



Go To The Rock

by Rev. Jerry L. McGlone

Isaiah 26:4

Trust in the Lord for ever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock.

A first grade teacher was having a devil of a time trying to help her students grasp the concept of history. They just weren't getting it. So, she asked a question. "What really important thing," she asked, "is in the world today that wasn't here a hundred years ago?"

Before any other child had a chance to think, one precocious little boy,
- a child who had a smart aleck answer for every question,
- a child who always wanted to be seen and heard,
- a child with a curly mop of tangled red hair -

jumped out of his seat, stood in the aisle, and yelled: "ME!"

He was absolutely right. It wasn't the answer the teacher had expected. It wasn't the answer she wanted, but his answer was right. He is really important in this world.

So are you! You came into this world a unique person. There is no one else quite like you. You are precious, and significant, and really important. There are some things you can do that nobody else in this world can do, some people you can influence that nobody else will ever reach, some word you can speak that nobody else can say.

You are special just the way you are. God made you. God loves you. God has a plan for you.

You are precious in His sight. He made you in His own image.

It's what my mother told me when I was a little baby. She said I was a special boy. It's what the Bible tells me when I read that God said, "I shall be

his God and he shall be my son.” [Revelation 21:7] It’s what my baptism tells me.

When I was baptized, the Rev. Mr. Maffett said, “Jerry Lee McGlone, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

My baptism tells me that in spite of all the billions of other people on this earth;

in spite of all the smarter people, the wealthier people, the more powerful people;

in spite of that teeming mass of humanity which crowds this planet;

in spite of it all -

God said, “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I know you by name, you are mine.” [Isaiah 43:1]

He knows me. He knows who I am, what I’m doing, what I’m thinking. I am important to him.

He knows you, too. He calls you by name, you are His. He will never forget you. No child of His will ever get lost in this mass of humanity. God knows each one. Jesus said, “Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered” [Luke 12:6-7]

God is not going to forget you, no matter what. Isaiah wrote, “... the Lord God is an everlasting rock.”

Remember that: the Lord is a rock. He will not move. He will not forget. He remains the firm foundation upon which you can build your life.

While clearing out my attic two weeks ago, I came across a treasure I had forgotten I had. I saw tucked away under the eaves, a package. I could tell by the size and the shape that it had to be some sort of framed picture. I figured it was something the kids used to have in their rooms, something they had put away, something I was going to throw away.

I pulled it out. I opened the plastic covering. I tore the corner off the paper wrapping. To my surprise I saw what looked to be a beautiful Victorian frame. I changed my mind. “This might be worth keeping,” I thought.

I carried it down from the attic. In the light of day, I opened the package completely. “What’s this?” I wondered. It was an old religious picture in a beautiful frame. It was a picture of a woman, desperately clinging to a cross which grew out of a rock in the middle of a storm tossed sea. The waves pitched the storm’s detritus across the view. A man’s arm reached out

in one last desperate grab for life before going under for good. The woman with her hair and dress blowing in the gale, clung to the cross. At the bottom of the picture was the title: “My Hope.”

I remembered, this used to hang in my grandmother’s house. Janet and I liked it so much, I cleaned it up. I took down my rare and valuable 1863 lithograph of Abraham Lincoln, and hung “My Hope” in the dining room.

The Lord God is your rock. He is the one who will not change. He is the one who will not falter. He is the one who will stand through every storm and flood. He does not move. He does not forget. He is the firm foundation upon which you can build your life. He is your hope.

But there are times when you feel like the Lord has forgotten you. There are times when you’ve gone looking for Him, and you can’t seem to find Him. There are times when your foundations seem to crumble, when the stormy winds of destruction blow all around you, when you feel cast off and abandoned.

I know. I know some of your heartaches. I know some of your tears and troubles and turmoil’s. I know that some of you are dying inch-by-inch of some unconquered disease. I know that some of your loving relationships have been torn apart. I know the loneliness some of you feel, some of the uncertainty that disrupts your soul, some of the injustice that eats away at your happiness.

I know there are times when you feel like God has forgotten you. What do you do when you feel like that -

when you think you’re not measuring up,
when you’re afraid you’re not good enough,
when you don’t feel like you deserve any blessings,
when you’re down in the dumps
- all depressed and feeling sorry for yourself,
when you feel insignificant, and worthless, and useless,
when you don’t think God cares about you any more -
what do you do?

Go back to the rock!

Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” [Matthew 5:3] When he said that, he was talking about you, too. He knew that sometimes you would doubt, that sometimes you’d think you’re not good enough, that sometimes you’d feel worthless. Jesus said that even when you’re down-in-the-dumps God has a blessing for you.

Isaiah wrote that God “will be like a hiding place from the wind... like streams of water in a dry place, like the shade of a great rock in a weary land.” [Isaiah 32:2]

Yes, the Lord God is your great rock. He will never forget you. Even when you feel worthless, He sees how very important you are.

What do you do

when illness overtakes you,
when death stands in the shadows, waiting,
when darkness closes in,
when your pain is so severe you can't think about tomorrow -
and you don't feel important to God any more?

What do you do

when someone you love is taken away,
when the separation rips your heart in two,
when the emptiness is so vast,
and you're so filled-up with sorrow that there just doesn't
seem to be any room left for God?

What do you do?

Go back to the rock!

Jesus said, “Blessed are those who mourn.” [Matthew 5:4] When he said that he was thinking about you when you are at your most vulnerable. He promised to give you comfort.

King David wrote, “The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” [Psalm 27:1]

Yes, the Lord is your rock. He will not forget you. Even when you suffer and are afraid and face death, you can have hope and the promise of a great tomorrow.

I imagine you have stood beside some open grave when you heard some preacher say, “earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.” When the preacher said that, you nodded in agreement. You admitted it's true. You know that death comes to every person.

But there are two kinds of death. The first kind of death is for people who do not know Jesus Christ. For people like that, death is not a doorway to eternal life. It is not the transition from life on earth to life everlasting. For people who don't know Jesus, death is the end.

Death without Jesus takes away life, takes away breath, bone, blood. It leaves darkness now and forever. It means eternal separation.

The second kind of death is for those who know, and follow, and love Jesus Christ. And for them, whether they are growing up, or growing old, or dying - God will not forget. For them, death is not the end.

They know that God is their rock. They know they are precious in His sight. They know they are important to Him. He will not let death have the last word in their lives.

What do you do

when you think the whole world is against you,
when you're left standing alone,
when everyone else is on the other side,
when you feel like the last hold-out,
when the crowd pushes you the wrong way,
and they're laughing at you and your faith?

What do you do?

Go back to the rock!

Jesus said, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake." [Matthew 5:10] When he said that, he was talking to you. He promised to give you the courage you need and the strength you want to stand by your beliefs in the face of temptation and rejection.

King David said, "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my rock in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge, my savior..." [2 Samuel 22:2-3]

What that means is you can count on God to be there for you. He does not move. He does not change. He remembers you.

But sometimes you forget.

Moses wrote, "You were unmindful of the Rock that begot you, and you forgot the God who gave you birth." [Deuteronomy 32:18]

Sometimes you lose your way.

Sometimes you stray too far.

Sometimes you stay away too long.

Sometimes you're a stranger to your own family of faith.

Sometimes you forget to remember.

So, what can you do? You can go back to the rock!

Every Sunday, no matter what might be said in the sermons, no matter which songs are sung or what prayers are made, no matter how you are

dressed or how many people say “hello,” no matter what else goes on or doesn’t happen - Jesus Christ is always here. He always invites you to come to his table and remember.

Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to his disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” And after that, he took a cup and said, “Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” [Matthew 26:26-28]

He always remembers you and calls you home. Do you remember him? Even when you have forgotten, the Lord God, the rock, remembers you.

When you feel forgotten, remember what King David wrote: “For God alone, my soul waits... He only is my rock and my salvation... I shall not be... moved... He only is my rock and my salvation.

... I shall not be shaken.” [Psalm 62: 1-2, 6]