

THE ROCK
January 31, 2016 morning service
Deuteronomy 32:1-4

Take your Bible this morning and go to the book of Deuteronomy chapter 32 and we'll begin reading in verse number 1 and read through verse 4 and then drop down to verse 31.

Yesterday so many of you had been praying for me as I preached at the Pensacola Governmental Prayer Breakfast and after I preached there I got home and was ready to preach out of another together passage and I just couldn't get away it. In my heart I felt like I needed to bring what I did at New World Landing yesterday and preach it here this morning. So I called an audible and switcherooed and decided to do this. Rarely is this the occasion. I try to plan ahead but just really felt that this is where God would have me be today with our church.

We're in Deuteronomy the 32nd chapter that I preached from yesterday morning and will again today. It was many years ago when Abraham Lincoln was President of the United States, he'd been to church one morning. He left church and was walking back to the President's residence when one of his security team asked him, "Mr. President, did you like the sermon this morning?" to which he said, "Well it was good." The man said, "Well does that mean you liked it?" He said, "I didn't say that." He said, "It was good but it was not complete because the sermon did not ask us to do anything great." If there's ever been a year, an era, a time when preachers need to call the church to greatness and the church needs to rise to greatness, we are in this hour. We need to rise to greatness.

Moses knew something about being great and in chapters 32, 33, and 34 of Deuteronomy you find his last days. In chapter 34 he's going to die. I've got a sermon out of Deuteronomy 34 on, "Lessons from Pisgah." That's where Moses died. That's where I was raised. It's where Moses died. That high rocky ridge overlooking the Promised Land where God buried Moses. God was the undertaker and buried him and no man knew where Moses was buried and God had already told him, "You're going there to die." But before he got to chapter 34, you back up to chapter 33 and he gave a blessing to Israel. If you back up to chapter 32, we find the composition of a song where Moses wrote a hymn, a song, and it's called the Song of Moses. We begin in Deuteronomy 32 in the first part of that song and you read these words in Deuteronomy 32, verses 1 through 4.

*"Give ear, O heavens, and let me speak;
And let the earth hear the words of my mouth.
Let my teaching drop as the rain,
My speech distill as the dew,
As the droplets on the fresh grass*

*And as the showers on the herb.
[I would to God my preaching would be like that every Sunday.]
For I proclaim the name of the Lord;
Ascribe greatness to our God!
The Rock! His work is perfect,
For all His ways are just;
A God of faithfulness and without injustice,
Righteous and upright is He.¹*

And then Moses takes that theme of the rock and he weaves it through this hymn. The rock, the rock, the rock, and he talks about the rock. You know, we sing about the rock a lot. Rock of ages, cleft for me. We sing about it. On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand. We sing about the rock. This rock is Jesus, yes He's the one. We sing about the rock. Well Moses was singing about the rock and the rock was all through this chapter.

Many months ago I was reading a prayer book of Spurgeon's and Spurgeon lifted up my text for the day and it was at that very moment I circled it and I said, "Right there is what I'm going to preach on to the Pensacola Governmental Prayer Breakfast." I didn't know what I was going to say. I just had a text. I've had many a text with no sermon. Now it's worse if you get a sermon and no text, alright? I've done that too. But that text just jumped out and it was verse 31a, as I would say. Only the first half of the verse. Here's what Moses said in Deuteronomy 32. You drop down to verse 31. *"Indeed their rock [lowercase] is not like our Rock.* Capital R. *Indeed their rock is not like our Rock.* And man, did God begin to squeeze my heart and mind and spirit.

You see, in our world there are clashing agendas. There are clashing thought patterns. There are clashing rocks in our culture. Their rock is not like our Rock. Their rock. Who are they? Well they are those that have been faithful and are not now. There are also those that were the enemies of Israel, the enemies of God's people, and Moses was saying, "Our enemies and the faithless people, their rock is not like our Rock." There's a difference in the rocks. One is true and one is false but there is a battle that goes on in our world. There is an opposition to truth in our culture today because their rock is not like our Rock.

Now everybody wants to be at peace and everyone wants to get along with everybody. Well I'm here to tell you, there is a culture, a worldview in this United States mindset that doesn't want to get along with you if you are a blood-bought believer, walking in the truth of scripture, believing that Jesus is the only way to heaven. They'll get along with you as long as there is not the exclusivity of Christ but when you preach the exclusivity of Christ and He is the only way, the true way, and there's no other way to get to heaven but by Jesus, I'm here to tell you, their rock is not our Rock. They just say, "Well just love everybody, any god, and everybody's going to the same place." I'm here to tell you, friends, not all roads lead to heaven and dogs are not going. I'm telling

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you, God loved human kind, you, and sent His Son to die for you. That is the *euangelion*. That is the gospel and all the world does not believe it because their rock is not like our Rock. There is a difference.

I want you to look with me over in verse 15 if you've still got your Bible open. Look how some people treated the rock. But Jeshurun, that's another word for Israel, a word of love, but Jeshurun grew fat and thick. You ever grown fat, thick, sleek. Then he forsook God who made him and scorned the rock of his salvation. There is a crowd in our culture that scorns the Rock. This word scorned in the Hebrew context, the construct here means to esteem lightly, to lightly esteem.

I'm here to tell you, I'm married to Liz and I heavily esteem her. I put all my weight to esteem her but there are some who esteem God very lightly. They just pay lip service. They've scorned the name of God because their rock is not like our Rock. That word scorned can also mean to fade away. Have you noticed how the gospel and Christianity in American culture just seems to fade away? People talk about the war on Christmas. There's not a war. It's just fading away. You don't see Christ. You don't see the manger, the nativity. You just see snowflakes and Santa Claus and winter solstice. Christianity just fades away. It's there but it's lightly esteemed. Scorned. Why scorn the Rock? Because their rock is not like our Rock. That's why this culture scorns you.

Go down to verse 18. Not only do they scorn the Rock, they neglect the Rock. Look at it in verse 18. "*You neglected the Rock who begot you, And forgot the God who gave you birth.*" It was God that birthed Israel. It was God that birthed you. It was God that birthed America and when we forget Him we neglect Him. Now this word neglect is a little different than the word scorn. The word neglect means that we become unmindful. He's just not in our mind. We forget. It can be translated, they ceased to care. Now where I'm from in north Alabama there is a euphemism for that. We've cleaned it up to say, "They don't give a rip." But there's another word that's used there. They just don't give a – they cease to care. There are people in our churches today that just don't care, that the things of God just go away. They just don't care. They neglect the Rock. They're unmindful. They forget where they've come from.

Now I want to show you that rock – their rock's not like our – I want to show you what their rock is like. That rock is found in verses 32 and 33. Now look in your text. "*For their vine [when he's talking about their rock, their vine] is from the vine of Sodom.* You want to know where that rock that's not like our Rock comes from? It comes from Sodom and Gomorrah. Now the greatest sin of Sodom according to Ezekiel 16:49 was pride. Right behind it came sexual perversion. That's where we are in America today. We have forgotten God and we are drinking and eating from the vine of Sodom and of Gomorrah with our own arrogance thinking that we're something when we're nothing. Sexual perversion is on every side. Everybody wants to point to homosexuality there but let me tell you, the heterosexual sin in our world is greater than the homosexual sin. Both are condemned by the Lord but we eat and drink from the vine of Sodom and Gomorrah.

You can't even sell a Hardy's hamburger without that being everywhere. I mean, just give me an all-beef patty, two buns, some pickles, and some mustard. You don't have to run a naked woman through my living room to sell me a burger, but we do. That girl comes slithering out on that sofa. "Encourage your husband to ask his doctor about Viagra." Your grandchildren are in that room and then they say that word. "Papa, what's that mean?" You see, we live in a sex-drenched culture and its root is in Sodom and in Gomorrah. Not only do they have their vine in Sodom and Gomorrah, their vine produces grapes and it says their grapes are the grapes of poison, and their clusters are bitterness in verse 32. There's a bitterness and a poison. I'm telling you, you drink from this vine and it will poison the system. That's where we are in America today. The system has been poisoned. Did you see what's going on in Flint, Michigan? They've poisoned the water system and people are up in arms and they ought to be. We've poisoned the culture with a rock that's not like our Rock.

Then he goes on to say not only is it from the vine of Sodom and Gomorrah, not only is there the poison of the grapes, their wine, verse 33 says their wine is from the venom of serpents. I'm here to tell you that this poison will kill you and that's what's going on. It's killing a lot of churches. This poison kills a lot. We've got churches that have just taken this book. Their rock's no longer our Rock and they've moved the book and now they just ordain anything. They just preach anything. Whatever the culture says that's what they do and it kills the church and you have no voice. It kills the nation that does not hold up righteousness. Their rock is not like our Rock.

Well what is our Rock? What should we do about our Rock? He said in verse 4, he uses the word, he talks about God is the Rock in verse 4. Our God is perfect. He never makes a mistake. Amen. All His ways are just. He is the God of justice. He is just in every account. Verse 4 goes on to say He is a God of faithfulness without injustice. God will never do you wrong. God does right in every situation and in every case. Righteous and upright is He. You can trust God. He's going to do right. He's going to be righteous. He's going to be upright. He's going to be just. He will bring about the right – He's the Rock and He is perfect and His ways are just.

So what do we do with this Rock? Well this morning I want to tell you there are three actions we need to take. These are my three calls to you when I talked about Lincoln and his greatness. I want to ask you to do something great today.

Number one. I want to challenge you that you build on this Rock. The first thing you can do is build on there. What should we build on this Rock? There are three things we've got to build. Number one, you ought to build your house on this Rock. Matthew 7 is the end of the greatest sermon that was ever preached. Jesus preached it in Matthew 5, 6, and 7 and it's shorter than most Baptist preachers go. He started with the Beatitudes, He gave us the Lord's Prayer, and He comes to the end of the great Sermon on the Mount and He said, "A certain man built a house and he built his house on the rock. The storms came and the winds blew and it stood. Another man built his house on the sand. The storm came and the wind blew and the rain, and great was the

fall.” Hear me. If you’re a Christ follower, you better be building your house on the Rock.

When we got here 25 years ago, my wife came – Carol Dunn, she’s in this service – your pulpit committee really cheated. They didn’t bring me here. They brought my wife here. They talked to her. They made her happy. She came home and we chatted. She said, “I asked them a question while I was there.” I said, “What did you ask them?” She said, “I asked them, do ya’ll ever have hurricanes?” They said, “We have not had a hurricane in over 60 years in Pensacola.” We hadn’t been here 60 minutes.

Hey, you can mark this down, friend. The wind will blow and the rain will come. Storms are a part of living on this side of death and when those storms come, you better have your house built on the Rock. This Rock is Jesus, yes, He’s the one. You better get your life on the Rock. Father, you better be praying with your children on the Rock. Husband, you better be praying with your wife on the Rock. Mom and daddy, granddaddy and grandmother, you better have your kids around you and praying and building your house on the truth of the Rock. Build on the Rock. Build your house on the Rock.

Number two. You better build your church on the Rock. Matthew 16, Peter, “Who do men say that I am?” “Thou are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” “Peter, Petras, on this Rock, petra.” He said, “Petras, on this petra I will build my house.” He didn’t say He was going to build it on Peter. Our Catholic friends have got it wrong. He didn’t build it on a man. He built it on Peter’s confession, the petra, the feminine construct of that word rock. He built it on the Rock of I Am, the Christ. That’s the foundation of the church. It’s not Peter. It’s Jesus. It’s the confession that He is Lord. We better keep Olive Baptist Church on the Rock.

I’ve told you 100 times right under here there was a spring when we built this building and we had to go down, down, down. We’re building this building right out here and it’s not far from this spring and they’re having to deal with the soil right out here right now. If you don’t get the foundation right, the building will never stand. But when you get the foundation right, bless God, a building will stand. You get the foundation of a church correct, make Jesus the foundation stone, the chief cornerstone, that church will stand.

Church, after I’m dead and gone, don’t let anybody come to this place that doesn’t preach the word of God and Jesus Christ is the perfect sacrificial Lamb of God, crucified, raised from the dead and coming again. I mean, stay with the stuff. That’s the Rock.

You’ve got to build your house on the Rock. You’ve got to build your church on the Rock. You better build your city on the Rock because the Bible still says in the book of Proverbs chapter 14 and verse 34 that righteousness exalts a nation but sin is a disgrace to any people.

Every year we have a drama in Pensacola and Tristan de Luna comes aboard. The first city of Florida, the first city of America. St. Augustine thinks they're it but we just discovered downtown they've been wrong all the time and we knew it. We've been here longer than they have. Do you know that Don Tristan de Luna, Earle Bowden in his book on Pensacola said two things about de Luna? He said he was a hardworking man and he was a very religious man.

Now, friend, it was not a piece of cake to discover Florida. It wasn't a cruise ship that came in down here, alright? I mean there were Native Americans. There were bogs and marshy land. I'm telling you, it was not easy. Many people tried but finally de Luna arrived. Traditional history tells us that when they got here they walked up on those beautiful beaches that they said was the most beautiful port in the Indies. When they came to the shores, the first thing they did was plant three crosses and have the Lord's Supper on the beaches of Pensacola. I'm here to tell you, the Holy Ghost – do you know that Mobile Bay, its first name was Holy Spirit Bay? Not the Bay of Mobile. Holy Spirit Bay. That's what they named it to start with. That's not really politically correct anymore so it's no longer Holy Spirit Bay. Pensacola, it's where the gospel first touched the United States of America, the northern continent. I'm telling you, there has been a devilish war for the soul of this country ever since and I believe for the soul of this city.

Have you looked at the seal of Pensacola? Don't Google it right now though I know some of you will. You go to the city website and you look at the City of Pensacola and you see the seal, there's a circle there. There are five dates that talk about five – how many flags do we have now? Three, four, two, one. I can't keep up. They keep running them up and down the poles. People get upset about this one and that one. Anyway, there were five flags because there were five dates and they're still there on the seal but in the center of the seal is a Christian cross. Why is that? Because this city was founded with the cross on its shores, the first thing it ever had.

Dear friend, I'm telling you, righteousness still exalts a nation and sin is a disgrace to it. I beg and pray that the city fathers of Pensacola and Escambia County will always keep the Christian cross on the seal of our city. You say, "Well that's just a symbol." Oh yeah but symbols mean things. Let me tell you, that symbol up there means something. This pulpit being in the center symbolizes something. Symbols make a difference. When you look at the red, white, and blue, I'm telling you, that symbol means something. Symbols are important and that cross on the seal is very important. Praying an opening prayer at the opening of the commission and the city council is important. Praying at the opening of the House of Representatives and the Senate is important. It's not what's said and even who does it. It's a symbol to say there is a God in heaven and their rock's not like our Rock but our Rock is perfect and we build on that Rock. We build homes, we build churches, we build cities, we build nations on that Rock.

Number one, build on it. Number two is run to it. Run to the Rock. Hear the word of God in Psalm 61, verse 1 and 2: *Hear my cry, O God; Give heed to my prayer. From the end of the earth I call to You when my heart is faint; Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.* Lead me, Lord, and show me. I'll cry out, I'll pray, and I'll run to that Rock which is a Rock of refuge. We ought to run to the Rock and in that we cry out in prayer.

In the year 1806 there were five boys in Massachusetts, five young men, and they were having a prayer meeting. They grew up in a theology that said you didn't have to send missionaries because of the tension between sovereignty and freedom and they didn't know about missions and didn't know what to do. There was just this tension. That tension still is alive today. Those boys in Massachusetts were going to pray about it and they got together and there came a thunderstorm. There was a big haystack and history records that they went to that haystack which is up off the ground and they got under the haystack and started praying. They prayed all afternoon and read their Bibles. 1806 marks the haystack prayer meeting that started a part of the modern day missions' movement in the American church. You can go to Massachusetts to that town. There's a college there in Williamstown and out from that there's a monument to the haystack prayer meeting.

Do you know that when you run to the Rock and when you really pray it really makes a difference? I have a lot of people who say to me, "I wish we'd get prayer back in school." I'd be for that. I wish we'd get prayer back in all our government. I'm for that but I'm telling you, I just wish we'd get prayer back in the church, that we'd get our people to pray, that they'd call out to God.

At my house I made a change the first of the year. I cleaned out a back room at my house and moved a bunch of junk out. I've got more junk and we got rid of a bunch of that stuff and I made me a real for sure prayer closet where I can go and I can call out to God and can't nobody hear me. I got me an altar in there and I've got stuff up on the walls. I just go in there and get on my face. I've got that altar. Friend, you ought to have you – there's a movie about that called "War Room." I haven't see it. You ought to see it. I hear it's real good. Somebody gave me a copy of it but I knew that we ought to have a prayer closet. Didn't nobody have to make a movie to tell me about that. Thank God for those that do and get us there. I'm going to watch it but I said, "That's my war room. I'm going to go in there and cry out to God." I'm calling some of your names there. When I know about your need, I write that down. I'm praying. I'm telling you, we've got to become a praying people. We've got to run to the Rock because our Rock is not like their rock.

On the 20th day of March your pastor is requiring every one of you to be right here at 6:00. I'm not asking you to come as your pastor. I'm requiring you to come. You say, "Preacher, I don't want to." I didn't ask you if you want to. I'm telling you to have yourself here. Joey Rogers, my good friend at Pace Assembly, he and I dreamed this up. We just went nuts one day and decided, let's have a prayer meeting. Let's get the Baptists and the charismatics together and have a prayer meeting. He said, "Let's

do it.” I said, “Amen.” So we’re going to host it. It’s going to be at 6:00. Their minister of music who was here for Christmas helped us. Brother Jon is going to be here. We’re going to pray through the Lord’s Prayer. We’ve done this here before and we’re going to take that and make a template of it. At 6:00 we’re going to gather. We’re inviting every church in Santa Rosa County and Escambia County, everybody that’ll let out – well, half the churches don’t have church on Sunday night anyway. They already let out so we’re inviting them to come. Be here at 6:00 and we’re going to pray. I’m requiring you to be here or we’re going to drop you out of the membership.

Hey, seriously, I want you to come. I want you to lead the way. We ought to fill that place. Joey and I believe that if we do it now, we believe in the fall we could do it again. We believe we could fill the Bay Center for a 10,000 person prayer meeting. We really believe we can. We believe we can call this area to pray. If Donald Trump can fill the Bay Center, surely Christians could fill it and cry out to God. Amen. We ought to run, run, run, united in prayer. Let me tell you, friend, this country of ours is in such trouble, no election’s going to solve this issue. No, sir. Not a ruby, not a cruise missile, not a trump card. I’m telling you, ain’t none of that going to solve this. The only thing that’s going to solve this is God’s people on their face running to the Rock.

Their rock’s not like our Rock. Our Rock’s alive. He’s got ears to hear, eyes to see, a tongue to speak, hands to touch. I’m telling you, He’s not a dead stone. He’s alive forevermore. Their rock’s not like that. Their rock’s dead. Their rock can’t hear. Their rock’s like that rock where Elijah was when the people cried out and cut themselves with swords and said, “Which god’s going to send fire from heaven?” Nothing happened when they cried out to their dead, deaf, blind gods. Elijah prayed and fire fell from heaven and consumed the altar, the trenches, and filled with water and a sacrifice. Why? Because our Rock’s not like their rock. Our Rock is alive and well.

We ought to build on it. We ought to run to it. Thirdly, don’t miss this. We ought to be willing to suffer for it. Suffer for the rock. I Peter, I’ve just preached through I Peter. All the Old Testament passages are all about suffering. In I Peter chapter 2, verses 6 through 8 we find that great passage: *For this is contained in Scripture: “Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, And he who believes in Him will not be disappointed.” This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, “The stone which the builders rejected, This became the very corner stone,” and, “A stone of stumbling and a rock of [what?] offense”; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.*

Jesus is a Rock of offense. If you preach Christ, friend, you don’t have to be mean to offend people. The cross will do the offending. The cross will do the offending. You just lift high Jesus. Speak the truth in love and I’m telling you, you’ll find – you don’t have to go looking for enemies. They’ll look you up. You’ll find a lot of friends too.

I’m amazed. I don’t know why I am but I’m just always amazed that God’s got a remnant of people everywhere I go. You can walk into the deepest, darkest place

you've ever known – we keep talking about we believe the University of West Florida is a dark place and needs the gospel because so many lost college students – but I'm here to tell you, God's got a remnant on that campus. You go there and begin to live for Christ, you'll find people like you because they love Him. God's got His people everywhere you go. But you'll often be in a minority and we are now in a minority because their rock's not like our Rock.

The noose is getting tighter and tighter on religious liberty in America. There is a movement that wants God out of government, wants God out of law, wants Him out of all education, out of your workplace. There is a movement that just absolutely wants God out of everything outside the walls of the church. Let me tell you, friends, if they can remove God from everything outside the walls, they'll soon come inside the walls. There is this war on religious liberty. If a man or a woman is running their business like they want to run it of people wanting to pray – beginning football season I went up to the kickoff classic, the Chick-fil-A deal. You know, the Truett family, they're sold out to Jesus. They love God.

They got ready for the ballgame and they stretched a flag out there as big as Texas. They asked everybody to stand and remove their headgear. I thought, this is good. They're going to sing the national anthem. Every time we have the national anthem – I go to the Blue Wahoos Ballpark. Every time I'm down there I raise my – get on my feet, take off my cap, put my hand over my heart, and while somebody sings that song, on key or off key, I pray for revival in America.

Let me tell you, friend, it's hard to sing outside with the wind blowing acapella but I was getting ready. They said, "Just before we have the national anthem, Grant Taft is coming to lead us in the invocation." I said, "What?" They prayed in the ballpark. You know, when I grew up in Pisgah we did that every Friday night. What happened? They ran God out of the ballpark. You're not required to be there. As a matter of fact, you paid a ticket to get in. Why did Grant Taft get to pray? I'm going to tell you why. Because the Truett family paid the freight for the game and they said, "We're praying at the classic." Now they could've gone safe and soft and not done that but they did it. That's why you ought to go buy a chicken sandwich tomorrow. They're closed today. Why are they closed today? Because they've made a decision. They're going to honor the Lord and let their employees off.

So I'm telling you, you'll hurt for it. You'll suffer for it. You ought to be willing to suffer. God didn't promise you all roses here. If you're going to stand for Christ, some of you are going to die. Some of you are going to hurt. You're going to lose your job. You're going to go to the back of the line, not the front of the line. There's a bunch of half infidels telling you that if you stand for God everything will be rosy. You see, any preacher that can preach a whole message and never mention Jesus, it ought to be his last sermon. I'm here to tell you, they killed Christ for righteousness and they'll do the same to you. It's alright. It's alright to suffer because there's some things out of suffering that you learn you never know any other way.

It was 1934. Martin Niemoller was a pastor in Germany in a suburb of Berlin. He mounted his pulpit when the Nazis began to come into power and this is what he said. "We have all of us – the whole Church and the whole community – we been thrown into the Tempter's sieve, and He's shaking and the wind is blowing, and it must now become manifest whether we are wheat or whether we are chaff! Verily, a time of sifting has come upon us, and even the most indolent and peaceful person among us [those that want peace because those indolent, peaceful people, thank God for them. They] must see that the calm of meditative Christianity is at an end.... It is now springtime for the hopeful and expectant Christian church – it is testing time, and God has given Satan a free hand, so that he may shake us up and so that it may be seen what manner of men we are!... Satan swings his sieve and Christianity is thrown hither and thither; and he who is not ready to suffer, he who called himself a Christian only because he thereby hoped to gain something good for his race and his nation, is blown away like chaff by the wind."

If he is the Rock, you ought to stand on Him no matter what comes and if suffering is a part of it, stand. Martin Niemoller was a pastor. A few months later he was placed in a German concentration camp for his preaching. His good friend, Bonhoeffer, died just weeks before the allies arrived but when the allies arrived in '45, Niemoller was found in that prison and he was released by a bunch of people that came waving a red, white, and blue flag with a motto that said, "In God We Trust." Standing on a Rock. Standing on a Rock. The question is, will Olive Baptist Church stand on the Rock?