

# Rejected CORNERSTONE



## Mark 11:27-12:12

*(A thirty second time lapse video plays of Kory and his kids putting together a Lego Death Star)*

One of the really good things when you have three boys is you can put all of their money together and buy a really big present that *you* have always secretly wanted. Christmas, two years ago, we got to purchase the Lego Star Wars Death Star. We spent two days putting this thing together. Christmas day and the day after, we literally spent the whole time putting this Death Star together. The time-captured video we made didn't capture all of the moments around putting together this Lego set. There was actually a moment where Crider and I came head to head. Most of the time, he was putting the Lego together, and I was just coming in doing a little bit and then go do other things. There was a moment where I came in and looked at the Death Star and it didn't seem quite right. It seemed like something was off, something was not according to plan. So I got the instructions out, turned a few pages back, and noticed one of the walls was actually in the wrong place. It was moved over a little bit, so I said, "Crider, we have a problem. You put this wall in the wrong place. We've got to tear it down and go back and fix this." He said, "Dad, it will be fine. Let's just keep going." I said, "No Crider, there's a big problem. You can't

just free build and get the design that's on that box. If you want this thing to happen, you have to follow the instructions to the T. You can't free build and end up with what is on the box." So we had this little argument with him saying, "it's fine, I can keep going and make up later on." I said, "No, we've got to go back to square one because if you don't put this piece exactly where it goes at this point, as the structure keeps going, there will be a point where it's not going to turn out how you want it to be. If you want to get the picture on the box, you can't free build. You can't just do according to what you think or desire; you have to build this according to plan. You've got to follow the step-by-step instructions." See, I'm sort of a master Lego builder because my kids love Legos. If there is one thing I've learned about Legos is you have to follow the instructions to the T. There's a thing called free building, and that is to just do whatever you want. You can do that, but if you're going to free build, you're not going to end up with the image on the box. If you want to get to the image on the box, you have to follow the maker's design. To get to the design, the maker has put out a plan, a step-by-step order where every brick goes in a certain place.

If you have your bibles, we're going to start in Mark chapter 11. We will see in chapter 11 and chapter 12 that we have Israel who is free building the Kingdom of God. They're building it according to what they think, according to how they are determining the bricks to go, and Jesus is going to come in and say we have a problem. Like that moment with me and Crider when I tell him you can't do that, Jesus is going to step in and say there is a big problem... 'You've been free building the kingdom. You've got it to where it looks like a really good structure, but you missed the most important part, you missed the most important brick. The most important brick, the cornerstone, is Me. You have built this wonderful structure, but you didn't build it on Me.' We will see as we read through this text and see this parable, Jesus is going to tell the builders of Israel, those in charge of the people of God, 'The stone that you rejected that you thought was not important, Me, Jesus Christ, is actually God's cornerstone, the most important stone that the entire structure kingdom is built on. You've missed Me, and in reality, you have missed everything.' You might think what that has to do with you. Well, it has a lot to do with you and a lot to do with me because our temptation is to be free builders. We're tempted to

just free build our own lives, our own way, with no regard to who Jesus Christ is. What Jesus is going to speak to all of us is if you want to have the design that is meant for your life, you have to build your life on the cornerstone of Jesus Christ.

We're going to explore this question:

### **Is Jesus a stone *in* your life, or, *the* cornerstone *of* your life?**

That's a big difference. Is Jesus a stone in your life, meaning, He's important, you make time for Him, you showed up on Sunday morning. Of course He is one of the pieces in your life; but if Jesus is a stone, if He's merely part of your life, then you've missed the whole point. So, is Jesus a stone in your life? Or, is He the cornerstone of your life? That's a big difference. In other words, are you trying to take Jesus and add Him to the life you've already created and the direction you're already going? Or, did you come to Jesus and say, 'You are brick one. You're page one, number one. I'm building everything from You and off of You. You are orientating my whole life. Everything I do is going to be determined on You, the cornerstone. You are not part of my life; You are my life. That's what true discipleship looks like. That's what true belief looks like. It's not making Jesus part of your life; it's Jesus becoming you life.

That's what we're going to wrestle with this morning. We're going to read Mark 12:1-12 together, then we're going to go back and work through the text.

### **Scripture**

***"And he began to speak to them in parables. "A man planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a pit for the winepress and built a tower, and leased it to tenants and went into another country. When the season came, he sent a servant to the tenants to get from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. And they took him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Again he sent to them another servant, and they struck him on the head and treated him shamefully. And he sent another, and him they***

***killed. And so with many others: some they beat, and some they killed. He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally he sent him to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But those tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' And they took him and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard. What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others. Have you not read this Scripture:***

***"The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone;  
this was the Lord's doing,  
and it is marvelous in our eyes'?"***

***And they were seeking to arrest him but feared the people, for they perceived that he had told the parable against them. So they left him and went away."***

(Prayer)

Father God, we pray that You would take Your Word and speak to our hearts, that you would let us examine whether Jesus is one brick in the building of our lives, or is He the brick, the cornerstone, who we build our entire lives on, and He determines every angle of our lives. God, help us to know if Jesus is a stone, or the cornerstone in our lives. We pray this in Jesus good name, amen.

Jesus tells this parable, but we've got to back up a little bit and ask the question of why Jesus told this particular parable. It's a long parable, and Mark doesn't usually have a lot of long parables. This is telling you this is a pretty important parable in this section of Scripture. We are in Jerusalem on that last week. Jesus is headed to the cross very shortly. This is probably Tuesday of that last week, and Jesus begins to tell a parable. Let's go to verse 27 of chapter 11 to ask why Jesus told this parable.

***"And they came again to Jerusalem. And as he was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to him, and they said to him, "By what authority are you doing these things, or who gave you this authority to do them?"***

The question is 'Jesus, who gave you the authority to do this, by what authority?' Jesus didn't cleanse the temple; He cleared the temple. He's doing all of things to the temple, He has authority, He's casting out demons, He's teaching, and He has a following. So the leaders, the priests, the scribes, and the Pharisees are all coming up to Jesus saying, 'ok, hold on just a second. Who gave you the right and authority to do what you are doing?' This group of people made up the Sanhedrin. They were the leaders, the power brokers of Israel. They were the ones who said what is ok and what is not, and here Jesus is going in disrupting their order, so they are questioning Jesus saying, 'who in the world gave you authority to step on our turf and tell us how to do things. We are in charge here! You need to speak to us if you're going to speak to the people. How dare you go over our authority and speak to the people directly!', so they are angry at Jesus.

***Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. Was the baptism of John from heaven or from man? Answer me."***

So Jesus is going to put a question into their court, and it will be a hard question for them to answer. Why is it a hard for them to answer? Well, Mark actually tells us.

***And they discussed it with one another, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But shall***

***we say, 'From man'?"—they were afraid of the people, for they all held that John really was a prophet.***

So Jesus basically says, 'ok, leaders of Israel; what about John's baptism? Was that from God, or was that from man? The Pharisees and the Sanhedrin are afraid to answer because they know they're in trouble. If they say it was just from man, then all of the people are going to be mad because they believe John was a prophet. But if they say it was from God, John was a prophet of God, then Jesus obviously is going to ask why they do you not believe in him. John said at the baptism, the heavens opened up and the Father shouted down from Heaven and said, "This is My beloved Son." "You want to talk about authority...that's My authority. I am the beloved Son of God. He's given Me all rights. I am the King of the Kingdom. That's the authority that I have. Who sent Me? God the Father sent Me.'

***So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."***

So the power brokers of Israel can't answer a simple question about the baptism of John, which everybody would have known about, everybody would have been talking about. Here's the problem. Jesus is claiming to be the King of the Kingdom, but those people who were in charge of the kingdom are rejecting Him and saying He has no authority. This is a problem. There's a guy saying He is the King of God's Kingdom, yet all of the people who were in charge of God's Kingdom, all the leaders of Israel, are saying huh uh; this guy is not who he says he is. This guy does not have authority. This guy is not the Messiah. The problem is the power brokers of Israel are saying Jesus is not the King, and Jesus is coming in doing kingly things. So how do we explain this? What's going on? Jesus tells a parable to explain what is happening.

What is a parable? It's usually a story with a punch. It's always a story that seems familiar, everybody knows the characters, and it's brought out of everyday life, but you can always expect a punch to come in a parable. There's always something that will strike you as odd. There's always something that might hit you and say, uh oh, I'm in trouble. So Jesus is

going to tell a parable and it will be really easy to pick out who the parable is directed to. Just in our reading, you've probably already noticed it seems like the parable is directed at tenants, the people who are in charge of a vineyard. Who do the tenants represent? They are the leaders of Israel.

Let's just walk through the parable we read together and let's see how Jesus uses this parable to show He has all authority and the leaders of Israel are acting in a way that they should not be acting. They're the keepers, the stewards, but they're acting like owners. In verse 1 of chapter 12, Jesus starts by saying, "A man planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a pit for the winepress and built a tower, and leased it to tenants and went into another country." In the beginning, there is a man. Notice what this man does. He plants a vineyard, but notice how much labor goes into it. This is an intense process. Planting the vineyard takes a lot of time. He has to remove stones, clear property, levels things, dig; he's doing a lot of work putting seeds in the ground and putting structures up so they grow right. There's a lot of labor and work going into planting a vineyard. Not only that, he actually put a fence around this vineyard to protect it from people who would come and steal the grapes, or foxes that might come in. As a kid working on a family farm with cattle, I've got a lot of experience of putting up fences and I know how much work goes into putting a fence up. It's long days, cutting with barbed wire, and it's a lot of hard work to put a fence up. You have to clear things and cut things, and they are continually needing maintenance and repair. Here is a man who not only planted a vineyard and put up a fence, but he dug a winepress. They didn't have a backhoe. Everybody is picturing this man who is doing a lot of work, shoveling and digging this winepress. Then he builds a tower so that a watchman can look out for thieves and foxes to protect this vineyard.

What is Jesus trying to tell us? This man in the parable is the owner. He owns it, he built it, he planted it, and he created it. What is that telling us? He has all rights to the vineyard. You could just imagine the people that are listening could automatically assume that Jesus is talking about God. God is being represented as this man. In fact, if you go to Isaiah chapter 5, it says in verses 1 and 2, "My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.

He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes." Then verse 7 says, "For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel..." So as Jesus tells this parable, everybody who is familiar with their bibles are going back to Isaiah 5, 'oh yeah, God is the one who dug and built and planted this vineyard, and the vineyard is Israel.' If you notice in Isaiah, the problem is the vineyard, Israel, do not produce good fruit. That was a judgment upon Israel. We are going to see in this parable that Jesus tells that there is not a judgment on Israel, there's a judgment on the tenants who were over Israel.

There will be a different judgment that Jesus is going to use in this parable, but here's the first thing we need to know. The man, who represents God, is the owner. He has rights and privileges. He planted it. He built it. Then notice what happens. He leases it out to tenants. What is a tenant? A tenant is like a steward. A tenant is a hired hand, someone the owner hires to come and take care of what's his, to take care of the vineyard while he goes off into another place and does another business venture. This was common practice in Israel. Everybody is familiar with owners and tenants. Owners own the land, own the vineyard, and tenants are the hired workers. They're supposed to keep up the vineyard and help produce grapes, but there's a distinction. Tenants are not owners; tenants are keepers. Tenants are workers. Tenants are stewards, so everything they do and produce is being done because of the gifts of another. They don't own the vineyard; it's not theirs. They are supposed to take care of it on behalf of the owner. They take orders and directions from the owner. Everything they do should be in line with what the owner wants. That is the relationship between a tenant and an owner. If you work somewhere as an employee, there is an employer. As an employee, you do everything according to what the employer wants you to do because they pay you to do that. You don't go to work and say, "I'm just going to do whatever I want today. I know my boss told me this, but I'm just going to do something completely different, and I think it will all go ok." No, you would get fired for that, right. As an employee, you do what the employer says,



or you get fired because that's what you're there to do. That's the owner/tenant relationship.

So, everybody is tracking because this is a very common thing that's going on in Israel. Verse 2 says, "When the season came, he sent a servant to the tenants to get from them some of the fruit of the vineyard." That's normal. That's what owners do. They send servants to get what's rightfully theirs because the workers are working for the owner. The owner is the one in charge and the tenants are stewards, keepers of the vineyard. But now look starting in verse 3. Something happens that should not happen. This is why if you're listening to this story as Jesus is telling it, rage begins to form in your stomach. You begin to have an outcry. The kids are starting to stir and say, 'Daddy, Mommy, is that ok? Is that right?' Listen to what Jesus says, "And they took him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Again, he sent to them another servant, and they struck him on the head and treated him shamefully. And he sent another, and him they killed. And so with many others: some they beat, and some they killed." Whoa! All of a sudden, this parable just highlights who the parable is about. It's about the tenants. What is wrong with the tenants? The tenants who are keepers of the vineyard are pretending to be owners of the vineyard. They're pretending like all the owner them actually belongs to them and they are the ones who call the shots, that they are the ones that get to determine how the fruit is given out, that all of the fruit is actually theirs, that it belongs to them, that they own it and they call the shots. So these keepers are acting like they're owners. They have forgotten their role. They are hired hands. They don't own the vineyard; they work for the vineyard owner. Jesus is trying to show what the leaders of Israel are acting like. They are acting like they own the Kingdom of God, and in doing so, they have put off the authority of God the Father. They are acting in a way that is not according to God the Father; they're acting in a way that is their own thoughts, their own desires.

So they question Jesus, 'who gives you authority? We own this place.' And Jesus, through this parable, is trying to say 'you forgot something; you don't own this place. God owns the Kingdom. You don't determine the shots.' All throughout Israel's history, we are going to see they continually

reject all of the servants that God sends to Israel. The leaders constantly reject them. You can imagine the listeners thinking these tenants are rebels. These are wicked tenants. Everybody in the audience is saying how dare these workers. These workers are not doing what's right. They are beating and killing the servants of the owner. This is not how things should be. Then it gets even more vivid. The anger gets even more deep in their stomachs.

Notice what Jesus says in verse 6, "He had still one other, a beloved son." You've just got to picture Jesus, the beloved Son, telling this parable. Everyone around is getting the sense that the tenants are probably Israel and the beloved son is probably Jesus. They are starting to put things together like we are starting to put things together. Now what's going to happen? Now the beloved son is going to come. What are the tenants going to do when the son shows up? Notice what the father says, "Finally he sent him to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'" The owner sends the beloved son, and that points us back to Jesus' baptism, the beloved Son of God. It takes us back to the transfiguration where God says, 'this is My beloved Son.' Now, the beloved son is walking into the vineyard to get what's rightfully his, and the father says 'they've got to respect my son.' Why? Because the son is the heir. The son owns the vineyard as well. What belongs to the father belongs to the son. The servants came on behalf of the father, and the son comes as the co-owner, like the father. He had the same rights and privileges as his father. He is the legal, rightful heir. Whatever he says goes. That's why the father says they've got to respect him because he is an extension of his authority. The son has his same authority, so as he walks into the vineyard it is as if the owner, the father, is walking into the vineyard. They must, they have to respect him. So this parable is about Jesus walking into the vineyard of Israel with the Father's authority. What the Father owns, He owns. He's coming to the religious leaders as the beloved Son, sent from the Father with all authority over them and all of God's Kingdom. They must respect the Son.

But what do the tenants do? Verses 7-8 say, "But those tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' And they took him and killed him and threw him out of the

vineyard." The tenants don't respect the son. They don't say here's the son, we need to give because he is our rightful master. Instead, they say, aha! If we kill the son, all this will be ours. So what do the tenants already assume? The owner is dead and gone and he is never coming back. If we kill the son, we own everything. Likewise, the leaders of Israel are already acting like God is dead. God is not their authority because when they see God's Son, they are rejecting Him and throwing Him out. So what do the tenants do? They kill the son and throw him out of the vineyard. This is prophetic. We're going to see in just days to come that in this last week in Jerusalem, the leaders of Israel putting Jesus to a cross, putting Him out of the city to throw Him out of the vineyard as the rejected and despised Son of God. They're acting like owners. They're acting like they own the vineyard, but they are supposed to be keepers, stewards. Instead, they are acting like owners with authority that they don't have.

What does Jesus say next in verse 9? "What will the owner of the vineyard do?" You could imagine everybody's answer. These tenants who are hired hands have killed and beaten the servants, and now they've killed the beloved son. They have thrown him out of the vineyard and he's lying in a field somewhere. The man is not just a vineyard owner he's a father. Can you imagine the father coming back to the vineyard and seeing the dead body of his son laying outside the vineyard? Can you imagine what he will do when he walks into the vineyard knowing the tenants are the ones who did that? Everyone listening to this story knows exactly what the father will do, but Jesus answers what they are answering in their minds. He says, "He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others." And so the Father will come with wrath and vengeance over what the leaders of Israel have done.

Now Jesus will take the parable and make it very personal. He says, "Have you not read this Scripture:

"The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?" And they were seeking to arrest him but feared the people, for they perceived that he had told the parable against them. So they left him and went away."

The leaders got the meaning of the parable; they get the point. 'Whose authority do you have, Jesus?' 'I'm the beloved Son. I've come into My Father's vineyard, which is My vineyard. I'm the King of the Kingdom, and here's what you are doing. You're acting like stewards who are pretending to own the place. You're not accepting God's authority, you're not accepting My authority, and indeed, you are going to reject Me and throw Me out. You are building a structure, but you're missing one thing. You're missing the cornerstone. You're missing the very most important part, and that is Me.' The builders have built this great Kingdom, but it's missing the one brick that makes all the other bricks come to life. They're missing Jesus, the cornerstone. It is a prophecy from Psalm 118:22. That's what Jesus quotes. 'Here's the prophecy, you are the fulfillment of the prophecy. The one you reject, Me, is going to become the cornerstone of the Kingdom of God. It's going to be marvelous. People are going to stand back and say I can't believe God did this. It is marvelous in our eyes.'

What's the big point here of this parable? We see the leaders of Israel are free building the Kingdom of God, and they're rejecting the most important stone. It's like me telling Crider he couldn't put the wall there because it wasn't right. Jesus is saying, 'hey, leaders of Israel, you're building things, but it's not right. You've missed the main point. You've missed the key brick that everything is built on. You're rejecting Me, and I am the whole point of the Kingdom. The tenants are pretending to own the place, when really they're only keepers. They're rejecting the cornerstone of God. The question for us is are we doing the same thing? Usually when we hear a parable, we always picture ourselves as the good guys, but typically in a parable, we are often the bad guys. We are often the tenants. We can often act the same way that Israel did. Let's just think about how this parable actually applies to us.

1. God is the owner and we are keepers.

God owns everything. We are merely keepers and stewards of all that He has given us. The first question we have to ask ourselves is are we being a keeper, or a pretend owner? Just think about your life. Are you being a keeper of all that God has given you, are you a steward, or, are you being a pretend owner? Your life was given to you by God. He planted you. He

put a fence around you. He dug in you. If you're a believer, He not only created you, but He redeemed you. He rescued you by the blood of His Son. Not only that, but He sustains you right now. He owns you. Your life is not yours. You belong to God. How often do we who are supposed to be stewards over our bodies and over our resources, how often like Israel's leaders do we pretend to be the owner? 'This is my life. I do what I want. It's my body. I'll do what I want with it. This is my life. I'll get the direction. I'll invite Jesus to come along, but I am the owner. I am the authority.' Are you a keeper? Are you a steward under God's authority? Or, are you pretending like an owner of your life, giving up the authority of God, of Jesus, doing things how you want them to be done?

## 2. Do you respond or reject God's Word?

Think about the leaders of Israel. What does He say? God sent servants over and over again, and the leaders constantly threw them out. What is He referring to? All the prophets of the Old Testament constantly came to Israel, gave them the Word of God, and the leaders said 'don't worry. God's not mad. Everything is fine.' They continually rejected God's Word over their life. Over and over again, they threw them out, beat them up, and they killed them. Instead of responding and repenting, they neglect and reject the Word of God. How many times in our life, do we get the word of the Lord, reading our bibles, we come to a place where we disagree, and we just throw it away? We reject it rather than conforming to it. That was the leaders in Israel. 'I hear what God is saying, but I want to do something else.' For us, do we respond, or, do we reject God's Word to us?

## 3. Is Jesus a stone, or, is He the cornerstone of our life?

What is the big problem in this parable? The leaders have rejected the cornerstone. They thought the cornerstone was just a piece of scrap. They thought it was a stone that was useless. It wasn't worth anything, so they threw Jesus out rather than acknowledging He is the cornerstone of the entire Kingdom. What exactly is a cornerstone? In ancient time, it was the most important part of the entire structure. This cornerstone had to be a perfect piece of material, perfect in every way. It had to be perfectly

symmetrical, an immovable object. When they got ready to build a structure they would put it on the very corner of the structure, and it had to be exactly the way the building was going to be formed. They would measure it so that all the lines were exactly right. We have a perfect stone that is the perfect amount of material, in a perfect place with all the perfect measurements. Why? Because once they started building the building, every other stone would be measured on this stone. If this stone moved or tilted the entire building would go astray. If the other stones weren't measured off this stone, then the whole building would be out of whack. It's the cornerstone. It's the most important stone.

What is Jesus trying to say about Himself being the cornerstone? He says 'I'm not a stone in your life. I'm not one brick that you put somewhere. I am the cornerstone of God. I am the most important stone in your life. Everything else gets its orientation off of. Everything else in your life is measured off of Me, your work, your family, your hobbies, and all that you do, where you go, how you spend your time is measured off of Me and from Me and for Me. I determine your entire life because I am the cornerstone of the Kingdom, and I'm the cornerstone of your life.' That's what a cornerstone is. It's that immovable object that everything else takes its bearings from. It's the most important stone of the entire structure.

My neighbor is building a house down the road, and if you pass by it now, you see a roof on it. It seems like a huge structure, but I can remember that months ago when they laid the foundation and they put the very first stone down. They spent a lot of time on it to get it exactly perfect because now I see a house with a roof on it, but that roof is only there because that stone is still there. That stone stood its place, and all the house got its measurements off of that one stone. That's what a cornerstone is. It's the most important part of the whole structure. Jesus is the most important part of your whole life. That's why Peter in Acts chapter 11 would say Jesus is the cornerstone, the one you rejected, but He is God's cornerstone.

Here's the problem for us. There are many, many fake cornerstones that we can build our lives on. There are numerous fake cornerstones that we can build our lives on. For Israel, it was works, Law, temple. If I just do all

these duties, my life will be secure. The problem is they built their life on the wrong cornerstone. The Law and the temple were meant to point to Jesus who is the cornerstone. He's the fulfillment of all of those scriptures that the Lord wrote about. He is the cornerstone. But some of us build our lives on a cornerstone that is not the cornerstone; it's a fake cornerstone. I love what Isaiah 28:16 says, "Behold, I am the one who has laid a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone..." It's a prophecy about Jesus. The last line says, "...of a sure foundation." That's the difference in Jesus who is the cornerstone. He is a sure foundation. He does not move. He does not crumble. He does not crack. If you build your life on Jesus, He is immovable. He will not shake or crumble. He will be there no matter what the storms of life bring to you. Your whole life and structure will be built according to Him lived out in His image for His glory. What about all these other cornerstones? They can seem so good. Some of us build our whole life on our family, our kids or our spouses are our cornerstone, they are our everything. We get our identity, value, worth, and everything from them because they're our cornerstone. We've built our whole life around our kids and then one day they leave the house. We have a beautiful house and structure, but the cornerstone gets ripped away. All of a sudden, we don't have a life anymore because the kids were our life. We literally built our life on the kids and we're looking around wondering what we do now. Our life begins to crack and crumble. Some of us put all our weight on our spouse, then they die or desert us, and now the whole structure comes tumbling down. So we put another cornerstone, which is work or career. We build a whole path, we get to retire and get a pension, and all of a sudden, the job gets taken away. All of a sudden, we lose that thing that we're holding on to. It was everything. This was our security, value, worth, and identity, and now it's robbed, it's taken. So we replace it with a hobby, but the hobby can't quite hold all of our life and structure up, so we move on to a pleasure or activity. Whatever it is, we put another cornerstone, but it can't hold the weight of our life and it crumbles and cracks. We have this design. There is a box. There is a design that God has meant for our life. He's created good works that we should walk in, and when we free build on other cornerstones, we get to a place that is far from God's design. What God is trying to get us to see

through Jesus telling this parable is that you can't free build your life and end up with God's design. You have to go back to square one. You have to take that very first brick and put it exactly where it belongs because that first brick, that important brick, is the Lord Jesus Christ. He's not part of your life; He is your life. He's not an add on; He is the very first one that you set in your life. You repent and you come to Him as the very center of your whole world so that He will be your cornerstone, so that everything else in your life gets measured off Him, is lived for Him, and He determines your life.

Here's the problem with Israel. Here's the problem with the leaders. They can't just take Jesus and fit Him into their system. He says it over and over again. 'You can't take new wine and old wineskins; it's just going to burst and ruin the whole thing. You can't take Me as the most important brick and put Me on the top and hop everything works ok.' No, you've got to destroy the whole structure. You've got to tear the entire thing down and start with brick number one, and brick number one is Jesus Christ. 'The stone that you rejected, the one you thought was unimportant; I am actually the cornerstone of the entire Kingdom.'

If you come to my house, don't ask to see the Death Star because it's no longer there. It sat there for a while and it looked great. We had it altogether, but at some point, my boys were playing Star Wars, and the Death Star got destroyed. It fell and went into a million pieces. I remember sitting over this Death Star that took so long to put together, and I'm trying to snap it back and make the pieces make since, but I realized there was no putting that thing back together. I just put it in several different containers and slid it under the bed. I told them we would have to wait for a winter project because the reality is when I noticed all of the foundation was cracked in this Lego. There's a second lesson I know about Legos. When a Lego breaks, you can't just repair it. You've got to take it back to brick one. You've got to take the whole thing apart and follow the directions line by line.

For some of you hearing this message, you are thinking Jesus is not my cornerstone, so I'm going to fit Him into my life to be my cornerstone. It doesn't work like that. If your life is built on a different cornerstone, you



can't take the cornerstone out and replace it with Jesus. The whole structure is off. The entire thing is cracked and faulty. What you have to do is realize I have a pretty life and it seems like everything is ok, but I have a life that is outside the Kingdom of God. So what I've got to do is take this thing down to the very first brick. I've got to repent and come to the Lord Jesus. I've got to say, Jesus, you are my cornerstone. I'm abandoning my project and I'm standing on You now. Rebuild my life from the ground up. If you're not a believer, you can't repair yourself by taking Jesus and adding Him to your life. It doesn't work like that. No, you've got to repent, abandon your life, and come to Jesus as the very first brick. Say, ok Jesus, square one, step one, brick one. Now, I'm on You and everything else I'm going to build my life off of you. Now, let's get started. That's what repentance and belief looks like. It's not a repair; it's a repent and start completely over.

If you're a believer and Jesus is the cornerstone, but now that we're a few years out, we forgot to measure off of the cornerstone, so everything in life is a little bit off. We've got to return to this cornerstone, draw the line again, and ask if we are living our life according to His Word and will as the cornerstone. Some of us may have forgotten we are stewards and are acting like owners. We're not responding to the Word; we're rejecting the Word. In reality, we're building on our own structure rather than the cornerstone of God.

I don't know where you are. Maybe you need to destroy everything and come to the stone for the very first time; that's repentance and faith. That's what it looks like to become a Christian. Maybe for you there is just some wondering. You're out here and you need to go back to the cornerstone and ask Jesus to mark your line out, mark your life out. You might be putting on the roof, but you want the roof to match the cornerstone because if you don't build according to the design, then your life will not look like the box. God has a picture. There's a box somewhere that's the picture of Jesus Christ, and I want to look like Jesus and I want to fulfill the good works He has called me to do, so help me not to be a free builder, help me build according to plan so that my life matches the box, matches the image of Christ.