



Matthew 16:18 – *Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means ‘rock’), and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.*

1 Peter 2:4-5 - *You are coming to Christ, who is the living cornerstone of God’s temple. He was rejected by people, but he was chosen by God for great honor. And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple.*

Nehemiah 4:2 - *“...Will they revive the stones from the heaps of rubbish—stones that are burned?”*

This is exactly what Jesus does! Like Nehemiah, Christ is our Master-Builder who takes the most unlikely people (burned stones) and uses them to build something great.

What Does the Master Builder Do With Us?

1. He Chooses Us

- Just as Nehemiah went to the broken down stones and chose to use them, so too Jesus comes to us and chooses us for His work
- We are chosen by Jesus because of His grace
- Grace gives us the amazing privilege of being used by God

2. He Shapes Us

- God is continually shaping us so that He can use us to build His Church
- Because God sees potential in each of us, He accepts us as we are but shapes us into who He wants us to be (e.g. Michelangelo & Statue of David)
- Humility and patience are required as God continually shapes and perfects us

3. He Sets Us

- God has the master-plan and He sets us in the exact place He needs us to be
- God will set us in a place for our own good and for the completion of His plan
- We are most effective when we trust God stay where He sets us (e.g. Jonah)

4. He Joins Us

- Christianity is not lived in isolation, but is expressed through relationship with God and people (i.e. Love God with all we have, and love our neighbour as ourselves)
- Something magnificent is made when stones are joined together (e.g. Taj Mahal),
- Our lives cross paths and intersect at the body of Christ (Luke 8:41-49)

Why Does the Master Builder Join Us Together?

a) To Build Something of Strength

- A stone alone has no great strength and can be easily moved
- Together we are stronger than we are as individuals

b) To Build Something of Purpose

- A stone alone can serve no great purpose, however many stones joined together can serve a higher purpose
- We become part of something bigger than ourselves when we join with others to build the Church

c) To Build Something of Beauty

- The glorious Church is made up of many individual people (living stones) built upon the common foundation of Jesus Christ

Conclusion

As living stones each of us have been chosen by God and connected with other believers, that we might contribute to His Church.

Discussion Guide:

- Which part of the message spoke to you most? Why?
- What difference does it make in our lives when we understand that God has chosen us by His grace?
- What are the benefits of being joined together with other believers, as opposed to being a 'stone alone'?
- How does our attitude change when we recognise that God has 'set' us in certain environments? (i.e. family, workplace, church)
- Talk about some areas of your life that God is shaping at present. Why does God shape us?
- What are the particular areas within our church that you would like to contribute toward this year? Talk about opportunities you may have together as a group.

Pray:

While you're together as a group pray for:

- Any needs within the group
- Our Senior Pastors James & Sam Macpherson
- People to continue to say 'yes to Jesus' in our Friday night and Sunday morning services. Pray specifically that people will be saved this Friday night (Feb 26th) as Pastor Lucas Connell shares his testimony.
- People who you are personally believing to win to Christ this year