

A Practical Study of 1 PETER:

Practice for Suffering Saints

“How Suffering Fits in the Father’s Plan”

Key Verse: 1 Peter 5:10

“But the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, shall himself make you complete, shall establish you, shall make you strong, shall ground you as on a foundation.”

Pattern Number Three – You are Part of the Establishment – 1 Peter 2:4-10

Key Verse 2:5

In this third study we are talking about “You are Part of the Establishment (2:4-10).”

In our first study together “Don’t Get Shook, God has the Controls.” Why? We have a blessing He’s provided for us in salvation. Through Jesus Christ, we’ve been born again—the living hope.

Secondly, we have an inheritance that’s got our name on it. We’ve got reservations made. It’s incorruptible, undefiled and

isn't going to fade away. It doesn't matter how long it's there. It's waiting for you.

And thirdly, whatever happens now you're protected by the power of God.

We have focused upon what we are to do in view of what God has done in those glorious truths. Our responsibility and the key to spiritual growth is: get tough and start growing.

Gird up the loins of your mind. And secondly, as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, they may start to grow.

I hope and pray that you have done some surgery today. Scripturally before growth ever takes place, there's got to be some quitting and some cutting. And it's once and for all done you sever it, you deal with it, you don't rationalize it anymore. You take care of it. You put it behind you and you get on with those things which are ahead of you.

This is the hardest area, I think, is to allow the surgeon's knife—the knife of the Spirit of God—to cut those things away from our lives that are not right. We know it.

We know we're living out of fellowship. We know we're living in disobedience. But growth stops until those things are taken care of. There is no growth while you're out of fellowship. There is no growth while you're living in the flesh.

You can be a Christian for 40, 50 years and still spiritually, you're living in diapers. The burp, the bottle and the dirty britches.

A lot of people live like that and they die like that. What a tragedy to have to step into the presence of the One who was crucified for me with my diapers on spiritually, simply because I didn't follow the simple patterns to growth.

I realize some of the things I said today run counter to some things you've heard on high life and low life and greater life and mid-life and all the other things. But at least you're going to have a chance to test that against the scripture.

I for one will tell you that it works. I know it works because it has worked in my own life.

Now Peter found that one of the patterns you must learn to practice by is a pattern that's probably harder for men than it is for women.

Women have a tendency to be social beings. Women just innately love Bible class. They love the bridge club. They love the garden club. They love to go over to their friend's house, drink coffee and solve the whole world's problems.

Men, they're macho. They're individualists. If they betray weakness by admitting a need, that is the toughest thing on their ego and pride that you can find.

So men don't tend to gravitate toward other men in socializing and fellowship and getting help.

We're getting ready to solve that problem in ministry. We're going to have our first annual men's conference this fall. I'm so excited about it. Dr. Henry Brandt is coming to speak. He's a close personal friend and Christian psychologist that's known world-wide. And it's going to be a marvelous time together for men to learn some of these basic principles. We need each other.

Hebrews 10 tells us: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is."

Men, of course, think "Well, I can worship Him on the golf course or in my boat. I can worship Him out under the stars. I don't have to be a part of a body of believers."

I don't see that in the passage.

Every one of us, as believers, needs each other. That's the marvelous thing about this conference. We pretty soon start eating up our tags. We pretty soon forget the other members of our family and we start flowing into one another's lives. You watch it. By Thursday. It'll be incredible. You don't care who you sit with because you know everybody if you've done your work. And you begin to really love and appreciate one another.

And so, come Saturday morning you hate to go down the hill and leave each other. Why? Because you've really grown to

love and depend on one another.

And that's what we're trying to teach you. That's the way God designed us. You need me and I need you. We're either going to hang together or we're going to hang separately (somebody said). And that's true.

We are no match by ourselves for what we have to face in the day in which we're living.

Now the Apostle Paul in these verses is going to talk about stones in a building. And we are those stones, inter-related to make a building.

In another one of Paul's writings in 1 Corinthians 12—by the way, I'm teaching that book on my fall tour so I just finished translating it last Friday and I've got it divided into 24 studies for next year and all I've got to do is write the lecture notes before tour starts. But I'm going to back up from 2 Corinthians and do 1 Corinthians now because it is addressing so many major issues that are going on right now, I felt like I needed to.

And so I was translating chapters 12, 13 and 14 on spiritual gifts and speaking in tongues and prophecy and all of that. When I get to chapter 12, I read that wonderful illustration of the body. The body's made up of many members but every part of it is necessary. There are parts of it right now that you're fully aware is necessary that you didn't know you had that you've hurt today. And so you're sitting there in a tad bit

of discomfort because that member's saying "Hey look, you offended me and I hurt." And you say "I wish I wouldn't have heard that." It's just normal.

You see what a neat illustration. Every part of the body is interrelated and that's how Paul describes our relationship with each other.

Now Peter, as he comes along, he's going to pull out the term "building." Paul does that too in Ephesians. We'll see in just a minute. Let's see what we can learn from these verses that are before us.

We're picking up at chapter 2 and verse 4.

v. 4 Toward whom we are drawing near a living stone, having been, it is true, rejected by men, but with God, elect, precious,

"Toward whom" WHAT? "we are drawing near."

What did your hymn tell you? "draw me nearer, nearer blessed Lord."

And so the yearning in our heart is to draw near to Him. If you are walking with God, you look forward to these times when you're being drawn nearer to Him, closer to His presence, because you've got to be nearer to be made like Him. And He wants you in close so He can work in your heart.

He says “we draw near” WHAT? “[to] a living stone.”

Do you think Peter's impressed with the word “living”? Man it's the third time we've had this.

We had “a living hope” in chapter 1, verse 3 last time.

And then we had, in the study this morning “the living word.”

And now today we've got “living stone.”

Do you think Peter's impressed with life? I do. I think he's lived enough of it to be able to tell us and that the real living comes in these major areas.

He calls us “a living stone.”

Verse 5.

v. 5 and you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house into a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

You know, you need only look at those verses and you understand that the “living stone” isn't Peter—it's Christ.

And then that we too, because we know Christ, are “living stones” in this building.

And as you're going to see, Jesus is that CHIEF STONE, that CORNERSTONE.

And so, we are drawing near to Him and we too are "stones." And as we draw near to Him, we're built up—we're being "built up a spiritual house into a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

Now why is he all of a sudden turned to sacrifice? What kind of a building is he thinking about? He's thinking about a temple isn't he? And he's thinking about all of us are interrelated in this building. And this building is a temple. In this building God dwells and in this building is Jesus Christ. And you come to the temple to offer your sacrifices. And you say "Well, I didn't know that I'm supposed to offer sacrifices."

Let's look at that a little more closer. In verse 4 he referred to Christ as the "living stone." And now Christians are "living stones."

Listen to Ephesians 4:25:

Ephesians 4:25

Finish then with lying and tell your neighbor the truth for we are not separate units but intimately related to each other in Christ.

Then here is Paul's version of the building:

Ephesians 2:19-22

So you are no longer outsiders or aliens, but fellow citizens with other Christians. You belong now to the household of God. Firmly beneath you is the foundation, God's messengers and prophets, the actual foundation stone being Jesus Christ Himself. In Him, each separate piece of building, properly fitting into its neighbor, grows together into a temple consecrated to God. You are all part of this building in which God himself lives by His Spirit.

Now what does that tell you? That tells you friends, we're all in this together.

Now that's the tragedy of denominations and all these different expressions because we have so distorted the building. And the building is believers from every place.

The sooner we eat up our tags and we start recognizing, Hey! I'm looking for born-again believers who are part of this building that I can relate to and I can have fellowship with and we can relate with one another.

You see, there's no room for separate units in the body of Christ. In the "spiritual house" that's being built, we're dependent upon each other.

That's exactly what Jesus prayed for in John 17. Have you ever read that prayer in view of that? Listen to these words as

He prays:

John 17:20-21

I am not praying only for these men but for all those who will believe in me through their message, that they may all be one just as you, Father, live in me and I live in you. I am asking that they may live in us that the world may believe that you did send me.

So what is PATTERN NUMBER THREE? You and I are part of the building. We each have a common relationship in Jesus Christ and we have a responsibility to that building.

I have responsibility to you. You have a responsibility to me.

Paul focuses on the fact that we each have spiritual gifts. Peter is going to mention that too. And that you use those gifts.

You have Josephine and Jane using their gifts to edify you. Some say my gift is teaching then if I'm functioning properly, I'm edifying you through the gift of teaching.

What is your gift? How are you edifying the rest of us? As we edify you, do you see it's a give-and-take proposition? We give ourselves unselfishly to one another because we're dependent upon one another. What a beautiful picture!

Smith, a commentator on 1 Peter puts it this way:

The materials in this building are living stones. Such are Christian believers drawn out of nature's quarry. They are cut and polished by the spirit of the living God and are then prepared for the place they are to occupy in the temple of the Lord of hosts. The figure is a bold one for it may be asked, "Do stones live?" Yet, it is a most appropriate one for dull and shapeless things as stones are yet under the skill of the lapidary they receive new forms and take so fine a polish, that when bought together they glitter in the light of the mid-day sun as did the stones of the temple that stood on Zion's hill. Even so do Christians live, dead by nature in trespasses and sins and often moreover so unseemly and so stained that it might be supposed impossible to kindle them into life. Yet by the grace of God they are quickened, cleansed and purified while some of them, at least, take such a high spiritual polish that they shine with a luster surpassing for the luster of the diamond, the amethyst, or the ruby.

"Living stones."

As a result of the new birth and a result of what we're going through, we're being refined and polished so we sparkle. So we glow. And through the testings, they fit us in the place where we belong.

The story told in a book that was on sorrow, *The Stewardship of Sorrows*. I can't even think of her name that writes it but the story really impressed me. I remember the story and forgot the author.

Anyway, this fellow was having a really rough time. He lost his job. His wife had divorced him. He was just really, really down. And he was walking downtown one day and there was a skilled lapidary working on a stone. And while he was cutting the stone, he was cutting it in a very peculiar shape. And the fellow was captured by it. And finally he talked to the lapidary for a minute when he stopped. He said "Sir, what are you doing to that stone?" He says "I'm shaping this stone down here to fit up there." And he pointed to the top of the steeple in the temple he was working on.

You know, that's exactly what God's doing for you and for me. He is working on us. He's cutting us. He's refining us. He's polishing us so that we'll fit up there. And He knows what's up there. We don't. And so He's preparing you perfectly to fit in your slot.

And our responsibility to one another is to recognize that.

Mr. and Mrs. L. W. Hardy of Arizona believe they are the largest suppliers of turquoise. Some stones are so dull that they reflect only a grey tint, but after being placed in a chemical solution for 90 days they become hardened and the lovely blue. It is not in the same manner that God takes us as humble believers who were dead in trespasses and sin who were of no value at all and places within us His life by the new birth, and then daily polishes us in the rock tumbler of experiences.

(source unknown)

Yes, that's what we go through. Rubbing against each other, experiencing the difficulties of life so that we produce a polish—brightness—so we are “living stones.”

Now notice what he goes on to say.

Peter goes on to say we are “living stones [and we] are being built up a spiritual house [WHAT?] into a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

Did you know that every person who is a Christian is a SPIRITUAL PRIEST? You're going to see that right here in these verses in just a minute. He's going to repeat it.

Now I say that again, each of us are believer priests according to what Peter tells us. And as believer priests we have **THREE SACRIFICES** that we can offer. And it's wonderful when you're offering all three of them. I'm going to start them all with “B” so it'll be easy.

1. The first sacrifice is your **BODY**.

Romans 12:1, 2

I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God, [WHAT?] that you present your bodies a living sacrifice.

How do you do it? You throw it all on the altar. You give it to

Him. You say in all that Jesus Christ would be magnified in this CRACKED POT.

That's what Paul calls us, you know.

2 Timothy 4:7

We have this treasure in cracked pots. You've got to crack the pot so that treasure will shine out.

We give our bodies as sacrifice to Him.

2. Secondly, we give our BLESSINGS.

Hebrews 13:15

Our constant sacrifice to God should be the praise of lips that give thanks to His name.

Well if that doesn't motivate you to a praise journal, I don't know what will!

You see the reason Christian people come alive when they start praising God is they're doing what God wants them to do. They're offering a sacrifice of praise.

It's not human nature to just praise. But do we love it? Oh! Do we love it! When somebody says we're credible or we've been a blessing or we've done something for them, that means everything in the world. Do you think that means that to God?

God says “Yes!”

A sacrifice of praise from my lips giving glory to God.

3. And the third one I have called the sacrifice of BELONGINGS.

Philippians 4:18-20

Now I have everything I want, in fact I am rich. Yes, I am quite content, thanks to your gifts, received through Epaphroditus. Your generosity is like a lovely fragrance, [NOW GET THIS] a sacrifice that pleases the very heart of God. My God will supply all that you need from his glorious resources in Christ Jesus, and may glory be to our God and our Father forever and ever. Amen.

Ok, we're all spiritual priests. We come into this temple of living stones. We function before the altar before God. And we make sacrifices that please Him. How do we do that? We give Him our bodies so He can use us, He can live in this temple of clay. This is His anyway. He owns it by creation and He owns it by purchase—the death of His Son—so we're just vacating the premises and turning it over to Him. That's a sacrifice of your body. Secondly, you sacrifice your blessings. You praise God with your lips. Third, you sacrificially give of your material needs—your material goods—in order to sustain the work of God. You give of your belongings to Him.

That's it. Now would you notice a little phrase?

It says these are “sacrifices [WHAT] acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

What’s that word “acceptable” do to you? You see, always throughout the Old Testament there was an agonizing concern about whether it would be acceptable. The priest would come into the Tabernacle—he’d come into the Temple—and what would he find? He’d take the blood of that little lamb and he’d hold his breath as he sprinkled it on the Mercy Seat. Why?

“Oh God, if there’s sin in the camp I’m going to die. I’m going to be struck dead in the presence of God! Oh that God would accept the sacrifice!”

And so there was always that concern. Now, the only way our sacrifices can be acceptable is through Jesus Christ and His blood shed on our behalf. You cannot come into the presence of the Holy God by yourself and on your own merit.

It is only through the shedding of the precious blood Christ that that veil in the temple was rent and you and I come by a new and living way, the precious blood of Jesus Christ. And Peter knew all of that.

But, is there anybody in the Bible that offers a sacrifice that wasn’t acceptable? What about Cain and Abel way back there in the book of Genesis? What was wrong with Cain? He took the fruit of his hands. He took his works—the fruit of the ground. God really doesn’t care whether it’s a lamb or the fruit

of my own labor. So he brings it into the presence of God and what does God do? Stamps rejection on it! “No!! I reject it!”

Abel brings what? A little lamb from the flock, and God accepts it.

You see my dear friends, we can rationalize this all we want but God has His own way of telling us how we come to His house. And there’s only one way—through Jesus Christ our Lord. And it’s by grace NOT human performance or human works.

He had the right to tell you how you were going to be born. Your parents came together in a living union, which is the vital union of oneness—which is a picture of the believer. As you come together in oneness, that’s a picture of you coming together and made one flesh in Jesus Christ. That’s why marriage is such a sacred thing.

And that same picture is a picture of what God expects from us. You were born according to His plan, not yours. And you’ll be born spiritually in the same way. You will be born again by receiving Jesus Christ and His shed blood on Calvary for your sin.

It is “acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

Boy! We walked through some heavy truth there but that is wonderful stuff!

Verse 6:

v. 6 Because of this it is contained in Scripture: “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, one chosen out, a precious cornerstone, and the one who is believing on Him shall by no means be disappointed.”

He’s quoting the scripture now to prove his point.

God said in the Old Testament “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, one chosen out.” What’s the next word? “a precious cornerstone.”

Can I ask you macho men a question? When is the last time you used the time precious? I mean, you’re a really cool guy you know? When’s the last time you said precious?

When’s the last time you told your wife she was precious? Now, we don’t do that do we?

Peter—roughed up fisherman—he’s had it all together all his life! He’s tough! He’s crusty boy!

But one guy said “I told my wife I loved her 25 years ago and that stands until I revoke it!”

Man! I don’t have to get gushy and mushy and emotional.

That’s the second time in the study tonight he’s used the word “precious” and he’s going to use it again.

You see, when your heart gets touched and you really start to get emotional, things become precious.

And I'll tell you something else, I can tell you this now that I've reached the 5-5 mark. That the older you get, the more precious some things become that weren't so precious early in your life.

We take an awful lot of things for granted early in our lives that become exceeding precious the older we get. And it's not just life. It's a strange thing how there is a great move away from material possessions to people. You find that your most precious commodity is your relationship with people.

Now I think God designed that because what you need as you get older is people who are your friends, whom you love and whom you are sacrificially committed to.

Boy, we're poverty stricken if we don't have that. And here he's using the word "precious"—this is twice already.

He just realized he turned the air blue the night before the crucifixion, denying the Christ! And some of the things he said and did in his earlier life—the old fellow's been softened and changed. You see it in the word "precious."

"Behold I am laying in Zion a stone, one chosen out, a precious cornerstone." And you know who that it is? Its Christ.

“and the one who is believing on Him [WHAT?] shall by no means be disappointed.”

Do you know what that is in the Greek text? That is the strongest negative that can occur in the Greek text. It's *ou mh*

You want me to translate it for you? A person who believes in Him shall positively, absolutely, no, never, in any way, absolutely not, ever be disappointed.

You can put all the never's and the no's in there that you want until you're blue in your face and then you've got it.

Peter is so confident of what lies out there beyond and the reality of what is in store for us exceeds anything we can comprehend. And so he says, I want to tell you something. You lay your life on the line with Jesus and you will absolutely, positively, no, never be disappointed.

Now is that a clincher to a sale? Some of you who are in sales could say something like that, you'd write an order every time you made a pitch.

You will absolutely, not be disappointed with my product.

And Peter says it.

Oh this is great tonight! Oh, I love these verses. Verse 7.

v. 7 To you therefore who are believing is the preciousness, but to those who are unbelievers, “The stone which the builders rejected, this [stone] became a head cornerstone,”

“To you therefore who are believing [WHAT?] is the preciousness.”

You see there’s a softening, there’s a change and he becomes precious.

“but to those who are not believing, “The stone which the builders rejected, this [stone] became a head cornerstone,”

You know, there’s a common denominator you see in people who have really walked with God a long time. There’s just a radiance and a preciousness about them. A deep love and respect for Jesus Christ.

I’ll always remember the one man that marked my life was an uneducated old country preacher who preached in chapel at Northwestern when I was in college ever year. You know what he did? He preached all week on one verse. And he’d stand up before us with that old gravelly Kentucky voice and he’d say “And you can exhaust the preacher but you can never exhaust the text.”

And you know what he’d do? Every sermon he ever preached to us in chapel, he started it with the same introduction. You know what it was? He couldn’t carry a tune in a bucket and

his voice was so gravely and so out of tune but the minute he stood up with that little old silver curl in the center of his forehead—I can still see it—80 something years of age, walked with God so many years. He'd start singing "My wonderful Lord, my wonderful Lord, By angels and seraphs in heaven adored. I bow at thy shrine, my Savior divine, My wonderful, wonderful Lord."

Captivated is a student body, the Spirit of God would sweep through the group and he'd have to sing it again because we all wanted to sing it with him.

That's the preciousness that's beginning to be manifested in the life of a guy like Peter.

Is he precious to you? Now I ask you, is he precious to you? I'm going to ask you something else. Have you told him lately? Have you told him since you told your wife? You see, it's not only preciousness in personal relationships, but that preciousness manifests itself in preciousness on the horizontal relationship. It's just a normal, automatic byproduct.

Now what does he say? He says "you ... who are believing." That's the SINGLE CONDITION OF SALVATION. I don't know how to cut it any other way. "Is the preciousness, but to those who are not believing"—that's what happens when you don't—"The stone [Christ] which the builders rejected, this [stone] become a head cornerstone."

Mankind, when he rejects Jesus Christ and he refuses to receive him, one day is going to realize that Christ was designed to be the chief cornerstone, the one that held the whole building together!

There is a legend that's told when Solomon's temple was built. If you've ever been in Israel, the temple is up on a high mountain area. It's been kind of cut-off. It's a plateau. And that whole temple, as it was built, the stones were quarried away from the temple so there was no sound of the quarrying of stones. They were brought together already architecturally refined and prepared to be fitted in place so there was no sound of instruments.

And one day the men from the quarry sent up a stone and that stone didn't fit anywhere right then. So eventually some of the workmen realized "well, what is this stone and why did they send it up here?" Some of the other fellows said "I don't know!" and they shoved the thing over the cliff and it rolled down in the valley, covered with brush and bramble. Finally when it came time to finish the temple, there was one stone missing. And it was the cornerstone.

And the men in the quarry said "We cut that many months ago! Where is it?" And the fellow who had been working on the job says "Oh, is that what that one was for?" and went down into the valley in the brambles and in the weeds and extricated the stone and rolled it back up the hill and it fit in its slot.

You see Peter is using an illustration. If in fact, that's historical fact. That the stone was rejected but it was the right one! And now it fits.

You see, He didn't fit their plans. That's why they rejected Him. But now He's become the head cornerstone.

Verse 8.

v. 8 and, “a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock which arouses opposition”; for they are stumbling at the word, being an unbeliever, to which indeed they were appointed.

Now you're scared. Now we're going to talk about those things for just a minute.

They're unbelievers. Why? Because they opposed it! Because they stumble over the stone! And because they did that, these people are still unbelievers.

John 12:48 is a very sobering verse.

John 12:48

He who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has been judged, the word that I have spoken, the same will judge him in the last day.

I think Peter is thinking of that great Sermon on the Mount—

that first public proclamation of Jesus as he ends it, he talks about the wise man building his house upon the rock and the foolish man, building his house in the sand. So be sure you're building yours on the rock.

Now see that last phrase? That grabbed you immediately, didn't it?

“to which indeed they were appointed.”

In other words, God appointed some people to not have salvation. Right? WRONG. Then what does the word “appointed” mean?

The word “appointed” always has to go with the word FOREKNOWLEDGE. Because God knows what is coming ahead of time. He can appoint what is going to happen.

He knows ahead of time what you've done with Jesus Christ and what you're going to do until the day you die.

They're “appointed” to this.

One dear guy in one of our churches came to me the other day and he says “I'm living next to a 90-year-old couple. They're in their mid-90s.” He said “I went over to their house to invite them to come to church and they both said together ‘We haven't been in the church for 90 years and it's a little late to be starting now.’” He says “Oh I grieve them.” They're only telling you they were appointed.

When you see words like this, you've got to go back to verses like 2 Peter 3:9 to get the whole doctrine.

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. He's not slow concerning his promises, some men count slowness, but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that we could come to him in repentance.

It's the desire of God that no one would perish. He also knows what hell is like. He knows what eternity without His Son is like and He doesn't want that for anybody. But He knows also that people are just going to refuse what He's provided.

Verse 9.

That's what they're like but this is what we're like! Oh! This is a great one!

v. 9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people that have become [God's own] possession, in order that you might proclaim the virtues of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people that have become [God’s own] possession, in order that you might proclaim the virtues of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;”

Oh wow.

What does he mean by “chosen race”? He thinks of the nation Israel. Remember when God called Abram? He says “Come apart from your people. You’re going to be mine. You’re going to be separated unto me.” And now every believer is a part of the BRIDE OF CHRIST.

We’re interrelated. We’re His. We’re a chosen group of people. And Peter will never again stray away from that word “chosen.” He loves that thing.

So his first statement of these FOUR CHARACTERISTICS here are:

1. “[we] are a chosen race,”

What’s the second one?

2. “[we are] a royal priesthood,”

But what do we do? We offer the sacrifices of our blessing, our body, and our belongings.

3. “[we are] a holy nation”—that’s the body of Christ made up of all believers that know Him.

And finally, what?

4. “a people who have become [God’s own] possession.”

I love William Barclay sometimes and the little statements that he makes about things like that and this is so good:

Christians are a people for God especially to possess. It frequently happens that the value of a thing lies in the fact someone has possessed it. A very ordinary thing acquires a new value if it has been possessed by some famous person. In any museum we will find quite ordinary things—clothes, a walking stick, books, pieces of furniture which are only of value because they were once possessed and used by some great person. It is the ownership which gives them worth. It is so with the Christian. The Christian may be a very ordinary person, but he acquires a new value and dignity and greatness because he belongs to God. The greatness of the Christian lies in the fact that he is God’s

Ephesians 1:12-14 agrees with that.

Ephesians 1:12-14

That we should be to the praise of His glory who first trusted in Christ in whom ye also trusted after ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom

also after ye believed you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of His glory.

First Corinthians 6:19-20—I translated that the other day too

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

What? Don't you know? That you're not your own. You've been bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and your spirit which are His.

Now the PURPOSE is given:

“in order that you might proclaim the virtues of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

Think of that for just a minute.

When is the last time you have proclaimed a virtue of Jesus Christ?

What would be a virtue that you'd proclaim tonight of Jesus Christ? Spontaneously?

What are His virtues that make you fall and worship with Him?

What? His majesty. His holiness. His patience and long-suffering. His humility. His love. His provision. His protection.

Alright, you've said all those things. When's the last time you told Him?

You see, Peter says here "where are all those things in order that we might proclaim the virtues of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

Ok, when you're proclaiming His virtues, what are you doing? You're praising the Lord! That's why it's so wonderful! That's why there's such a wonderful feeling inside of exhilaration! As you praise Him in humility and brokenness for who He is and what He has done.

He has called us, what? "out of darkness into His marvelous light" when we became His.

2 Corinthians 4:4

The God of this world blinded our minds so that we couldn't see.

John 3:19

This is the condemnation, light has come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.

A man who refuses to receive Jesus Christ lives in darkness while he's here and he goes to outer darkness after he dies. All darkness.

The person that comes to the light, he lives in the light here and he lives in the eternal light in the hereafter.

Francis Schaeffer in his book *Death in the City* makes a very sobering statement along this line:

Our generation needs to be told that man cannot disregard God, that a culture like ours that has had such light and then had deliberately turned away, stands under God's judgment. God is a God of grace, but the other side of the coin of grace is judgment. If God is there, if God is holy—and we need a holy God or we have no absolutes—there must be judgment.

Peter says we are “a chosen race, [we are] a royal priesthood, [we are] a holy nation, [we are] God's own possession” and it's our responsibility as believers to proclaim His virtues. That's part and parcel of our lives.

Verse 10.

v. 10 who at one time were not a people, but now are God's people; who once had not found mercy, but now have found mercy.

So here we are, the “living stones” in a building—a part of the establishment. Christ, the cornerstone. We intimately related to Him.

Now I got 5 lessons that came out of that and I’ll try this evening to go slow enough so you can get them.

Lessons #1 of course is obvious. Are you a stone in His building?

Are you at peace about that? There’s nothing more wonderful than to come to the assurance of your salvation here on this mountain.

Are you a stone in His building?

Lesson #2: Has Jesus Christ become precious to you? Have you told Him He is?

Has Jesus Christ become precious to you? Have you told Him He is?

That is the real mark of spiritual growth. It’s a real test. How special is He to you?

Lesson #3: The sacrifices of a godly priest—the sacrifices of a godly priest are blessings, bodies and belongings.

The sacrifices of a godly priest are blessings, bodies and belongings.

Lesson #4: You shall by no means be disappointed.

You shall by no means be disappointed.

Then my last one tonight.

Lesson #5: Are you proclaiming the virtues of Jesus Christ?

Do you have any problem proclaiming your problems?

You see, our big problem is that we focus on our problems instead of the Person. If we claim the virtues of the Person, it would give us a whole new perspective of the problems and the traumas that we face in our life. God designed it. That we would proclaim the virtues of Jesus Christ.

I want you to bow your heads tonight for a little bit.

I want us to reflect on where we've been.

I want us to think together for a few minutes.

I want you just to tell Him right now that He's precious to you. And I want you to proclaim to Him personally some of the virtues we've talked about.

Thank Him for the fact that you're a living stone in His temple. And that He indwells you. And thank You too that you're not going to be disappointed.

Now can you verbalize that in song?

Let's sing a Christmas carol shall we? Just the chorus.

O come let us adore Him,
O come let us adore Him,
O come let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.

For He alone is worthy,
For He alone is worthy,
For He alone is worthy,
Christ the Lord.

To You be all the glory,
To You be all the glory,
To You be all the glory,
Christ the Lord.

71 in your hymn books—"He is Lord."

He is Lord, He is Lord!
He is risen from the dead, and He is Lord!
Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess
That Jesus Christ is Lord!

Again!

He is Lord, he is Lord!
He is risen from the dead, and He is Lord!
Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess
That Jesus Christ is Lord!

213:

Father I adore You
Lay my life before You
How I love You.

Jesus, I adore You
Lay my life before You
How I love You.

Spirit, I adore You
Lay my life before You
How I love You.

O Come Let Us Adore Him:

O come let us adore Him,
O come let us adore Him,
O come let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.

Proclaim His virtues in prayer please.

Father, thank You that the blessing comes as we are those who are faithful to study Your Word, to offer the sacrifice of praise from our lips, glorifying the precious Lord Jesus. Thank You for His virtues that have ascended to the throne of grace. How it must bless your heart, Father, to hear your children pray. We do worship You. We adore You tonight. We want to be those who are living life right so that we might be useful. Father, forgive us for getting shook when You have the controls. Knowing that You provided for the new birth, You've provided an inheritance, You've provided power to protect us. Thank You that You've taught us as a man thinks in his heart, so is he. To gird up the loins of our minds. Forgive us when we think those things that are not right. And forgive us, too, for letting any day pass without being exposed personally to the Word of God as our own hearts are bear before You. Father, we thank You tonight that we do need each other. And that as we function together as a body of believers, we edify and build one another up and we magnify the Lord Jesus in that brings You glory. We fulfill the prayer of the Lord Jesus that we would be one, even as You and the Son are one. We do thank You. Refresh our spirits in these days. Bring us to deeper realization of who You are and fresh, new personal commitments. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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PATTERN NUMBER THREE – YOU ARE PART OF THE ESTABLISHMENT – 1 PETER 2:4-10

KEY VERSE 2:5

v. 4 Toward whom we are drawing near a living stone, having been, it is true, rejected by men, but with God, elect, precious, v. 5 and you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house into a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

v. 6 Because of this it is contained in Scripture: “Behold I am laying in Zion a stone, one chosen out, a precious cornerstone, and the one who is believing on Him shall by no means be disappointed.”

v. 7 To you therefore who are believing is the preciousness, but to those who are unbelievers, “The stone which the builders rejected, this [stone] became a head cornerstone,”

v. 8 and, “a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock which arouses opposition”; for they are stumbling at the word, being an unbeliever, to which indeed they were appointed.

v. 9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people that have become [God's own] possession, in order that you might proclaim the virtues of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

v.10 who at one time were not a people, but now are God's people; who once had not found mercy, but now have found mercy.

NOTES

QUESTIONS:

1. Read 1 Peter 2:4-10 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. How is the Lord Jesus described in verse 4?

3. How are we described in verse 5?

4. What does Peter say about those who believe on the Lord Jesus in verse 6?

5. Who is the “stone” and “rock” in verse 8, and what two things does He cause, according to this verse?

6. How is the Christian described in verse 9?

7. What is the Christian's responsibility, according to verse 9?

8. What two things have happened since we came to know Christ, according to verse 10?

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Are you a stone in His building?

LESSON #2: Has Jesus Christ become precious to You? Have you told Him He is?

LESSON #3: The sacrifices of a godly priest are blessings, bodies, and belongings.

LESSON #4: “. . . Behold I am laying in Zion a stone, one chosen out, a precious cornerstone, and the one who is believing on Him shall by no means be disappointed” (verse 6).

LESSON #5: Are you proclaiming the virtues of Jesus Christ?