



Christmas Really Did Happen, And It Changed Everything.

You know I think that video is really poignant right after Christmas because as we begin to take down our Christmas trees and Christmas lights, *Psychologists* have identified that about 25% of people experience varying degrees of depression after Christmas.

They say that it's due to the fact that after weeks, maybe even months, of decorating, shopping and wrapping, baking, visiting and being visited, the whole thing is suddenly over, it just fades away in a day or two.

There is even a term for this in the Urban Dictionary...its called a *Christmas Hangover*.

# Christmas Hangover



Do we have any casualties of *Christmas Hangover* here this morning? No, I'm not talking about that type of hangover 😊.

The Urban Dictionary defines a Christmas Hangover as *[quote]* “*The slight depression some people experience for up to a week after Christmas is over… it is caused by all the excitement of Christmas suddenly being over.*”

*The most common age group of people that suffer from Christmas Hangover is around ages 8–13, however, there have been other reported cases.”*

You see, Christmas Hangover happens because there is such a build up centered on one particular day, and once that day is over, excitement fades.



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And speaking of what FADES and what is REAL, this morning we are going to dive back into our I Peter series (that we began before Advent). This morning Peter is going to focus us on (this same idea) the importance of BUILDING OUR LIVES **NOT** ON WHAT FADES BUT RATHER ON WHAT IS SOLID/WHAT IS REAL.

And if you remember we have entitled this (I Peter) series *Dual Citizens*, because one of the main themes of Peter's First Epistle is the reminder that while we are all citizens of this Earth, those of us who are IN CHRIST are primarily CITIZENS of HEAVEN.

Understanding that while this Earth (our temporary home) will FADE away, we take courage in the truth that the ultimate destination of CHILDREN OF GOD is the KINGDOM OF GOD.

**PASTORAL PRAYER:**

# I Peter 2:4, 5 (ESV)

**As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, <sup>5</sup> you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.**

**Read:**

Beginning here in verse 4 Peter uses the metaphor of a “living stone” to illustrate how Jesus Christ and his followers (Christians) are joined together in God’s program of redemption.

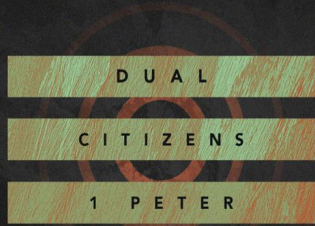
And Peter uses this oxymoronic statement “living stones” because he is trying to illustrate something new God is building. You see in the ancient world when you built anything of value that you wanted to last, you used STONES.

But while the stones you use to build a structure are DEAD…what Peter is describing here is anything but DEAD…this is a living organism God is building and he’s using his precious cornerstone [Christ] as the foundation.



# The Christian life is about building our lives upon Christ.

I Peter 2:4, 5



And that brings us to our first point/truth for this morning. **The Christian life is about building our lives upon Christ.**

If this sounds like your life & how you're seeking to live, praise God, keep working out your faith, continue your growth as a disciple.....but if you are deeply struggling with what it means to build your life as a Disciple of Christ I want to exhort you to make this your top priority in 2019.

We need to examine closely what we are currently building our lives upon because everyone on this Earth is building their life on something.

**Some build their lives on whatever is popular in the Culture.** Some people think they'll simply do what every other person is doing. If it's popular, that's what they do, too.



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Illus:

My freshman year of college was a real pivotal year for me spiritually speaking. I grew up in a Christian home, I had prayed the sinners prayer...I even decided to go to a Christian College....by everyone's estimation I was a pretty "good kid."

But when I was 19, God showed me a lot of my unsurrender, in a multitude of ways....He revealed a greater plan for my life.....a plan that was better than what I had come up with, BUT I WASN'T HAVING IT.

# Mark 8:36 (ESV)

For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?

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Jesus knew this invitation would challenge us, which is why he asked his disciples this insightful question in Mark 8:36, he asked the, *“For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?”*

Jesus knew that the spiritual landscape [of this world] was one where many would forfeit their very soul to gain this world……and he challenges us to think deeply on this.

Is there a benefit to gain the treasures this world has to offer if we have to surrender our very souls in the process? When we look at it that way the obvious answer is NO! Church do not forfeit your soul for temporary gains.

Come to Christ, become a part of the spiritual house he is building, and offer the spiritual sacrifices back to God that Christ’s blood made possible.

# I Peter 2:9, 10 (ESV)

**But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.**

And as we continue on in verse 9 Peter continues to express the privileges and position of those who come to Christ.

Church remember that the Gospel is GOOD NEWS……these following verses are a description of who you are IN CHRIST THE LIVING STONE.

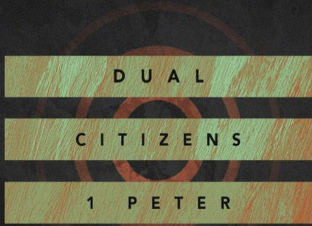
**Read:**

Here Peter describes the function of the living stones: it says we are to “proclaim the excellencies” of Him who called us out of the **darkness** of sin into **the light of life**. This is the “job description” of a living stone: to be a speaker of praise, a declarer of truth, we are to express the love and light of God to a darkened world…to herald the salvation he has brought us…this is an integral part of our **Dual Citizenship**.



**The Christian family is made up of those who were called out of darkness into light.**

**1 Peter 2:9, 10**



And that leads us to our second truth for this morning is...**The Christian family is made up of those who were called out of darkness into light.**

**Illus:**

**Everybody wants to be apart of a family. Bar none. This might not seem true to you at the moment because most of you just spent a lot of time with your family and you might be growing weary of some of them 😊.**

**But invariably if you found yourself without any family tomorrow, every single one of us would be crushed because we were all made to be apart of a family.**



Now the scenario that I just mentioned is the plot to my all time favorite Christmas movie **HOME ALONE**.

Do we have any Home Alone fans here this morning?

Home Alone tells the story of the mischievous Kevin McAlister who gets so angry at his entire family that he wishes they would all disappear. From his perspective as an 8 year old, Kevin believes he'd be better off on his own.

And when Kevin wakes up the next morning, he gets his wish, his entire family is gone. At first he thinks it's great, he has the house to himself, he can eat what he wants, he can jump on his bed, he can watch whatever he wants on TV. But as the movie progresses Kevin realizes he needs his family as he's left to defend his house from some neighborhood burglars known as The Wet Bandits.



When trouble arises in our lives, we are often tempted to HIDE, when the appropriate response is to lean into our spiritual family.

A part of the reason we feel the tendency to HIDE is because for too long churches [the world over] have been a pointing finger of condemnation, rather than a LIGHTHOUSE leading those from darkness into light.

We here at Brandywine, we desire to be a congregation where we hate the sin, but we love the sinner. A place where you can bring your hurts, habits and hang-ups and we will guide you through the process of laying those burdens at the foot of the cross.

And you see church part of what Peter is trying to convey to us in his epistle is that LIVING STONES must live in such a way that we actually are a LIGHTHOUSE to those around us.



# I Peter 2:11, 12 (ESV)

**Beloved I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. <sup>12</sup> Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.**

## Read:

Peter warmly addresses the church here as BELOVED. And the BELOVED are called to live as *sojourners*, some translations might say *aliens*.

The literal Greek is the word *paroikous*, meaning: “those who live in a place that is not their home.”

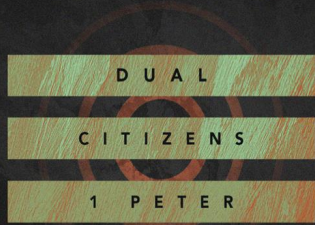
If you are a disciple of Jesus Christ, and your soul longs for another place……that is a very good sign. Because this means this world is not your home, you can think of it like your on a Guest Worker Visa here on Earth.

But remember our citizenship here isn't passive, we have work to do, and one of the two things Peter mentions here is that we are to abstain from passions of the flesh which wage war on our soul.



# The Christian church lives as honorable exiles to the glory of God.

I Peter 2:11, 12



And that leads us to our third and final truth for this morning...**The Christian church lives as honorable exiles to the glory of God.**

This is the identity of living stones who are built on the foundational life of Christ.....the LIVING STONE.

Why?.....Because this is how Jesus lived.

He was the honorable exile, coming from Heaven to Earth on a mission of redemption, and while here in exile he was mocked, beaten, betrayed and ultimately crucified.

And through it all he remained completely honorable because he was foremost concerned with glorifying His Father.





Church my prayer for my life and for your life, and for the life of our church is that we will continually surrender our lives to God.

Realizing the same things that Christ realized.....that this life is short, and eternity is long, and therefore we want to live for the things that will last.

I want to challenge you to consider making some changes to your 2019 that will put you in prime position to BUILD YOUR LIFE UPON THE SURE FOUNDATION THAT IS CHRIST.

**Pray: Offering**