The phone rang in the pastor's office. On the other end of the line, a still, small voice was asking for help. The unidentified woman didn't say much. She simply said that her world had been turned upside down and she didn't know where else to turn. Many of us can identify with that woman. We have lived it at times. One day your husband or wife comes home and announces they want a divorce. You get a phone call that your son has been in a car accident. Your daughter tells you she is moving in with her boyfriend and not planning on getting married any time soon. Your boss comes into your office and tells you that your position has been eliminated due to cost constraints.

Someone once said the only constant in this life is change. Change often comes in, sweeps us away, and knocks the breath out of us. So it is only natural that we look for something that we can cling to, something that we can stand on as we face the future. The writer of the book of Hebrews addresses this in our passage this morning.

He acknowledges that we live in an unstable world and even echoes Peter's words in 2 Peter 3:10 that reminds us, "*But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed*." When you witness a series of natural disasters like we have over the last several years or have come face-to-face with the devastation of terrorist acts, you might lose all hope for any stability in the future. At that moment, our writer here says, *"At that time His voice shook the earth; but now He has promised, ‘Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heaven.' The phrase ‘Yet once more' indicates the removal of what is shaken — that is, created things — so that what cannot be shaken may remain"* (Hebrews 12:26-27).

In other words, after everything has been shaken up and turned upside down, we will see the things that we can cling to, the things which are rock solid and cannot be moved. Every once in a while, we catch a glimpse of them when we are in the midst of some difficulty. The author of Hebrews points them out to us in this passage so we will know they are there even before the first storm clouds gather overhead. And he ends this passage with these words of hope: “*Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe;*”

This morning I want to talk about four of these rocks that cannot be shaken. The first is the throne of God. No matter what happens on the earth, no matter what happens in our lives, there is one thing that is secure. God's place of authority will never crumble and fall. We read in Psalm 45:6: "*Your throne, O God, endures for ever and ever* ..." and in Lamentations 5:19: "*But you, O Lord, reign forever; your throne endures to all generations*."

When the Bible talks about God's throne, it is talking about something much bigger than a piece of furniture. His throne is a metaphor which refers to God's kingship and rule on the earth and beyond. It speaks of God and His place as the supreme sovereign over creation. In essence, the writer of Hebrews is saying, "No matter what happens in your life, you can rest assured that God will not be overturned. He will remain strong, unshakeable and in control."

The nature of politics is that leaders change. It happens in an orderly way in the USA but with every new administration that comes into the White House there are a lot of people are out on the street looking for a job. The new leader brings in his own people. It is not new. There is a line in Exodus 1:8 where the author says, "*Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph.*" Everything changed. Before long, Joseph's descendants were turned from friends to slaves. In other countries today, change often takes place swiftly and unexpectedly. You can wake up to a new regime overnight. Even in Jesus' day, the Roman Empire put puppet kings in place to serve the empire not the people.

So the idea of a stable kingdom was very appealing. No matter what era you live in, God represents unchangeable permanence. In Hebrews 1:10-12 we read, "*And, ‘In the beginning, Lord, You founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands; they will perish, but You remain; they will all wear out like clothing; like a cloak You will roll them up, and like clothing they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will never end.*'" It was unlike anything they had ever known and it is often lost on us.

Nonetheless, it is important to us because God is still the source of our hope and our grace. As long as God is in control we know that we have an Advocate in high places. We have someone who cares for us and will seek out our best interests. We can cling to the throne of God and find a precious hiding place amidst solid rock when our world is falling apart.

When Augustus Toplady penned the words of the famous hymn, "Rock of Ages," he was caught up in a sudden storm. As the wind and rain came at him, he found refuge in the cleft of a large rock. He immediately thought of God and the way he protects us in the savage storms of life. God is our rock and our refuge and he will not be shaken. He will always be there holding onto us.

If God is a sure foundation, then His word will also be unshakable. This is the second “rock”. In Mark 13:31 hear Jesus say, "*Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away*." Peter echoes this in his epistle when he tells us that, "*the word of the Lord endures forever*" (1 Peter 1:25).

The Bible is living, powerful and eternal. We can read it to find strength and courage in any circumstance, in any generation. It declares the truth and gives us a peek into God's plans for all creation. It reminds us of God's call to righteousness and points us to the path that will lead us to Him. When we want to know what God expects of us, we can open the scriptures. They do not change. Our understanding may change and grow, but the truth remains constant.

When we look for God, there is no better place to find Him than in His word. When we turn on the television, go online or open up the newspaper, we find a lot of messages couched in politically correct language. No one wants to offend anyone, so we water down our conversations and end up saying little of note. We do not want to turn anyone off so we do not challenge anyone.

God does not hide the truth and He doesn’t mince words. He puts the truth out there for all to see and then lets it work in open hearts and minds. If you want to know what to do to rebuild your world, turn to the Bible. Jesus tells the parable of the wise and foolish builders in Matthew 7:24-27. He suggests that building your life on the rock that is the Word of God will help you stand tall during life's greatest trials. It will hold fast and cover you when you need it most.

We need to hear the truth when our marriages and families are under attack and falling apart. We need to hear the truth when consumer debt is feeding greed and pushing people into bankruptcy. We need to hear the truth when people are turning to drugs and alcohol to fill an emptiness within them. Whenever a friend of mine starts preaching on these hot topics, he always says, "Don't get mad at me for saying these things. It's all right here in the book!" The Bible is, at the very least, God's little instruction book on life and it is there to guide us into a deeper relationship with Him. Thank God it too is a rock that doesn't change.

The church is a third "rock" to which we can cling. In Matthew 16:18 we read "... *I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it*." In recent years the church has been rocked by scandals. The church has struggled over doctrinal issues. The church has been pushed aside by secular society as being marginalized and irrelevant. Nonetheless, the church shows up when there is a need and people are lost and suffering.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in September 2005, people were displaced and literally left without anything: no home, no job, and no food. Then one night there was a story on television that mentioned over 10,000 meals had been prepared and served at one of the shelters. The churches had gotten together and made it happen. Over 10,000 meals – and we think the roast beef dinner is a big deal. Many of the volunteers themselves had suffered from the effects of the storm, but they answered the call to reach out and help their neighbors. These people responded to the call of God and became the church triumphant.

Ministries may come and go. Church buildings will be raised up and torn down again – or maybe just get a new roof. Pastors will serve and move on to new callings or retire. But the church of Jesus Christ will always be there. To the author of Hebrews, the church was not a place. The mountain of God was where the people came to worship. In verse 18 he says, "*You have not come to something that can be touched, a blazing fire* ..." for God is not in the mountain. God is everywhere and particularly in us! The point being that it was the assembly of the people that made it possible for worship to happen and then for ministry to go forth.

The church is not perfect. We know that. But the church will be never ending because it is founded first and foremost in God and then carried on in God’s people. The church is not a place but God’s people gathered in His name. That is why the church survived the persecution in Rome and the various schisms over the centuries. God continues to bless all the fragments and amazingly makes a more bountiful whole. And because of this, people are still coming to saving faith.

 Fourth and finally, we have the promise of eternal life. Those who trust in God have a promise of a bright future. 1 John 2:17 says, "... *the world and its desire are passing away, but those who do the will of God live forever*." In John 10:28 Jesus says, "*I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand.*" Paul says in Romans 8:38-39, "*For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*"

As Christians, we have eternal life which cannot be shaken, for Christ is our strength and He cannot be shaken. He is our life. When all that can be shaken is removed, we will remain, and we shall dwell in our eternal inheritance in that city whose architect and builder is God. That is good news. It means we will have the ultimate victory over life's greatest enemy. It means that God's promises will not fail. They are rock solid.

I remember watching Mayor Rudolph Giuliani stand tall after the terrorist attack in New York on September 11, 2001. He declared that the city would survive the disaster and would rebuild and come back stronger than ever. He gave credit to the people and their indomitable spirit. He was right. The city has come back. How much more for the children of God when we face difficulties.

When I think of the strength of the human spirit then ponder the power of God, I know the future is bright. When we stumble, there is a rock that will not fall. When we fall, God picks us up and the church gives us solid ground, God's Word charts our course, and God’s promises drive us forward. Thank God for this faith built upon a solid rock that cannot be shaken. Stand on this Rock which is God almighty. Amen.