



The Living Stone

Nov 6 2022

WORSHIP

BAmazing God
Thank You Lord
Refiner's Fire

WELCOME

Take time to read
1 Peter 2:4-12 then
discuss how you
understand the passage
and what verses stand
out in your reading
and/or the message
delivered last Sunday.

WORD

1 Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Stones are supposed to be non-living things. And yet Christ has breathed life into our formerly dead spiritual state when He caused us to be born again in His Spirit.

Jesus Christ, The Living Stone

When Peter calls our Lord Jesus Christ the Living Stone and likewise calls us living stones, what it means is that we, believers, are being built into a temple with Christ as our firm foundation. (1 Peter 2:4-5). It means that our faith is being built on Christ and on no one else. Our faith is not being built on the basis of the next superstar pastor who preaches false doctrines and tries to seduce us with promises of health, wealth and success. Our faith is not being built on the basis of man-made traditions nor on the basis of what our friends or families believe in. Our faith is not being built on what the world dictates to be right nor on what we want or feel to be true. Our faith should only be based on the Word made flesh, the One who calls Himself the Way, the Truth and the Life, the Living Stone – Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jesus Christ, The Chief Cornerstone

Christ is not just a Living Stone. In Matthew 21:42, He refers to Himself as the Cornerstone that the writer of Psalms 118 prophesied about. This He revealed when He confronted the hypocritical priests and the Pharisees and told them: "Have you never read in the Scriptures: The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone..."

The cornerstone is the most important part of ancient buildings. Just like Christ is the most important Head of the Church. The cornerstone is the first stone that is set in construction. Just like Jesus is metaphorically referred to as the "firstborn of all creation" (Colossians 1:15) – not that He was ever born for He has always been. The cornerstone is also the reference point that determines the measurement and orientation of the building. Just like Jesus, His teachings, and the very essence of His being, should be the basis for the whole of Christianity.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

Thanksgiving

Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives.

Country and World

Repentance and salvation
Peace in Ukraine and healing for those infected by the virus

Church

CCF members would honor God & love God and make disciples.
Core, pastors and leaders.
Ministries and church worldwide

Personal Concerns

Share your problems and concerns with your group and pray for one another.



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We Are A Royal Priesthood, A Holy Nation

On the other hand, we, believers, are not merely called to be living stones. We who have received adoption to the Father's sonship through His Son Jesus Christ have also become part of the holy priesthood. In other words, we are not just part of the structure of the temple but we also serve as priests in the temple, offering acceptable sacrifices to God. (1Peter 2:5)

Our Acceptable Sacrifices

These acceptable offerings to Him include the sacrifice of our love for God and for others (Ephesians 5:2), the sacrifice of our praise (Hebrews 13:15), the sacrifice of our generous and cheerful giving (Philippians 4:18), the sacrifice of our doing good and sharing freely with others (Hebrews 3:16). Most importantly, we present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God which is our spiritual worship (Romans 12:1). We do this by dying to ourselves daily, setting aside our own desires in complete servitude to the lordship of Jesus in every single area of our lives.

Yes, it's easier said than done. Especially because we are still in the flesh. If we reflect upon our lives we will realize that we are not consistently, nor perfectly performing these sacrifices. We still stumble. There are times when we find it hard to praise God. There are times when we struggle with loving one another. There are times when we let our selfishness take over instead of freely sharing our blessings with others. Even more difficult, this sacrifice is not a one-time deal. It is not even just a daily exercise. Rather, it is a moment-by-moment surrendering of our will to Christ.

And how can our sacrifices be made "acceptable" when, oftentimes, our motives are not even completely pure and good? Praise God that we, and our sacrifices, are made acceptable to God because we have accepted Christ's sacrifice of Himself to save us from our sins. Because the sinless Lamb of God's completely pure and holy blood has taken away our sins and covered us completely. In the Father's eyes, we look nothing like the worthless sinners that we are. Instead, God chooses to see us as holy, pure and righteous because of His Son's perfect, once-for-all-time sacrifice. As far as God is concerned, He looks at us and sees: "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession" (1 Peter 2:9-10) So as we come to Jesus, let's tell Him with sincere and glad hearts: "Lord I belong to You and I offer myself to You". If we pray this with our whole heart, although we are not perfect, the Lord will be delighted.

Our Privilege and Our True Calling

Why are we given all these privileges? Because of our calling. So that we may



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declare the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His wonderful light. Once we were not a people, but now we are the people of God; once we had not received mercy, but now we have received mercy. (1 Peter 2:9-10) As believers, these praises should constantly flow out of us as a form of gratitude to our Lord, especially considering how we have been saved from our sins.

And having received all these privileges, how then should we live our lives? We must abstain from any sinful desires we've had prior to our relationship with Christ. (1 Peter 2:11) Desires that used to take hold of us and to control us. Yes, these sinful desires continue to tempt us until now and continue to wage war against our souls (1 Peter 2:11) – even after we've been saved by being born again spiritually through Jesus' death and resurrection. But we should not give up. Though we may end up falling countless times, we have to keep fighting the battle against our sins. We should have an unending desire to pursue holiness in our lives. (1 Peter 1:16) Because soon, unbelievers will see the change in our lives and they too will turn to God as we influence them – resulting in them ultimately glorifying God.

As living stones, our duty is to be willing to be built into the spiritual house of God. As a holy priesthood, our duty is to offer ourselves as a spiritual sacrifice. As God's special possession, our duty is to declare His excellencies who brought us out of darkness into the light. (1 Peter 2:9) As citizens of the kingdom of God, our duty is to continue to wage war against our own sinful desires and to pursue His holiness.

A Note On Salvation: What Does It Mean To Be Saved?

There are three different phases to our salvation that most of us believers will go through and should embrace.

Justification

Remember the thief on the cross who was justified right before he died? Just like him, as soon as we receive the Lordship of Jesus Christ into our lives, we are justified and saved from eternal damnation. We are declared righteous. This justification is the act of God whereby He forgives the sinner of all his sins – past, present and future. We receive this by His grace alone, through faith in Christ alone – not by good works. Just like the thief on the cross who never had the opportunity to do good works after being saved because he died right after. So if we have repented of our sins and have accepted Christ as our Lord and Saviour, then we have been saved and justified. We have experienced the first part of salvation.



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Sanctification

Those of us who remain alive after being justified are undergoing the 2nd phase called sanctification, which the thief on the cross never experienced because he died right after being saved.

This is the process wherein we move from spiritual infancy to maturity. It is an ongoing process that continues until we finally leave this world. Our Lord Jesus is continually sanctifying us to be more and more like Him. Thus, Paul's message to pursue holiness in our lives.

This phase is never easy. Because many times, we will feel the painful process of being conformed into His image. We are like stones being sculpted by the chisel of the Builder. Our sinful desires, sinful habits, sinful ways of thinking are cut off so that we can fit into His temple. Many times, persons or things that may not necessarily be sinful but which we have learned to prioritize over God, and have allowed to become idols in our lives, are chiselled off. The Builder's tools can be quite painful.

Why do we have to go through all these pain and suffering? Because when we are too comfortable and complacent, we become blind to the sanctifying work that the Lord desires to do in our hearts. Because sometimes, it's only by going through the sanctification of suffering that God can break us down in order to rebuild us into His image and deepen our dependence on Him.

Glorification

This is our future destiny as believers. This is when we will finally leave this world and enter into the presence of God in heaven. It is God's final removal of sin from our lives so that we can stand faultless before Him in eternity, in our glorified bodies. We will finally be free of our sinful nature as He transforms us into holy individuals. This is when we will finally enjoy unhindered access to His presence.

You and I are living stones. We are a reflection of the true Living Stone, the Cornerstone who is Jesus Christ.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Discuss areas in your life where the Lord is actively shaping you into His spiritual house.
2. Read the following:

PRIVILEGE	DUTIES
<i>Living stones</i>	<i>Be willing to be built into the spiritual house of God</i>
<i>Holy Priesthood</i>	<i>Offer ourselves as spiritual sacrifice</i>
<i>Chosen people, royal priesthood, holy nation, God's special possession</i>	<i>That we may declare His excellencies who brought us out from darkness into the light</i>
<i>As citizens of heaven and foreigners/ exiles of this world</i>	<i>That we should continue to fight and wage war against our sin and be holy.</i>

a Realizing the privileges that was given to us believers, how does this make you feel as a follower of Christ? How do these privileges encourage you while journeying through Christian living?

b. Discuss the following privileges and duties mentioned above. What challenges do you face as a believer in pursuing the duties that are set before you?

3. Sanctification is crucial in a believer, how do you view this while knowing that sanctification can affect every area of your life?

4. How are you currently being sanctified by the Lord? Encourage one another and close in prayer.