

“Rejected, Rescued, and Redeemed”

Sister Sharon Eubank

First Counselor, Relief Society General Presidency

I’m here at Temple Square inside of the Assembly Hall. It was finished in 1882 and is one of the most interesting buildings on the Square. Do you know why? Look at these bricks. They don’t look even or regular. The building has a dark, rough texture with a lot of masonry between the stones.

The Assembly Hall’s stone came from rejected pieces left over from the construction of the Salt Lake Temple. The builder, a man named Henry Grow, knew that these stone would still make a beautiful building. Even though they had broken or splintered at the stone quarry – they would just need extra mortar in the joints to even them out.

I was 17 years old and extremely shy when I started taking university courses. I was absolutely sure I wasn’t as smart or as articulate as the other kids in the classroom. I didn’t have the experiences they had or the ability to think on my feet. There were times when the idea of walking into a class where the teacher might ask me a question was so nerve wracking that I turned around and went home. I finally decided I would have to face my fears if I was ever going to get my education. It sounds silly now, but I would pray every morning for the confidence to just turn the classroom door knob and walk in and sit down.

Jesus Christ knows all about rejected stones because He was one. [Psalms 118:22](#) says:

“The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.”

Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of our faith and also a master builder of our abilities. He can spy a good block that isn’t being used and work with its imperfect shape to make it usable. If we confess to him that we don’t want to remain a broken block, He will be generous with His mortar and fill in our gaps. When the mortar dries, it doesn’t matter which part is granite and which part is masonry. It holds us together so we can stand up for the purpose we are made.

Just like the stones that built the Assembly Hall, I wasn’t a complete block as a student. I’m still not a complete block now. But I am better than I was. In my calling in the Relief Society presidency and in my job at Latter-day Saint Charities, I am required to speak to strangers all the time; I have to answer questions and think on my feet. It was my early experiences as a student and the help that the Savior gave me that have allowed me to me grow in my abilities. I testify this can be true for you as well.

I want to show you one more feature of the Assembly Hall that I think is interesting. High above every door is a window that shows a Star of David. This was a symbol the pioneers used to show that we are dedicated to the gathering of the tribes of Israel before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

It’s no accident that you meet in weekly *gatherings*. It helps to have friends to encourage you and to share what they are thinking about. Think about the people in your gathering group. Did you know each other before you started? Are there members who will remain a friend when BYU-Pathway is finished? The reason I had such a hard time walking into class was because I didn’t know anyone. Friends make a huge difference in our confidence. BYU-Pathway is part of the great gathering that is happening in our time. It connects people from many different places around the world to education, progress, and the blessings of the gospel.

That word “gather” has great significance. It was just a year ago that President Russell M. Nelson talked about your role and my role in gathering Israel. He said:

“There is *nothing* of greater consequence, absolutely *nothing*. This gathering should mean *everything* to you. This *is* the mission for which you were sent to earth. ... *Anytime* you do *anything* that helps *anyone* — on either side of the veil — take a step toward making covenants with God and receiving their essential baptismal and temple ordinances, you are helping to gather Israel. It is as simple as that.”¹

But how exactly do we gather Israel – this great mission that the prophet said should mean everything to us? It happens in the very same way that you come together in weekly gatherings.

- Get to know people
- Listen to them talk about what is important to them
- Share what is important to you
- Help them with their problems
- Invite them to help you

This is how we make friends. This is how we help each other. This is how all good things in our lives grow and develop.

The Lord loves you. He is aware of you. He will bless you in the smallest things if you ask Him for help. As many times as you get up and try again, He will be there for you. He won’t ever give up on you. My prayer for you is that the Lord will bless you, little by little, to fill in the gaps and become the great building He has designed you to be. And above every doorway of your life may you welcome in the gathering of Israel.

¹ Russell M. Nelson, “[Hope of Israel](https://www.hopeofisrael.org/)” (worldwide youth broadcast, June 3, 2018), [hopeofisrael.lds.org](https://www.hopeofisrael.org/)