

The Rock
1 Cor. 10:4

Good morning! Perhaps, you've heard some men say about their wives, "She's my rock." Like the time when former President Obama awarded Staff Sergeant Salvatore A. Giunta the Medal of Honor because of his heroic deed in Afghanistan. In an interview afterwards, he said, "My wife is awesome. I call her my equal -- but you know, she's smarter than me -- she's my rock."

So, I did a serious word study of this phrase and turned to one of my favorite scholarly web sites called "Yahoo! Answers". One reader asked, "What is the meaning of "My wife is my rock?" And another reader replied, "It probably means she's always faithful, always calm, always dependable, always full of a positive attitude, always supportive, always strong. It means she never drags the guy down, when he has had a hard day she is always there to help make him feel better and get him back on his feet when he's feeling down." Wives, Amen?

It's like a story I read about a dying man. The man had been slipping in and out of a coma for several months yet his wife stayed by his bedside every single day. When he came to, he motioned for her to come nearer.

As she sat by him, he said, "You know what? You have been with me all through the bad times. When I got fired, you were there. When my business fell, you were by my side. When I got shot, you were there. When we lost the house, you were there. When my health started failing, you were still by my side. When I consider all that, I think you bring me bad luck!"

Well, at least she was always there. But my point is, as the Yahoo! Subscriber noted, "A rock means someone who is faithful, always dependable, always supportive, and always strong." In short, immovable, stable, and strong.

In our message today, I'd like to share with you how all these traits characterize the Lord Jesus. But not only that. In fact, I'd like to share with you what I found what the Bible means when it says that Jesus is the Rock.

We're on the last part of our series on "Who is Jesus?" We've been looking at the different names and titles of Jesus in the Old and New Testament. As we looked at those titles, we realized how Jesus is truly unique, and how he is deserving of all our adoration because he is our God and Savior. And today, I thought I'd share a message that is perhaps quite fitting because of the times we're living in. There's so much anxiety, stresses, uncertainties, fear, unpredictabilities. We need something to stand on, to be our refuge, and to refresh us. We need a rock. And Jesus is the Rock, the Bible tells us. **1 Corinthians 10:3-4, "...for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ."**

This passage refers to the two instances when God provided water for the Israelites while they wandered in the desert after the Exodus. The first is mentioned in Exodus 17. Please open to this passage – **Exodus 17:1-7** and follow along as I read. Then, the other one is in **Numbers 20:1-13**.

These two events happened in the beginning of their desert journey and at the end of their journey. Did you notice how the events are almost similar? Did you notice also how stubborn and rebellious the Israelites really were? How they never learned from their experience? But most importantly, did you notice how gracious God was, that despite their stubbornness and even the disobedience of Moses and Aaron, God still provided for them? God is always faithful even though we are unfaithful. And that was the gist of my message last week, if you remember.

The Rock is Jesus Christ. He is the one who stayed with them throughout the journey. When they got thirsty in the beginning, Jesus was there. When they got thirsty at the end, Jesus was there. The Israelites didn't realize it, but the rock was not only physical, but also spiritual in the sense that it provided spiritual nourishment for them. Out of it came the living water of Jesus Christ that refreshes the thirsty soul.

Now, it's interesting that Paul applied the Rock title to Jesus Christ. You see, Paul is an Old Testament scholar. He knew that the Rock title is applied to Jehovah God in the Old Testament. There are numerous verses like Psalm 144:1 where it says, "Blessed be the LORD, my rock, who trains my hands for war, And my fingers for battle." And also Deut. 32:4, "The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He." And Isaiah 26:4, "Trust in the LORD forever, For in GOD the LORD, we have an everlasting Rock."

Obviously, then, Paul being an apologist for Jesus wants to let the early Christians know that Jesus and Jehovah are the same God. In fact, throughout his New Testament letters, he repeats over and over that Jesus is the Creator, the Savior, the one whom every knee shall bow and every tongue confess is the Lord.

So now, let me share with you what the Bible tells us about Jesus being the Rock.

First of all, Jesus is the Rock because

1. He is my Refuge in the day of trouble.

In Psalm 31:1-3, David wrote these words, "In You, O LORD, I have taken refuge; Let me never be ashamed; In Your righteousness deliver me. Incline Your ear to me, rescue me quickly; Be to me a rock of strength, A stronghold to save

me. For You are my rock and my fortress; For Your name's sake You will lead me and guide me.”

These desperate words were written by King David when he was being pursued by his son Absalom and his army. David was in deep anguish. He felt alone and defeated. His own son turned against him and was out to kill him. Can you just imagine the pain he felt? At that moment, he knew that his only help is God. He knew that he could take refuge in God. God could give him peace and comfort. God had never failed him. God rescued him from the lion and the bear and the giant Goliath when he was a young shepherd and he knew that God can come to rescue him again. God was always there to lead him and guide him toward victory.

In another Psalm, he says, “For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock.” (Psalm 27:5)

The image of the rock here is not just a big stone. But it is a large mass of stone forming a cliff or a peak. Just like that picture of the Rock of Gibraltar in Spain. That is where King David wanted to be. He wanted to be in a place where his enemies couldn't reach him. On that peak, he could feel safe and secure. The Rock, of course, is God. In him, there is peace and security.

In times of trouble, we would like to be safe and secure as well. We can ask God to lift us up and set us high upon a rock where we can feel God's comfort and peace. God says he will be our refuge. He will rescue us when troubles come. In Isaiah 43:1b-3, God says, “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.”

I don't know what kind of trouble you're in. Is it financial? Is it health-related? Is it a relationship? Is it about your career? Is it about what people are saying or said about you? Just remember that God is always there for you. The Bible says that he is your refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

Many, many years ago, Corrie Ten Boom was in trouble. She was the Dutch Christian lady whose family hid several Jews behind a wall in their house during World War II. The Nazis eventually discovered it and hauled all the Jews and the Ten Boom family away to a concentration camp in Germany. In 1971, her story was published entitled "The Hiding Place" and in 1975, it was made into a movie with the same title. If you know the song, "You are My Hiding Place", that's the movie where it came from.

Now, what many don't know is that the movie nearly did not make it to the theaters were it not for God's intervention. What happened was that a few months before the film was finished, the production crew found out that they were \$50,000 short. That was a big amount during that time. They did all they can to fill the gap but to no avail. They thought of abandoning the project. And they consulted with Corrie. She wanted it to continue, of course, and with a simple faith that she always had, asked everyone to pray and believe that God would provide and quoted from **Psalm 50:10: "for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills."** And she remarked, if God owns all things, couldn't he provide an amount that is insignificant compared to the worth of all animals in the world?

During that week, a check unexpectedly came in the office of the producer in the amount of – guess what – exactly \$50,000 from an anonymous donor.

I have no doubt that if you are in trouble today, Jesus knows that. He cares about what is happening in your life. He knows what you're going through and he will pull you through.

Please don't doubt the goodness of Jesus because he is looking after you. There is nothing that ever escapes his attention as far as the details of your life is concerned. He is interested in you, in what you need, more than you could ever realize.

Jesus is the Rock because he is your Refuge in the day of trouble. Also,
2. He is my Refresher when I feel weak and weary.

Going back to the story of the Israelites in Exodus 17 and Numbers 20 which I referenced earlier, we see that from the rock came water that quenched the thirst of the people. That rock is located at Mt. Horeb which is in the Sinai Peninsula. In fact, Mt. Horeb and Mt. Sinai are the same. That rock still exists today and that's how it looks like. And that's an artist's rendering of the water gushing out of the rock.

I imagine people especially children just running toward the water and drinking all they could perhaps even taking a bath. They surely must have felt refreshed and reinvigorated. After several months of walking in the desert, that truly is a welcome relief. They have been energized and ready to walk again.

That is the kind of feeling you get when you drink from the fountain of God's love. You see, many of us can get easily tired in this fast-paced world we're living in. I found out that living and working here in Northern Virginia and DC may not be different from living and working in NY. If you're in IT, that may be more pronounced because it is cut-throat competition. Tech companies compete for government projects which translate to tight work schedules and heavy work loads. I've seen first-hand how it has affected many of my co-workers. Have you noticed that in me, too? That's why sometimes I don't have the time anymore to dye my hair. But yesterday, I really made the effort and by the grace of God I did it.

Then, our schedules get jammed also with our children's school activities. It seems there's always something going on in school and we need to be there. Plus

the fact we have to drive them to their soccer practice or attend their violin concert or this and that. If you're a parent, you can relate to that, right?

So, many of us are stressed out and burned-out and copping out. What do we do? We need to call time-out! We've got to get back our bearings and take a deep breath. Folks, really, we need to take a break so that we won't break.

There's a reason why God gave the fourth commandment, "The seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns." (Ex. 20:10) In short, God is saying, "You must rest." Why? Because our bodies can only take so much. If we don't, our bodies suffer, our careers suffer, our relationships suffer, even our spirituality suffer. You notice when you're tired you get cranky?

It's one thing to rest and another thing what to do when you're at rest. May I suggest something? Why not dwell on the Word of God? That's where true refreshing comes. Psalm 19:7 says, "The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul."

I remember the story of Jim Cymbala. Jim is the pastor of Brooklyn Tabernacle in Brooklyn, NY, one of the largest churches in New York. But it began as a small church. In fact, it was dying. There were only a handful of people when Jim began to pastor the church after it was handed over to him by his father-in-law who went to Florida to start a new church. In fact, there were two churches that were passed on to him. The other one was in New Jersey. Both churches were dwindling in number and really struggling financially. So, Jim and his wife shuttled between New York and New Jersey every Sunday and did ministry in those two churches during the week and they did all the ministries themselves. They tried their hardest efforts to keep both churches afloat. They did this for

several months until the hard work took its toll on his body. He became sickly and coughed a lot. His father-in-law invited him to Florida so he could recover.

His condition improved. And one day, while he was on a boat by himself, slowly gliding along the river, and wondering whether he should go back to ministry while praying and reading the Bible, God spoke to his heart. God said that he will use him to build the church he left. And that God will always give him a message to preach. That emboldened him and he went back to New York with a new sense of purpose. He closed the church in New Jersey and concentrated on building the church in Brooklyn. The rest is history.

That is what happens when we take a break and focus our eyes on God. When we draw close to him in prayer and in the reading of his Word, he refreshes us and speaks to us in turn.

Finally, Jesus is the Rock because

3. He is my Redeemer who set me free from sin.

The Bible says that Jesus is the cornerstone. In **Isaiah 28:16**, it says, “**So this is what the Sovereign LORD says: ‘See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation’**”.

What is a cornerstone? Since ancient times, builders have used cornerstones in their construction projects. A **cornerstone was the principal stone**, usually placed at the corner of an edifice, to guide the workers in their course. The cornerstone was usually one of the largest, the most solid, and the most carefully constructed of any in the edifice. In other words, it is the foundational stone.

Spiritually speaking, Jesus is the foundational stone of his church. Without him, there would be no church. In fact, he said in **Matthew 16:18**, “**...on this rock I will build my church**” and when he said that he was referring to himself and not to Peter who he was speaking to in that verse.

How did he build his church? First, he had to die on the cross. He died for sinful people like you and me. Sin is what separates us from God. Sin entered the world when Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the garden of Eden. And that sin was passed on to us. The Bible says, “For all have sinned and fall short for the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23). It also says that “the wages of sin is death.” (Romans 6:23a) And that’s why every person who ever lived has died. The bad news is those who die will be separated from God and spend eternity in hell.

But the good news is God loves us so much and because of his love he came to earth as a man in the person of Jesus Christ. The Bible says, “But God demonstrates his love for us in this: While we were still sinners Christ died for us.” (Rom. 5:8)

The death of Jesus freed us from slavery to sin and death. Instead, we become slaves to righteousness. Romans 6:18 says, “You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.” There is then a transfer of ownership. In fact, the Bible says that God paid for our freedom. “You were bought at a price”. (1 Cor. 6:20) And the price is the blood of Jesus. What all of this means is that we are saved. We are born again into the Kingdom of God.

The question now is: **What do I do to be redeemed?**

If you’re asking that question right now, I’m glad you did. Because it is a question that will spell a great difference in your life. What do you need to do? Nothing. Literally nothing. You don’t have to be a good person to be saved. The Bible says that our righteousness is like filthy rags. Your good works, good looks, good connections, good habits, good background will not save you because just one sin contaminates you. Your best is not good enough to save you.

What you can do is to just believe in Jesus. Believe that he died for you. Believe that he is the only one who can save you. The Bible says, “Yet to all who

did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” (John 1:12)

If you become a child of God, then as the Bible says, “Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.” (Eph. 2:19-22)