



Sermon Notes, 31 January 2021

Term Spring 2021

Series 1 Peter (Trust, Surrender, Confidence)

Gatherings: the 11, the 6

Title 1 Peter 2:4-12 – Living Stones

Preacher Chris Brown

Reading: 1 Peter 2:4-12

This passage is one of the most exciting declarations of our identity as followers of Jesus, as His Church.

Jesus is the foundation for everything Peter writes. He begins in verse 4 'as you come to him, the living Stone' identifying Jesus as certain, enduring, **and**, risen, alive today. In verses 6 to 8 Peter describes Jesus as the cornerstone, quoting from Isaiah 28 and Psalm 118. Peter is declaring that the ancient prophecies about Jesus have been fulfilled and in doing this confirming that Jesus has always been God's plan for his people's salvation. As cornerstone, Jesus is the primary stone, the foundation stone on which the entire building (the Church) is established. Some people accept Jesus, others reject him. This doesn't change the eternal truth that Jesus is the cornerstone, 'chosen by God and precious to him' (v. 4).

Peter declares that our identity, as followers of Jesus, is found entirely in Jesus. When we follow Jesus we are transformed into his likeness (1 Corinthians 3:18), Peter confirms this, writing, 'you also, like living stones' (v. 5). Not only are we like Jesus, we are being built by God into His spiritual house.

Picture someone building a dry stone wall. The large pile of stones is transformed into something far stronger than any single stone. Each stone is carefully placed in just the right place. In a similar way, when we choose to follow Jesus, God places us as 'living stones' into His spiritual house. We each become a unique part of His glorious Church.

We are also a 'holy priesthood' (v. 5) and a 'royal priesthood' (v. 9), recognising that Jesus is both king and priest. Read Hebrews 7 to capture the breath-taking reality of the transformation that Jesus has made possible in our lives through his birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension. As a holy and royal priesthood, we serve God together as priests in his spiritual house. The Levitical priesthood (Exodus 28 onwards) is superseded; every follower of Jesus is a priest, has direct access to God through Jesus and is invited to serve God, building His kingdom. Peter reminds us that we are 'a chosen people ... a holy nation, God's special possession' (v. 9).

As followers of Jesus, this is our identity. God declares this as our identity and meets us where we are, walking with us as we gradually understand our new identity. This is a process that the Holy Spirit gently leads us through at a pace that is right for us. As we

walk with the Holy Spirit, we learn to trust God that we are who he says we are. We surrender to God, recognising that He places us as living stones in His spiritual house. We grow in confidence as we listen to the Holy Spirit and respond in obedience, serving God in building His kingdom. Choosing to surrender to God is our 'offering of spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ' (v. 5). Proclaiming our love for Jesus, sharing how Jesus has transformed our lives, is how we 'declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light' (v. 9).

Questions:

- Pause and reflect on God's declaration over you that, as a follower of Jesus you are a living stone in his spiritual house, a priest in his royal and holy priesthood, chosen, His special possession.
- What aspects of your identity in Jesus do you find easy/hard to accept?
- How can you, as living stones built together by God, encourage each other in seeing yourselves in the way God sees you?
- Pause and ask the Holy Spirit what he is asking of you in the coming week.
 - What is your personal journey with the Holy Spirit? An invitation to deeper surrender, to increased trust and acceptance of your identity in Jesus?
 - What opportunities is the Holy Spirit inviting you to? Are there people the Holy Spirit is asking you to pray for? Are there people the Holy Spirit is asking you to chat to about your love for Jesus? Are there people the Holy Spirit is asking you to show Jesus' love to?
- If you are happy sharing anything that the Holy Spirit has shown you, then share with each other, pray for each other, and encourage each other in increasingly confident obedience to Jesus.
- As you go through the week, pause when you can and remember that you are:
 - Chosen by God
 - God's special possession
 - A living stone in God's spiritual house
 - A priest in God's holy and royal priesthood