

I brought my Rocky Mountain rock and stone collection today. Back when I lived in Colorado we'd go rock climbing over an old abandoned gold mine. For vacations we'd go four-wheeling, camping up in the mountains. As you can see, I found some rock and stones. Stones to show the rock hard edges of the Rockies. Glittering rock to show off the glitter of gold - "there's gold in them there hills. Even more there's fools's gold in them there hills." For all the stone I brought home, I must have picked up and tossed, kicked and rejected, walked by, missed, ignored tons more.

I imagine you've done some stone picking, haven't you? When you're stone picking, what do you look for? For skipping stones across the lake, stones like this won't do; you want smooth stones. For landscaping stones for your yard, stones like this won't do; you want big stones. For jewelry and ring stones, stones like this won't do; you want gemstones. So what would you do with these? You'd toss them, ignore them, reject them. You might be wondering: "Why haven't [I] already tossed these."

We live in a world where we pick and choose, reject and toss. That's not all bad, is it? It depends on who and what we pick and choose, who and what we reject and toss.

So what do we do with the Rock? I don't mean Dwayne Johnson. What do we do with the Rock chosen by God and precious? When we look at Jesus ... when we listen to Jesus ... when we hear Jesus call ... what do we do? Do we pick and choose? Or do we reject and toss?

Back when Jesus walked and talked in small-town Nazareth and big-city Jerusalem - what did people do? Pharisees and Sadducees who were looking to build a church in their image looked at Jesus, listened to Jesus, and rejected Jesus. As they were building their idea of church, they tossed Jesus as garbage stone because Jesus didn't fit their idea of what church should be like. In those same days, when people like you and me were looking to build their lives, they looked to Jesus; they listened to Jesus; and time and again they didn't like the way Jesus looked; they didn't like what he said; so they tossed him off as garbage stone that didn't suit them. Why? They wanted a Jesus who didn't get in the way of what they wanted to do. They wanted a Jesus who didn't expect too much. They wanted a Jesus who would make life easier and better for them. And when they heard

Jesus say: “Deny yourselves; deny your way of thinking; deny the world’s way of thinking,” they tossed and rejected Jesus like garbage stone.

That was then. This is now. What do people do today with Jesus? Apart from the nails and the cross, not much different. If they don’t like what Jesus says, so many do the same thing, don’t they? We all know people - they don’t like what Jesus says; they don’t like what Jesus claims - Jesus doesn’t fit the life they want to build for themselves. So what do they do? They toss and reject Jesus like garbage stone. We all know people, don’t we? Some days we see them in the mirror.

That word “reject” is so harsh, isn’t it? When family and friends decide Jesus doesn’t fit the lives they’re trying to build, when family and friends live like Jesus doesn’t fit the lives they’re trying to build - we don’t want to say they’re rejecting Jesus, do we? When we decide that Jesus’ call to action - what Jesus wants us to do - doesn’t fit our schedule or our lives, when we decide that Jesus expects too much, when we put Jesus off to the side, we don’t want to say we’re rejecting Jesus, do we? Instead, we sugar-coat our rejecting. We excuse and rationalize our rejecting. But if Jesus’ call to action is put off while we live the world’s call to action .... If Jesus’ word is put off while we fill ourselves with the word of the world .... What is that if it’s not rejecting Jesus?

To a people who had rejected Jesus, Peter says: **“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”** I’m not sure that was an invitation. At least, not at first an invitation. First and foremost, Peter is challenging those who would reject Jesus, rejecting the thinking that puts Jesus off to the side. Here we have God’s hard reality for hard hearts - **“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”**

People out there have a hard time with that hard truth, don’t they? Too exclusive! People in here have a hard time with that hard truth, don’t we? Too exclusive. “Who are you to say who’s right for God?” “So what if she didn’t believe in Jesus; so what if she didn’t go to church; she lived better than anybody in your church.” “Who are you to judge ...?”

Who am I to judge? Who are you to judge? We aren’t the judges, and we’re not the gatekeepers to heaven. We’re simply echoing the judge, echoing the gatekeeper. It’s not me; it’s not us. It is God who says: **“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”** If God wants to offer us a way out of this world with all its hurt

and heartache, if God wants to offer us a way out from under his judgment, if God wants to offer us a way out through Jesus, that's not something to gripe and grumble about. That's something to celebrate! "God is offering us a way out!"

Did you notice? We just moved from exclusive to inclusive. Peter moved from exclusive "**there is no other name,**" to inclusive "**by which we must be saved.**" Peter was offering - to those who had rejected Jesus - a way to be saved. Yes, Jesus is exclusive; there is no way to be saved without Jesus. Without Jesus, people - real people - people we know - are going to hell. But at the same time that Jesus is exclusive as the only way to be saved, Jesus is inclusive - Jesus is for the world; whoever believes in Jesus will be saved; everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved!

**"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."** That's not just a hard truth for hard hearts. When Jesus said; "**I am the way, the truth, and the life,**" who was he talking to? Thomas and the other disciples. "Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life" isn't just hard truth for hard hearts, it is hard truth meant for wandering, wondering, questioning, and struggling hearts. It's hard truth to keep us clear on the options - Jesus, Jesus, only Jesus. It's hard truth to keep us focused on Jesus.

**"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."** Inside that hard truth is a soft heart - the soft heart of the Father - your Father - who "**so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.**" Inside the hard truth of our lesson is the soft heart of your Good Shepherd who gave his life for you - as God's atoning sacrifice, God's peace-making sacrifice, not only for your sins but for the sins of the whole world. Inside the hard truth of our lesson is the soft heart of the Spirit who is at work to call you, gather you, to include you in the life and the love of the Father and the Son.

To get back to rocks and stones, God didn't give us Jesus to be a bashing rock - "You need Jesus!" God didn't give us Jesus to be a rock in a box, a rock we put in a box and save for some other time. God gave us Jesus to be our foundation rock, our cornerstone - the Rock we build our lives on, the perfect stone that sets our course right in the house of God. God is giving us Jesus to be our Rock. So what kind of Rock will Jesus be in your life? Amen.

## DIVINE SERVICE II

**IN OUR WORLD TODAY ...** we like to pick and choose, toss and reject. If something or someone doesn't fit what we think we want or need - out he or she or it goes. And so, for most people - Jesus gets tossed, because he doesn't fit what they are looking for.

**IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ...** we see that Jesus does fit what God is looking for. In Jesus, God gives us what we need.

### OPENING HYMN

*"I am Content! My Jesus Lives Again"*

**Hymn 464**

I am content! My Jesus lives again,  
in whom my heart is pleased.  
He has fulfilled the law of God for me,  
God's wrath he has appeased.  
Since he in death could perish never,  
I also shall not die forever.  
I am content! I am content!

I am content! My Jesus is my head;  
his member I will be.  
He bowed his head when on the cross he died  
with cries of agony.  
Now death is brought into subjection  
for me by Jesus' resurrection.  
I am content! I am content!

I am content! My Jesus is my light,  
my radiant sun of grace.  
His cheering rays beam blessings forth for all:  
sweet comfort, hope, and peace.  
This Easter sun has brought salvation  
and everlasting exultation.  
I am content! I am content!

I am content! Lord, set me ever free  
and wake me from the dead  
that I may rise forevermore to be  
with you, my living head.  
The chains that hold my body, sever;  
then shall my soul rejoice forever.  
I am content! I am content!

#### INVOCATION

M: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

#### CONFESSION

M: Dear friends, let us approach God with a true heart and confess our sins, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to forgive us.

C: **Lord of life, I confess that I am by nature dead in sin.**

**For faithless worrying and selfish pride,**

**For sins of habit and sins of choice,**

**For the evil I have done and the good I have failed to do,**

**I deserve to be cast away from your presence forever.**

**O Lord, I am sorry for my sins. Forgive me, for Jesus' sake.**

#### ABSOLUTION

M: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. In his great mercy, God made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in our sins. Hear the word of Christ through his called servant: I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

#### LORD, HAVE MERCY (*Kyrie*)

M: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

For the well-being of all people everywhere, that they may receive from you all they need to sustain body and life, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

M: For the spread of your life-giving gospel throughout the world, that all who are lost in sin may be brought to faith in you, hear our prayer, O Christ.

**C: Christ, have mercy.**

M: For patience and perseverance in this life, that we may not lose the hope of heaven as we await your return, hear our prayer, O Lord.

**C: Lord, have mercy.**

M: Lord of life, live in us that we may live for you.

**Amen.**

**HYMN**

*"Like the Golden Sun Ascending"*

**Hymn 470 vs. 2-4**

Thanks to you, O Christ victorious!

Thanks to you, O Lord of life!

Death has now no power o'er us,

you have conquered in the strife.

Thanks because you did arise

and have opened paradise!

None can fully sing the glory

of the resurrection story.

You have died for my transgression,

all my sins on you were laid.

You have won for me salvation,

on the cross my debt was paid.

From the grave I shall arise

and shall meet you in the skies.

Death itself is transitory;

I shall lift my head in glory.

For the joy your advent gave me,

for your gospel's great reward,

for your baptism which has saved me,

for your supper and your Word;

for your death, the bitter scorn,

for your resurrection morn:

Lord, I thank you and extol you,

and in heav'n I shall behold you.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, you form the minds of your faithful people into a single will. Make us love what you command and desire what you promise, that among the many changes of this world, our hearts may ever yearn for the lasting joys of heaven; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## FIRST READING

*Acts 4:8-12*

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. Jesus is

“ ‘the stone you builders rejected,  
which has become the cornerstone.’

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## PSALM OF THE DAY

*Psalm 118A*

*Refrain*

This is the day the LORD has made, let us rejoice and be glad!

This is the day the LORD has made, let us rejoice and be glad!

The LORD is my strength and / my defense;

he has become my sal- / vation.

The LORD's right hand is / lifted high;

the LORD's right hand has done / mighty things!

I will not / die but live,

and will proclaim what the / LORD has done. *Refrain*

I will give you thanks, for you / answered me;  
you have become my sal- / vation.  
The stone the builders re- / jected  
has become the / cornerstone;  
the LORD has / done this,  
and it is marvelous / in our eyes.  
**Glory be to the Father and / to the Son**  
**and to the Holy / Spirit,**  
**as it was in the be- / ginning,**  
**is now, and will be forever. / Amen. Refrain**

SECOND READING

*1 Peter 2:4-10*

As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, in order to bring spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it says in Scripture:

“See, I lay a stone in Zion,  
a chosen and precious cornerstone,  
and the one who trusts in him  
will never be put to shame.”

Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,

“The stone the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone,”

and,

“A stone that causes people to stumble  
and a rock that makes them fall.”

They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

*John 14:6*

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

I am the way and the truth and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

**GOSPEL**

*John 14:1–11*

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.”

Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise be to you, O Christ!**

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

*“Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled”*

**Hymn 809**

Do not let your hearts be troubled;

have faith in God and faith in me.

I will go forth to prepare a place for you;

then I’ll come back to take you with me,

that where I am, you may also be.

In God's house there are many places  
for you to dwell in peace and safety.  
You know the way to where I'll lead you;  
if you are lost, I will show the way. (Refrain)

I am the way, the truth, and the life;  
only through me can you know what I know.  
If you knew me, you would know the Father;  
if you see me, you see your God. (Refrain)

The words I speak are not only of myself;  
it is your God who lives within me.  
If you believe that your God and I are one,  
I will provide when you call my name. (Refrain)

#### SERMON

*Acts 4:8-12*

#### NICENE CREED

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one**

**baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

**OFFERING PRAYER**

Lord of all, forgive us for so often arguing with your claim on our lives. Accept these gifts as evidence of our determination to accept your guidance and your help, as you equip us for the life of service to which you have called us.

**OFFERING**

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**PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

**M: O Lord God, our strength, our song, and our salvation, you fulfilled your promises by the resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ, from the dead.**

**C: Thanks be to God! You give us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

M: In your compassion you sent Christ, the Good Shepherd, who laid down his life to rescue the lost.

**C: Drive out all doubt and gloom that we may delight in your glorious triumph.**

M: Lift our eyes heavenward to see him who lives to make intercession for the saints, and grant us confidence in the greatness of his power. Keep before us the vision of your redeemed people standing before your throne and singing the song of victory.

**C: Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive wisdom and power and honor and glory and praise.**

M: Make us instruments of your peace as we bring the good news of hope and new life to those around us. Guide us in the use of all that you have entrusted to us: our time, our talents, and our treasures.

**C: Risen Lord, live in us that we may live for you.**

M: Merciful Lord Jesus, grant healing to the sick, and strengthen the faith of the suffering and the dying. Assure them of your abiding presence, and comfort them with the hope of eternal life.

*Special prayers and intercessions may follow.*

M: Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

*Silent prayer.*

M: Gracious Father, you have restored to us the joy of your salvation. With happy hearts, we come before you and say:

**C: Alleluia! Thanks be to God! Amen.**

#### LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

#### THE SACRAMENT

(Guests, please see our communion practice on page 2.)

(Gluten-free wafers are available; ask Pastor.)

M: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

M: Lift up your hearts.

**C: We lift them up unto the Lord.**

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

**C: It is good and right so to do.**

M: It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who rose from the dead in glorious triumph to bring forgiveness to the world and everlasting life to all who believe.

Therefore with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

#### **Holy, Holy, Holy**

**CW 184**

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power, God of might.  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest!

**WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my † body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my † blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: **Amen.**

**LAMB OF GOD *Agnus Dei***

**CW 202**

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us, grant us peace.

**DISTRIBUTION HYMN**

**"Built on the Rock"**

**Hymn 856**

Built on the Rock the Church shall stand  
even when steeples are falling.

Crumbled have spires in ev'ry land;

bells still are chiming and calling,

calling the young and old to rest,

but above all the soul distressed,

longing for rest everlasting.

Surely in temples made with hands

God, the Most High, is not dwelling;

high above earth his temple stands,

all earthly temples excelling.

Yet he who dwells in heav'n above

chooses to live with us in love,  
making our bodies his temple.

We are God's house of living stones,  
built for his own habitation.  
He through baptismal grace us owns  
heirs of his wondrous salvation.  
Were we but two his name to tell,  
yet he would deign with us to dwell  
with all his grace and his favor.

Here stands the font before our eyes,  
telling how God has received us.  
Th' altar recalls Christ's sacrifice  
and what the sacrament gives us.  
Here sound the Scriptures that proclaim  
Christ yesterday, today, the same,  
and evermore, our Redeemer.

Grant then, O God, your will be done,  
that, when the church bells are ringing,  
many in saving faith may come  
where Christ his message is bringing:  
"I know my own; my own know me.  
You, not the world, my face shall see.  
My peace I leave with you. Amen."

#### **CLOSING PRAYER**

M: We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet that you have given us to eat and to drink in this sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our love. By your Spirit help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## BLESSING

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. **Amen.**

## CLOSING HYMN

*"You Are the Way ; Through You Alone"*

Hymn 514

You are the way; thro' you alone  
can we the Father find;  
in you, O Christ, has God revealed  
his heart and will and mind.

You are the truth; your Word alone  
true wisdom can impart;  
you only can inform the mind  
and purify the heart.

You are the life; the empty tomb  
proclaims your conqu'ring arm,  
and those who put their trust in you  
nor death nor hell shall harm.

You are the way, the truth, the life;  
grant us that way to know,  
that truth to keep, that life to win  
whose joys eternal flow.

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