

Cornerstone Church

December 18, 2016

**Sermon Series: Practicing Our Readiness Drills for
Christ's Return - Seeking God's Guidance from 1st and
2nd Peter**

Today's Sermon: We Are a Holy Priesthood. What an
Awesome Gig!

Today's Passage: 1 Peter 2:4-8

(1 Peter 2:4-8 ESV) [4] As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, [5] you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. [6] For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." [7] So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," [8] and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

Main Point: If God has made the church His new temple, which is an infinitely holy honor, then shouldn't we treasure the body (one another) with as great a respect as we can?

Review

[1] So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. [2] Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—[3] if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. (1 Peter 2:1-3 ESV)

1. Suffering believers can find it hard to love one another as we ought, so Peter has told us to agape one another (1:22-25).
2. That means that we curb all activity that hurts one another and we do that by falling more in love with Jesus

and His Word (2:1-3).

In today's passage:

3. That Word tells us how treasured this new temple of God is by making Jesus the Cornerstone and how honored we are to be critical components of this new temple (2:4-8).
 - o The Temple in Jerusalem was central to their identity and life. To understand this passage we have to think like Jews.
 - Eastern cultures think that their meaning and identity is wrapped up in the community, not the individual. We think "I" they think "we". For example:
 - The first connection is family and when someone is identified in Scripture, they are always labeled as the "son of _____"
 - The second level of identity is the clan, then the tribe, then the nation.
 - The nation finds its identity and meaning in their God whom they worship and His residence is in a building located in Jerusalem.
 - Therefore if a Jew wanted to know who he was at his core he would say "I am Jacob's son, who is of the clan of Ram, who is of the tribe of Judah, who are Israelites that worship Yahweh several times a year in His temple in Jerusalem. That makes us special since we are His chosen people.
 - o After the Old Covenant was made obsolete by the establishment of the New Covenant the old Temple had to be destroyed in order to make room for the new Temple, which is Jesus and His followers, the Bride of Christ.
 - The old Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. leaving the Jews without a core identity.
 - The only way for them to regain their identity would be to become part of the new Temple of God which is still under construction.

- We, as Jesus followers, are that new Temple, the place where God resides today!!!! **(1 Corinthians 3:16-17 ESV) Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.**
- The structural integrity of the new Temple is only as good as its Cornerstone (something like our foundations). That Cornerstone is Jesus. **"a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious,"**
 - Of course not everyone agreed. At first He was discarded and rejected. **The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,"**
 - The day this happened officially was when Jesus was crucified.
- Now on that Cornerstone is being added additional stones (think gigantic blocks 40' long by 7' wide). We are those additional stones **"you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house"** (See also Ephesians 2:19-22)
 - The language implies that we are still being chiseled and are not yet in our completed form. **As you come to him** (present tense meaning as you come to Him daily in your submission to His Lordship) **are being built up** (present, passive indicative, meaning daily we are being chiseled by God through His word to fit perfectly into this new Temple).
- But we are more than stones that house the Spirit of God we are also priests in that Temple. **to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.**
 - The OT priests took the offerings (lamb, goat, meal, etc.) from the people and offered them up as burnt, sin, guilt, and thank offerings on the altar to receive God's forgiveness, and as expressions of gratitude to God.
 - Are the spiritual sacrifices we offer sacrifices of our bodies (Romans 12:1-2), or material gifts (Hebrews 13:16) or sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving (Hebrews 13:15) or are these souls we bring to God in evangelism? **"Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and**

precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." [7] **So the honor is for you who believe,**

- And for those who reject our offer of salvation in Christ. . . **but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," [8] and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.**

Application:

1. We need to stop thinking like Westerners where the individual is primary and start thinking like Easterners where the community is primary and in our case that is the church of Jesus Christ. This is now your new identity.
2. How critical to the structure is each block?