayer is rooted in our ability to be changed and transformed by the thought of the Father's extreme sacrifice to bring us back to himself. The price of his Son, the extreme cost of surrendering the very life of his own precious anointed Messiah, shines a light on all our motives, all our excuses and alibis, and all our hesitations to give everything to him. The cities of the world will simply not be won without those who ponder heaven's loss for the sake of earth's gain, and strive to live in the spirit of that cost.

God gave up his own precious Son, his chosen and elect, in order to bring us back to himself. Do we really need, then, any other reason to redouble our efforts and strive with all that is in us to demonstrate our gratitude for a Father's heart so generous that he would not even shelter his own Son in order to draw us lost, poor, and despised, back to himself? ■

**The Season of Epiphany:
Jesus Is God's Precious Son, Given for the World**

1 Pet. 2.4-5 - As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, [5] 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.



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Biblical Principle of the Month

Even as children of the Father, none of us can possibly know how painful and horrible the loss of Jesus, God's precious Son, was for him to sacrifice on behalf of the world. His extreme demonstration of love and grace, when fully appreciated and embraced, can transform us, renew us, and lift us up out of lethargy and boredom to heroic and courageous discipleship. As we behold our Lord's beauty during this Season after Epiphany, let us never forget his unconditional availability to God, and the Father's unreserved love for the world. Let us pray for the cities informed by his heart, and do all we can this month to share with others and plead to God to win the lost, those for whom he sacrificed his only Son to bring them back to him.

Isa. 42.1 - Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations.

Rom. 5.6-10 - For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. [7] For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— [8] but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. [9] Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. [10] For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.



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