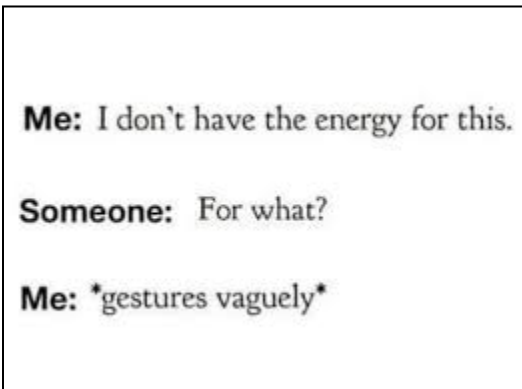


The United Church of Moscow  
The Fifth Sunday of Easter  
May 3, 2026

1 Peter 2:1-10  
*Cornerstone Christians*

## **Bedrock**

I don't like the word, "salvation." It feels really churchy, kinda icky. It's probably because it conjures images of a scary afterlife that I'm being saved from. That's the image we often think of when we think of salvation. But honestly... life in the here and now is so crazy that I often don't have time to worry about life in the hereafter. So, the concept of salvation being just about after I die doesn't really resonate with me. Because I often feel like this one instagram user (@daydee3) posted:



**Me:** I don't have the energy for this.  
**Someone:** For what?  
**Me:** \*gestures vaguely\*

I think this is a feeling that a lot of people can relate to. The world is difficult -

- Looking for hope in the midst of hopelessness
- Joy in the midst of grief
- Justice in the midst of extreme injustice
- Love in the midst of apathy

In other words, "salvation" here and now, not just hereafter.

**People are not just looking for salvation from a hell they're going to, they're looking for salvation from a hell they're going *through*.**

Verse 2 tells us that through the word, through Jesus, we will "grow into salvation." In other words, Jesus is the salvation we've been looking for. The hope, joy, justice, and love that we are craving in the midst of this life. Jesus is here - not just offering the "get out of hell when you die" kind of salvation, but the salvation that brings life and flourishing in the midst of difficulty in this present life.

And you know this is true - examples of God's faithfulness to this community from "joys" prayer time.

You have, as verse 3 suggests, tasted and seen that the Lord is good! In your own life, in this community.

This is why we take communion together every week - because as we taste the bread and juice, we are reminded that we have tasted and seen the Lord's goodness. Here and now.

Jesus is our salvation, not as an escape *from*, but as our way *through*, through the joys and the sorrows of this life. This is why the text calls Jesus the capstone, the cornerstone, the foundation, the bedrock.

Cornerstones, or the bedrock, provide a durable foundation for buildings to be built upon. Before this church was built, before your homes were built, before any buildings have been established, a layer of bedrock has been established. A capstone has been laid. A strong foundation helps secure a building and ensure its longevity.

If you drive around town, you can see several construction projects in various states of development. Some are in the demolition phase, some are finding the bedrock and pouring the foundations, others are being reconstructed, building upon the foundation. But there is one construction sight in particular that always catches my eye. It's located on the corner of 3rd and Washington. Perhaps you're familiar with it:



I drive by this site everyday on my way to work, and I've been told that this project began several years ago. It is supposed to be a music shop, with a beautiful grand piano showroom in the bottom storefront, with loft apartments built up on four stories on top. So, in preparation for this new building, the original building was torn down and the bedrock for this new building was established.

But that was several years ago. Nothing new has been built upon it. The building project has been halted. It now sits as an eyesore to downtown and is a painful reminder that:

### **The bedrock often gets abandoned.**

#### **Barrier**

Verse 7 says the capstone has been tossed aside by the builders. What was meant to be foundational has been discarded. What was meant to be built upon, has been left to waste and to cause problems.

You have witnessed what it looks like when Christians and Christian institutions and churches abandon the bedrock:

- When they justify and cover up abuse instead of protecting the most vulnerable
- When they speak words of hate and judgment instead of love and grace
- When they incite violence and stay silent in the face of injustice instead of encouraging peacemaking and advocating for justice
- When they turn toward greed and rapid consumerism instead of generosity and contentment
- When they gatekeep and exclude the love of God instead of embracing the expansive and inclusive love of Jesus

The bedrock has been abandoned by some who claim to follow Christ. The capstone has been tossed aside. Jesus- who was meant to be foundational, has been discarded. What was meant to be built upon, has been left to waste and to cause problems.

The building on 3rd and Washington, once filled with such promise for a good thing in our community has become a sore spot for our community. If you ask people about it, they will roll their eyes and tell you about their frustrations with it - This is prime real estate! It looks terrible! It has become a problem for harmonious living. This is not the image of our town that we want to portray.

Not to mention that it is hazardous. With each new wind gust, debris from the abandoned sight blows into the sidewalk. Nails and broken concrete threaten the feet of pedestrians, the fingers of curious children's hands, and the stability of the elderly.

What was meant as a beautiful place of community has become a terrible depiction of division and frustration. What was meant to be foundational has become a stumbling block. **What was meant to be the bedrock has become a barrier.**

And so too, when the church abandons the bedrock, it becomes a barrier.

When Christians abandon the ways of Christ, what was meant as the bedrock becomes the barrier to inclusion, to community, to beauty, to flourishing. The foundational ways of Jesus becomes the “stumbling block” (v.8).

When the largest and loudest voices of what it means to be Christian in America today seem to continually abandon the bedrock, Christ himself becomes a barrier for people experiencing the love, the mercy, and the justice that Jesus teaches and demonstrates. The salvation, the *way through*, of Jesus becomes inaccessible, problematic even, because of those who bear the name of Christ and discard the ways of Christ.

And people continue to get tripped up on Jesus. And the consequences are catastrophic:

In a 2025 study conducted by Pew Research, they found that among Americans who don't identify as religious, 50% said a primary reason was because they don't like religious institutions, while 49% said they don't trust religious leaders, and 6% agreed that religion is outright harmful.

Of the Religiously unaffiliated adults in the US, 40% said religion causes more harm than good, while 43% said it does an equal parts harm and good, with only 16% of religiously unaffiliated americans agreeing that religion is net positive. [PRS](#)

But I don't have to tell you about the way people in this country feel about Christians, you experience it everyday in this community:

On Monday, I went to an emergency town hall meeting for the Latah County Board of Adjustments. The Board was voting on whether or not to grant a special use permit to a new business owner occupying one of the largest storefronts in downtown Moscow. His business plan included a brief comment that in addition to the business, he also intends to use the space as an additional location for his Christian Nationalist church on Sunday mornings.

For over an hour in this town hall, people stood up and gave testimony in opposition, encouraging the board to deny the permit. They spoke with emotion and with logic, pleading the board not to allow this type of Christianity to flourish in our community.

But there is one comment that stuck out to me: A woman got up and calmly shared her story. She said, "I've lived in Moscow my whole life. I love this town. But more and more, I think about leaving. Because these people do not represent my values and they are making it difficult to live here. And if one of us leaves, many others will follow - not because we want to, but because we don't see another option."

Her comment was met with applause and nods of agreement.

The bedrock, when it is abandoned, becomes the barrier. Jesus - who was meant to be foundational, meant to be salvation has become the stumbling block. A source of division, a thing that is actively driving people away from community.

So, if people in our country and in our community keep getting tripped up on Jesus, what is our response to this reality?

## **Build**

So often, we too, are quick to abandon the bedrock:

- When people ask us what we're doing Sunday - we hesitate to say church
- When people ask if we're religious - we hesitate to say we're Christian
- When people ask us what we care about - we hesitate to use "churchy" language

These statistics make it difficult to embrace our identity as Christians. We become ashamed to associate with a brand that has caused so much harm. Become so problematic. Become such a barrier to people feeling safe, loved, and included.

In the face of harmful versions of Christianity, we are quick to run to secularism instead of to the savior. We are quick to run to the things we do, instead of the ones we do them because of.

We are quick to point to our pride flags, our food pantry, and our protest signs. But do we point them to Christ?

Don't mishear me - these are good things that we do, good symbols that we carry, but they are an outpouring, an overflow, a result of the foundation we have in Jesus:

We believe in the full inclusion of all people because we believe that Jesus does not exclude or discriminate against anyone. We believe in feeding and clothing our neighbors because we believe that Jesus advocated for caring for the most vulnerable. We believe in protesting against injustice because Jesus encouraged righteousness and equity.

We believe that Jesus came not just to save us from the hell we're going *to*, but the hell we're going *through*. Not escape it, but to endure it - with hope, and joy, and justice, and love.

This is what it means to claim that Jesus is our salvation. Jesus saves us from hopelessness, despair, and apathy. Jesus saves us from having to use the tools of violence and empire and oppression. This is a salvation, a foundation, that people in our country and in our community are desperate for.

You want to know how to push back against Christian Nationalism? You want to know how to change the narrative about Christianity? About Christians? About Jesus?

**Don't abandon the bedrock. Build upon it.**

Be genuinely, authentically, loudly, deeply, unapologetically, Christian.  
Has anyone in here tasted and seen that the Lord is good?

If the answer is yes, then now is the time to be loud! You are chosen people, a royal lineage, God's own people called up and called out for this very moment, to speak up and act upon the one who has called you out of darkness and into this amazing light.

"Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy," the text says. Once you were unable to see through the lies and the deception of churches and Christians and institutions who have abandoned the ways of Jesus, but now, you have tasted and seen the Lord's goodness, you have seen the bedrock, the cornerstone, and you can never go back.

Rid yourselves "of all ill will and all deceit, pretense, envy, and slander," and allow yourselves, allow this church, to be built up like living stones, to be built up into a place where Jesus dwells. Where the ways of Jesus are loudly and proudly proclaimed, where the ways of Jesus are loudly and proudly practiced.

Without Christ as our foundation, we are just an underfunded community center. Without Jesus as our foundation, we allow Jesus to continue being a stumbling block.

There's a poem by Maggie Smith that I find myself returning to again and again these days called "Good Bones" that goes like this

(<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/89897/good-bones>):

Life is short, though I keep this from my children.  
Life is short, and I've shortened mine  
in a thousand delicious, ill-advised ways,  
a thousand deliciously ill-advised ways  
I'll keep from my children. The world is at least  
fifty percent terrible, and that's a conservative  
estimate, though I keep this from my children.  
For every bird there is a stone thrown at a bird.

For every loved child, a child broken, bagged,  
sunk in a lake. Life is short and the world  
is at least half terrible, and for every kind  
stranger, there is one who would break you,  
though I keep this from my children. I am trying  
to sell them the world. Any decent realtor,  
walking you through a real shithole, chirps on  
about good bones: This place could be beautiful,  
right? You could make this place beautiful.

Life is short, and people believe this faith we profess is at least 50% terrible, and that's a conservative estimate. Because for every act of mercy and justice, and love, there is someone taking the name of Jesus in vain, using and abusing it for their own gain.

But you are God's chosen realtor, walking people through the wreckage of the world, pointing out the good bones, the foundation, the bedrock. This faith could be beautiful, right? We could make this faith beautiful.

You are cornerstone Christians. Tasked with building upon the foundational ways of Jesus, so that others may taste and see the goodness, the mercy, the salvation, the way *through* of Jesus. Do not abandon the bedrock. Build upon it.

### **Reflection Questions:**

1. What do you think the dominant expression of Christianity is within your community?  
Within our country?
2. How does this image impact the way you express and practice your faith?
3. In what ways could you practice being more "genuinely, authentically, loudly, deeply, unapologetically, Christian" this week?