

Growth Group Discussion Q's

March 29, 2026

- **Fun Discussion Starter:** Which is correct: Spaghetti with sauce on top vs. Spaghetti with the sauce mixed in? Alternatively, which is better: Spaghetti when it is first served or as leftovers the next day?

Jesus the Cornerstone

Psalm 118:19-25 cf. Matthew 21:9, 42

Context: Ps 118

Psalm 118 is the last in a series of Hallel psalms (psalms of praise) that were used for festival gatherings. It was written sometime after the exile and was in regular use during Jesus' day to picture God's loyal love toward his people. It served as a reminder that though Israel may be seen as "discarded offcut stones" (deemed unusable), God is faithful to provide salvation in marvelous and unexpected ways.

God chooses the offcut stones

Throughout Jesus' ministry, he demonstrated time and again that the marginalized and discarded people are in fact the ones who are entering into the kingdom. Consider the following examples:

The Children – Though children are a blessing, they are not yet contributors to the household and were thus viewed as having less value. Jesus, by contrast, elevates them as important in the kingdom of God (Mt 18:1-5; 19:13-15).

The Poor – Jesus surprised the disciples when he pointed out that riches actually make it harder to enter the kingdom (Mt 19:23-24). Indeed it is the poor, who understand their need, who are entering in ahead of the rich (Lk 6:20; Mt 19:30).

The Sinners – Jesus spoke against the pride of the Pharisees which prevented them from seeing their own sin and need for a savior. Instead, it was the "tax collectors and prostitutes" who were responding in faith and repentance at John's baptism (Mt 21:31-32).

- Why do you think that it was the marginalized who responded to Jesus' ministry over and above the rich and influential?
- Why do you think that even his own disciples were slow to see these "offcut stones" as Jesus did?
- Is there anything that stands out to you in these passages? How does this impact you as you read these examples?

Jesus became an offcut stone

In the same conversation with the Pharisees noted above (Mt 21) Jesus told them a parable of tenants who ill treated the owner's messengers, and, in an attempt to seize the vineyard for themselves, killed the owner's own son (Mt 21:33-40). He asked them, "what should be done to

those tenants?” To this, the Pharisees replied that they should be brought to a “wretched end” (v.41).

At this, Jesus quoted Ps 118:22-23 and identified himself as the offcut stone that they, “the builders” were rejecting, that God would choose as the cornerstone (i.e.. the most important stone).

- What does Jesus’ willingness to be identified as a rejected stone mean to you?
- What do you think Jesus’ means when he says that God has chosen the rejected stone and made it the “cornerstone”?
- Read 1Peter 2:4-5. How do you think this teaching of Jesus impacted Peter?
- What does this mean to you?
- If God views us this way, how ought we to view ourselves?