

“Cornerstone or Tripping Hazard” Romans 9:30-33 **LARGENT**

- A man enters a country store, he spots a sign: "Danger! Beware of Dog!" Inside, he sees a harmless old hound asleep in the middle of the floor. "Is that the dog we're supposed to beware of?" he asks the owner. "That's him," comes the reply. "He doesn't look dangerous to me. Why would you post that sign?" "Before I posted that sign, people kept tripping over him."

Jesus will be one of two things to you! The Foundation on which you build your life (Your Cornerstone) OR The Rock that trips you and makes you fall.

1 Peter 2:4-8 ⁴ *As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—* ⁵ *you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house^[a] to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.* ⁶ *For in Scripture it says: “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.”* ⁷ *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,”* ⁸ *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.*

- Paul has been explaining to the church that the failure of the Jews to recognize Jesus, provided the opportunity for the Gentiles to be reconciled to God by faith.
- **The reason there aren't more Jews in the pews is that the Jews have stumbled or tripped over the person of Jesus.** Instead of building their live on Him, they built it on the Law. When Jesus showed up, they tripped over Him and rejected Him.
- Jesus being a Jewish tripping hazard is found prophetically in in Isaiah 8 **Isaiah 8:14-18** ¹⁴ *He will be a holy place; for both Israel and Judah he will be a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. And for the people of Jerusalem he will be a trap and a snare.* ¹⁵ *Many of them will stumble; they will fall and be broken, they will be snared and captured.”*
- Paul's been explaining to us that salvation is available to all, but that it comes by God's chosen method and nation and person, Jesus.
- The problem the Jews had was not that they weren't from the right lineage or that they didn't obey the law perfectly. The reason there aren't more Jews in the pews has nothing to do with that. It has to do with how they are responding to Jesus.
- And it's exactly the same today for you and me. **Those who don't put their faith in Jesus as the foundation of their life do so because they are tripped up on Jesus.**

Romans 9:30-33 ³⁰ *What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; (so the Gentiles weren't even trying to be righteous with God and now they are saved by faith in Jesus)* ³¹ *but the people of Israel, who pursued the law as*

the way of righteousness, have not attained their goal. (In contrast, the Jews have been fighting for righteousness for their entire existence and there aren't many saved Jews.) ³² *Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works.* (It says about Israel that they “pursued the law as the way of righteousness) *They stumbled over the stumbling stone.* ³³ *As it is written: “See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who believes in him will never be put to shame.”*

- The reason the Jews didn't acquire righteousness when Jesus came was because their intensity of pursuing righteousness by obeying the law caused them to trip over Jesus rather make Him the foundation for their righteousness.
- Let's talk about your walk. You are all walking on a path in life and come upon a stone. That Stone is Jesus.
- You are here this morning, I'm talking about Jesus. You've encountered the Stone.
- Some of you come to the stone of Jesus and believe and receive Him as the cornerstone or foundation of their life. But everyone else Jesus is a stumbling block.

I think the question we all want answered is what causes people to stumble? People trip over Jesus the same way they tripped over Him in Paul's day. I'll prove it to you.

1. Some people trip over Jesus because they are “pursuing the law as righteousness.” (this was the Jews – Romans 9:31)

- a. Perhaps that's you. I'm a pretty good person. I think I'm good enough.
- b. I have a problem with someone saying I don't deserve heaven.
- c. I trip over the idea that someone who did worse things than I did could be considered righteous above me.

For those who understand they can't save themselves, instead of tripping on Jesus, they make HIM the foundation of their righteousness.

- If you or someone you know is stumbling over Jesus because they think they can get to heaven on their own, Meditate on this. Matt 5:48 *“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”* **This is God's requirement. Perfection.**

2. Some people trip over Jesus because they can't believe He rose from the dead.

- a. In Acts 17, Paul is teaching to people where there is an altar to the unknown God. Paul explains that they can know the true God.

Acts 17 ²⁹ *“Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill.* ³⁰ *In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.* ³¹ *For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given*

proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”³² When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, (This is a stumbling block to them) but others said, “We want to hear you again on this subject.” (they are on the path and looking at Jesus and deciding whether to build their life on Him or be offended and trip and fall³³ At that, Paul left the Council. ³⁴ Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. (some encounter Jesus through Paul’s sermon and Jesus becomes their cornerstone and foundation as the trusting Him for their salvation.

3. Some people trip over Jesus because they don’t believe He is God.

- a. This was a primary stumbling block that caused the Jewish leaders to have Jesus Crucified. Blasphemy. Claiming to be God.

John 10:24-33. *²⁴ The people surrounded him and asked, “How long are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.” ²⁵ Jesus replied, “I have already told you, and you don’t believe me. The proof is the work I do in my Father’s name. skip to verse 30 ³⁰ The Father and I are one.”³¹ Once again the people picked up stones to kill him. ³² Jesus said, “At my Father’s direction I have done many good works. For which one are you going to stone me?” ³³ They replied, “We’re stoning you not for any good work, but for blasphemy! You, a mere man, claim to be God.”*

4. People stumble over Jesus because they don’t believe what God’s word says about Him.

- **You can’t accept Christ a-la-carte. If you don’t accept His way and His lordship you have stumbled**
- **You can’t build on Part of the cornerstone.**

APPLICATION: Christians – Don’t be the reason people stumble. If they are going to trip let it be because they don’t believe Jesus is God or because they don’t believe Jesus rose from the dead or because they are consumed with being good enough on their own.

Romans 14:13 *¹³ Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister. ¹⁴ I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean. ¹⁵ If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died.*

- **Don’t let your life, your opinions, your actions, your words your hypocrisy, your lack of forgiveness, your rebellion, your pride cause someone to trip and not put their faith in Jesus the cornerstone.**
- **Is Jesus the Cornerstone of your life today?** Is He your Lord and Savior.
- **If not, what is the stumbling block with Jesus that is keeping you from doing so?** Write in on your connect card. Send me a text or email. It is worth talking through it.