On Friday morning the phone rang at the church. The call was from me, a woman's voice introducing herself as the editor of the religion page of the Chronicle Telegraph. She was looking for a comment on the importance of mothers in the development of faith in a child, she explained. I'll ask you some questions, record your answers, then I'll read back those answers to see if any of them would be adequate. It was all right for me to use max as a quote from you. She asked some questions, I answered, she read my answers back, I was ashamed at how my answers sounded. Finally I gave her the name of another ELCA pastor whom I was sure could say just the right thing for mother's day.

Since I've realized I should have said something like, the importance of a mother to religious faith is like the importance of rain and sun to a garden. As any gardener knows, crops can be grown with water from the hose, but the garden does the best when the rain falls from above. The teaching and example of believing mothers give growth and fruit that is abundant, like gently falling rain.

Our second lesson today speaks of the faith to which God calls mothers and fathers and children. Come to him, max to that living stone, rejected by men but in God's sight holy and precious; and like living stones be yourselves build into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Everything begins with Christ, the living stone, later spoken of in our lesson as the cornerstone, chosen and precious. We come to him, we build our life on him, and we ourselves are built into a spiritual house. Normally we think of this spiritual house as the church, but first today I would like to move in a different direction.

Jesus promised, where tw or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them. Where only two or three are gathered calling upon Jesus, the cornerstone for the spiritual house is present. As we are built into Christ we, each of us, are priests, offering our days and our deeds as spiritual
sacrifices to our God. In our homes gathers the church of Jesus Christ, in our homes Christ is dwelling in the midst of we who are gathered, in our homes God is constructing a spiritual house out of us.

Come Lord Jesus we pray, as the church that is in my home gathers to share a meal. And he is our guest, and your guest, and we are his temple, we are his spiritual house, his priests.

How important are mothers and I would add fathers to the spiritual faith of children? Why they are priests in the temple of God. They are the preachers and teachers, they are the rain watering the garden of faith.

And I could not even think of a quote, I who am called to proclaiming the word could not even think of a few words to be printed in a newspaper. I felt very ashamed, inadequate.

I felt just the way that I and I think a great many other parents feel. Ashamed, and inadequate.

We have not been faithful priests in our homes. We have ignored the cornerstone, the foundation who is Christ. We have built upon so many other gods. I find myself offering my children as sacrifices to all that the world treasures. Christ takes a second place behind sports and band and Cedar Poing.

And in my own home, Christ does not have the center of as much conversation each week as the latest offering on funniest home videos. I am ashamed.

And I feel inadequate. I promised at each of my children’s baptisms to be a teacher and example of righteousness for my children. But the truth is that I am not sure how to do that. Just as I knew that I should know what to say to that reporter when she called, so I know that I should know how to be and example and teacher for my children, but I don’t. I only know that in so many ways I hope they will not be like me, but that they will know what to do.

Well, enough of that. Let’s talk about something we can feel good about. Just the other day I was walking down the hall of the church, looked around and thought about what a fine job you have done fixing up the hallway and the now the lounge. Some time ago I had thought about inviting other pastors here...
for a meeting. I was ashamed, I didn't want them to see how things were. But as I walked down the hall the other day I realized, now I could have that meeting here.

But you know something, the real glory of this house for worship is no different now than it was a year or three or five years ago. When the halls and the windows cracked and broken were shabby and the tiles were coming off, the Lord who is the glory of our faith in this place was present when two or three gathered. When the roof was leaking he was not ashamed to forgive sins when we his people gathered in this place. When the tiles were coming off the floors, he did not hesitate to hear the prayers of his people as they gathered to call upon his name.

I find it hard to preach on Mother's day. Some families are all shining and bright. Children and children's children are gathered in worship. Everywhere there is success and health and happiness. Mother's Day seems to have been created for the Mothers of these families.

But far more come to this day with heavy hearts. Sin and sickness and sadness have taken their toll. Children and children's children are not all shiny and bright. The words that I speak about mothers and how important they are only adds to the pain.

I find it hard to preach on Mother's day, but because I know that Jesus during his earthly ministry never heaped more burden on a heavy heart. Had there been a Mothers Day during Jesus earthly ministry I know that he would have gathered around him that day every woman who never gave birth to a child, and every mother whose son turned into a drunk driver, and whose daughter was an adulteress. That is the very reason that the people whose lives were shiny and bright rejected God's cornerstone. That is
how Jesus became a stone that makes men stumble, a rock that will make them fall, as our text says. We think that the hall is all shiny, the windows are all fixed, that we can be proud of the house of God. But the truth is the glory of our church, the glory of our home is Jesus Christ. As it stands in scripture: Behold I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and who believed in him will not be put to shame. Believe in him who takes your life with its shabby hallways, and broken windows, and says of you: You are a chosen race, you are a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people that you may declare the deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were no people but now you are God’s people. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Come to him, to that living stone, rejected by men but in God's sight chosen and precious; and like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

May Jesus be your precious stone, the pride and the hope and the glory of every mother and every child. May be the cornerstone of your home, and of this church, and of your life.