

Solid rock or stumbling block

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Solid Rock or Stumbling Block

- Sermon on the mount : To have life, to have happiness
- All the money or stuff in the world is useless if you don't have any life in you to enjoy it.
- Jesus talks about this in our gospel lesson today. He has just told his disciples that he is going to go to Jerusalem and be killed.
- Peter rebukes Jesus for saying something like that.

Solid Rock or Stumbling Block

- We have forfeited our lives.
- We might have a pulse - there might be some brain activity going on and everybody is still breathing...
- But there is not much life in us, because we are too focused on ourselves-instead of denying ourselves-its all about us, all about self-preservation.

Solid Rock or Stumbling Block

- See Jesus' words to Peter "If any want to become my **followers**, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and **follow** me."
- We modern Christians have frequently missed the — **followers** part.

Solid Rock or Stumbling Block

- Too often we have told Jesus to follow us.
- Too often, like Peter, we've scolded Jesus for not sticking to protocol Too often, we have told Jesus our way and expected him to follow us.
- Who is this Jesus anyway?

Solid Rock or Stumbling Block

- Jesus tells the disciples that it is absolutely essential to his life that he dies.
- For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? (16:24-26).

Solid Rock or Stumbling Block

- What good is all the money in the world and all the fancy cars and all the expensive houses and all the gourmet food if you are not alive?
- The English word for life is a biological or scientific term meaning--- we have a pulse and we can breathe and there is brain activity going on.
- The Greek word for life, psyche, is not a medical term at all. It has more to do with who we are and what gets us going than just a pulse. It's to do with our innermost self or inner person, the soul, our being.

About life and death

- The Bible tells not about better life, but how to die a better death;
- It tells us how not to improve ourselves, but how to deny ourselves.
- It tells us not to focus on ourselves at all, but to focus on Christ.

Solid Rock or Stumbling Block

- Peter – the rock— became a stumbling block standing in the way of Jesus' destiny to redeem a fallen world.
- The very same people who stand for Jesus often stand against him.
- As a Christian - Am I a solid rock of faith, or a stumbling block inhibiting the faith of others?

Solid Rock or Stumbling Block

- Jesus said..... You are the light of the world. A city located on a hill can't be hidden. Neither do you light a lamp, and put it under a basket, but on a stand; and it shines to all who are in the house. Even so, let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 5:14-16)
- We must be recognizable and visible in the community if we are to bear witness to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

- No anonymous Christians. You are either for Christ or against him.
- When it comes to bearing witness - Neutrality is not an option. Mediocrity is no option either
- When it comes to standing with Jesus, there is no middle ground, “sitting on the fence”
- Jesus told his disciples, Matthew 12:30 You're either for him or against him.
- As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are expected to live by a higher standard than the world around us. Matthew 5:47- [you shall be perfect] –
- We should strive for the righteousness of God and not be content with the status quo.

Solid Rock or Stumbling Block

- We are called to live by a higher standard, when we do, others notice, and when we don't ... others notice that too, they are watching to see how you live out your faith.
- What you say and do makes a difference.
- You either help others come closer to the righteousness of God, or you cause them to stumble – and when you do, there is a price to pay.

Solid Rock or Stumbling Block

- When we act –It’s about what is best for those around you.
- You can either be a stumbling block or a rock of faith. This is why Jesus rebuked Peter:
“Get behind me, Satan...”

The Cross is the answer

- "If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, and whoever will lose his life for my sake will find it."
(Matthew 16:24-25)
- How can you gain life by losing it?
- The answer lies in the Cross of Jesus Christ. Jesus died for the sins of the world and, in dying, he was raised again to eternal life.

The Cross is the answer

- Seek life and all its worldly trappings, and you'll lose it; lose your life in devotion to God and service to others, and you'll find it.
- The Cross is the answer – a stumbling block to all who would bring God down to their level yet, the cornerstone of God's kingdom.

(1 Corinthians 1:22-24)

- When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.
- Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.
- Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."