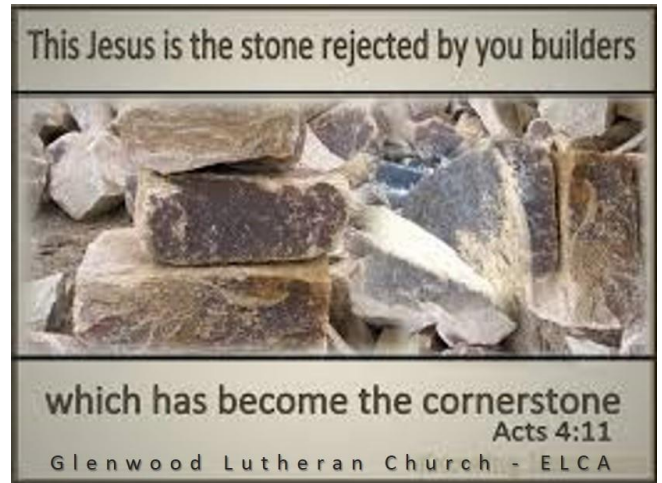


Connections Newsletter with Pastor Mark Manning

**“This Jesus is ‘the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone.’”
- Acts 4:11**

Peter is telling the leaders of Israel that not only have they blown it in crucifying the Messiah they had so longed for, but that in doing so God has thwarted their claim to be the ones upon whom everything is built. God is building something new, with something the builders have cast away.

I like to go to the Habitat for Humanity “Restore” stores. If you have never been to one, they sell donated used/new building materials and appliances (using the income to fund their larger housing operation). You can find furniture (some from hotels), doors, windows, kitchen appliances, ceramic tiles, bricks, shingles, bathroom and kitchen plumbing fixtures, lights; all sorts of neat stuff. Usually you can buy it for a small fraction of its original cost. In some ways it is a place for “rejected cornerstones.” But you can use it to start a new project! You can re-use it for your new purposes. What was deemed not worth it by some, is now valuable to you. For the early church, being cast off or rejected had real meaning. In some places, believers in Jesus were cast out of the synagogue or temple. They were cast out of family and social networks. They had to build a new worship and communal life together, with the Risen Jesus Christ as the cornerstone of it all. Have you ever experienced this rejection and rebuilding in your life?



[\(click here or the image above for a short video message\)](#)

Prayer: God, you are the creator of all there is, and you continually add to our lives. You bring us daily bread in food, shelter and all that we need. Help us by the power of your Holy Spirit, to build our lives around you as our cornerstone. Amen.

[Click Here for a Short Video Message from Pastor Mark](#)

Questions for Discussion/Reflection:

1. *Luke quotes Psalm 118.22, a Psalm of victory, salvation and joy, in reference to Jesus. He is simultaneously giving them Good News, while reminding them of their actions and complicity is Jesus' death is also God's plan. Do we really go so far as to say that Jesus' death was God plan these days? Or do we skirt the question? Why?*
2. *In the past, Old Testament scriptures were used to support prophetic speech and explain what God was/is doing. These days, some denominations and religious groups use the Bible to predict and explain world events—often with a special agenda or twist. How can we begin to talk about the right way to use the Bible and wrong way to use the Bible to explain what is happening in our lives?*
3. *In our society, what are some examples of something or someone who has been rejected but now is the cornerstone of something new?*
4. *In our church and religious life, what are some examples of something or someone who has been rejected but now is the cornerstone of something new?*
5. *How can we be aware so that we do not reject others who may build up the kingdom of God?*