

Living as chosen holy priests

1 Peter 2:4-10

Welcome to week 3 in our series through the book of 1 Peter. In this passage Peter shifts his metaphor from growing to building, and changes his emphasis from the individual to the communal. Once again this passage testifies to the supreme worth of Christ and encourages believers to understand their identity and live in light of it.

How did you feel God encourage, inspire or challenge you through the message on Sunday?

Cornerstone!

The building technique alluded to here was the practise of using a cornerstone as the foundation and starting point of all subsequent building. The cornerstone was the most important and valuable piece, it had to be as perfect, large and strong as possible. Like a compass that is slightly off, if the stone wasn't quite right the walls and overall shape of the building would not end up as they should. Jesus is the perfect cornerstone – for God's salvation plan, for His church and for His follower's lives.

Read Isaiah 28:16-17. How does Jesus fulfil Old Testament prophecy about the coming salvation God would bring?

How does Colossians 1:15-20 relate to what Peter is writing to these early believers?

The importance of Jesus cannot be understated for our world, salvation, the church and our lives. Yet there are so many other things we have to focus on in life – for example: caring for the poor, reaching the unsaved in our community, even engaging in culture and politics around what a Christian response is to euthanasia or same-sex marriage. How can we do those things and remain Christ-centric?

When you think of your own lives right now, how much of your:

- *Theology* is Jesus-centred?
- *Thinking or attitudes* come from Jesus and his teaching and life?
- *Lifestyle* is built on Jesus as cornerstone?

The world in which we are 'aliens and strangers' will engage with Christians on a lot of topics, but often don't want to engage with Jesus. How can we respect others by responding to their questions, but doing so in a way that seeks to make Jesus the focus?

It's not just about you, you know?

1 Peter 2:4-10 is a beautiful passage all about Jesus and His church, every 'you' in this passage is plural in the original language. How do you see our church demonstrate what it means to have different individuals all being built into a spiritual house that holds Jesus supreme?

How have we seen individualistic attitudes and behaviours creep into our church?

How do you see individualistic attitudes and behaviours creep into your own life? How do you combat those to put the focus of your lives back on serving Jesus and His church?

What are the spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God that we should be offering? Can you give examples from your own life about spiritual sacrifices you feel God calling you to at the moment?

A cornerstone that divides, builds up & destroys

Who are the builders in v7 that rejected this stone?

As those who have trusted in Jesus, what does it mean for us to 'never be put to shame' (v6) as a result of our trust in Jesus?

How is Jesus a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall?

What does it mean in verse 8 that they were 'destined' to stumble? How does that fit with other verses that place responsibility on the lost for not believing (John 1:12; 3:36; 5:24; Rom 1-3 etc)?

What is 'the message' that people disobey?

Radical shift in identity

Michael Frost spoke about these verses a fortnight ago, how do you think this grand renaming would have affected the first readers?

These identities (chosen people, royal priesthood, holy nation, God's special possession) are all identities applied to the nation Israel in the Old Testament. What does it mean that they are now applied to Jewish and Gentile Christians?

In what ways are Christians/the church a chosen people? A royal priesthood? A holy nation?

There is a purpose Christians have that comes from such an identity. Ultimately, what is the purpose Peter lists in these verses?

In light of the whole letter, clearly Peter has more than singing praises in church in his mind here – list ways we can declare the praises of God in:

- Our personal/private lives when no one else is around?
- Our church lives?
- Our relational lives?
- Our work/uni lives?

Enjoy a time of prayer together celebrating that we are those who have now received mercy & adoption through our Saviour Jesus!!