

Priesthood of the Believer

First Baptist Church Peachtree City

February 12, 2017

1 Peter 2:4-10

INTRODUCTION

I invite you to turn in your copy of the Scriptures to 1 Peter chapter 2 as we continue our 'Glow' series. Likely in Rome around 62-64 A.D., the Apostle Peter writes this inspired letter to the believers in five different cities in the Roman Empire who were experiencing increasing difficulty and persecution under the treacherous Roman ruler named Nero.

Peter has been encouraging these believers toward a confident faith in Christ and exhorting them toward godly living in some incredibly harsh circumstances. The basis of their confidence was to be their faith in the finished work of salvation provided through Jesus Christ on the cross. Their pursuit of holiness in their lives individually and collectively would not only build their confidence that God was actively at work in their lives, but would serve as a dynamic display and witness to the Gospel message that had transformed them.

As chapter one ends, Peter reminds them that God's Word, including the message of the Gospel that was preached to them, will stand forever. Chapter 2, beginning with 'Therefore, or *'because of all of this'*, he challenges them to put aside the attitudes and behaviors that marked their lives before Christ, and rather to continue to pursue the refreshing nourishment of God's Word because, through it, they had tasted and experienced God's goodness and grace. ***Let's continue by reading God's Word together...starting with 1 Peter 2:4.***

TEXT

4 And coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, **5** you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. **6** For this is contained in Scripture: **[Isaiah 28:16]** "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER stone, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." **7** This precious value, then, is for you who believe: but for those who disbelieve, **[Psalm 118:22]** "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone," **8** and, **[Isaiah 8:14]** "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed. **9** But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A [peculiar] PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. **10** for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.

In the middle of this exhortation for righteous living and witness, which will resume in verse 11, Peter draws *three pictures* of our reality, (our status), that result from our relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. *If you will* open your heart today to hear God speak to you, I believe He will encourage your soul and overwhelm you with His goodness...no matter where you are on your journey or how difficult your circumstance.

And if you are here today without a personal relationship with Christ, I pray He will open your heart to what you are missing and you will today place your faith and trust in Him.

UNDERSTANDING

A. Living Stones built on the Cornerstone. (v.4-8)

Coming to Him in a continual fellowship...the Rock [Matt. 16:18] who is risen from the dead...He may have been rejected by men, but He is precious to God and to us. Christ was chosen particularly by God with a unique preciousness to lavish His love on us and build us up into a unified body (*spiritual building*) where each believer (*stone*) has been made alive in Him and has been Sovereignly shaped for His perfect purpose and glory.

Although examined and not meeting the expectation of the Jewish religious leaders to be their awaited Messiah, our Cornerstone (Jesus Christ) was and is exactly who God divinely appointed to be the foundation of His Kingdom people. And those who believe in Him will never be *'disappointed'* or *'frustrated'* or *'panicked'* or *'ashamed'* in Him.

However, there is some bad news here. People who have rejected Christ, who are disobedient through their unbelief, will be judged and doomed by Him – the Righteous Judge. Rejecting Christ as Savior carries with it the rejection of God Himself.

Christ is either the Rock upon whom you, by grace, rest; or He is the Rock that is in the way of your own path, upon which you will stumble and are ultimately crushed.

B. Priests with access to the King-High Priest. (v. 5-9)

Prior to Christ, the Jews had one high priest who had access to make sacrifice in the presence of God. Now, because Christ, through His sacrifice, tore the veil that separated people from the presence of God, every believer has access to the God directly through our Savior and mediator...Christ Jesus. He says that we are a *holy* and *royal priesthood*.

Peter knows that, as we bring the sacrifice of our lives to God, we still battle the flesh and in our flesh we struggle to pursue holiness. But when God looks upon us, He sees the righteousness of His perfect Son who died for us that we may become the righteousness of God in Him [2 Cor. 5:21]. We are holy in His sight because He sees us *through* His Son.

Our imperfect attempts at worship and sacrifice are accepted through Christ our High Priest. Unlike the Jewish high priests who were not from the royal lineage, we are also royalty because we have been adopted in the family of the King of kings and Lord of lords...the One of whom the Scripture says [Phil. 2] has been given **THE NAME** which is above every name, to whom every knee will bow and call Him Lord.

The first century believers may not have felt like royalty...and they certainly had little political influence. But the Bible says that at the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ, we will rule and reign WITH HIM. And no court will be striking down our Eternal King's executive orders.

C. Chosen People called and protected by God. (v. 9-10)

Some translations use the descriptor – **peculiar**. In our context, that usually means 'weird'. However, in the original language, it means a person or people who have been purchased (*redeemed*) and brought into a group with a circle of protection drawn around them, denoting God's unique ownership of us...purchased by the blood of His own Son.

Yet, we are not a people who have been quarantined in silent, protective custody, but rather we are to **proclaim forth** the character, virtue, glory and grace of our God. Our greatest witness is the life transformation that He has brought to us and is bringing about in us, as we live no longer in darkness...but in the light of His presence.

At one time, only the Jewish people had a unique relationship with God. But through the redeeming work of Christ, we received mercy, not the righteous judgment we deserved.

APPLICATION

Although all of these descriptors apply to the all believers, please do not lose sight of the fact that they apply to **you (personally)** as a follower of Christ. One of Satan's greatest tools is to **fog our vision** so we lose sight of who we are in Christ. That happens either through the *lie of pride*, that you do not need God, or the *lie of guilt*, that your sins make God unapproachable. That is why it is so critical that we know God's unchanging Word.

Make no mistake, sin does hinder your relationship with God. But you are His child and He does not abandon you. In fact, the Bible says He pursues us passionately desiring our restoration. It says that if at any point on our journey [1 John 1:9] we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[Rom. 6:23] You have been given eternal life, made eternally alive through Christ, and He has shaped you specially to fit into His family...with a specific purpose. Uniformity and unity are not the same things. Your uniqueness is God's gift to you and to the church.

He is constantly drawing us...individually and collectively...to conform us into the image of His Son, (which is to be our personal and united aim), so that we can enjoy the privilege of our access to His presence and we will in turn reflect His glory to a dark and dying world.

You are a priest in whom dwells the Spirit of the Living God, giving you access to the Most High God ...day or night...through Christ...regardless of your circumstance. And one day, the Bible tells us that Jesus Christ will come again...and we (**YOU**) will reign with Him and rest in His presence forever and ever. **As a believer, you are part of God's family.**

Is there a lie that Satan has been using on you? Would you come to the throne of God's grace today...call out the lie for what it is...and replace it with biblical Truth?

Finally, if you are not yet a follower of Christ, the truth is that He will either be your Rock in whom you believe or He is the Savior you have rejected. Either you believe in Him and embrace Him as Savior and Lord...or you stand rejecting Him. So the question is not complicated: **Have you believed in Jesus Christ, God's Son, who died to pay for your sin?** This same Bible tells us in [Romans 10:9-10]

"If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

Would you come to Him in repentant faith and be a part of God's forever family today?

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