

**“The Testimony of Our Hope” Bible Studies for Life June 21, 2020**

When have you bought something based on a friend’s recommendation?

- |                            |                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| - car                      | computer             |
| - meal at a new restaurant | vacation at a resort |
| - clothes                  | book                 |

As believers, we are called to “recommend” Jesus to others. We share that hope by our words and actions. We live in the culture, but we also stand apart from it. As a believer, there should be a positive difference in the way we believe and act.

**The Point: Our hope in Christ points others to Him.**

1 Peter 2:4-6 (NIV) As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him-- 5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

Peter begins his letter by calling on those who have been born again to continue to grow spiritually. He urges them to draw closer to the Lord. Peter calls Jesus “a living stone.” Earlier he described Him as “a living hope.” The source of their hope was Christ, who is no longer dead, but alive.

Peter described Jesus as the one “rejected by people but chosen and honored by God.” During His earthly ministry, Jesus was constantly criticized and attacked by the Jewish religious leaders because He rejected their views of God and Scripture.

How is Christ still being rejected by people today?

- refuse to believe
- feel that to believe in Christ is to give up all the “fun” they have
- reject the claims of Christ ... that He is God, that He rose from the dead
- don’t want God to interfere with their lives
- they want to be in charge of their own life

The living stones are all believers, the members of the Body of Christ, the Church. The uniqueness of Christianity is that every Christian is a priest. Peter wrote that all Christians are to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Christians are to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice committing ourselves completely to God. We should also offer up to God a sacrifice of praise as well as doing good deeds and sharing our resources with those in need.

What are some foundations people build their lives upon?

- |                        |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| - fame, popularity     | - fun, entertainment |
| - material possessions | - notoriety          |
| - power                | - great achievements |

What will happen to those who trust in the "Cornerstone," those who build their lives on Him?

- eternal life    peace with God
- set free from the penalty, the power, and eventually the presence of sin

In Ephesians 2:20, Paul spoke of Jesus as a chosen and honored cornerstone. In a building the entire structure depends on the strength and position of the cornerstone. The other stones are placed beside and over it. Peter encouraged his readers to stay faithful to Christ and trust in Jesus as their Savior and Lord.

If we are “stones” which form the “building” of the church, what are different kinds of “stones” needed for God’s church?

- pastors, teachers, missionaries
- prayer support people
- worship leaders
- choir, musicians
- people who are witnesses to unbelievers, evangelists
- encouragers
- financial supporters
- work with children, youth, nursery workers
- hospitality, fellowship
- secretaries, administrators, maintenance workers

Next, we will discover who we are as believers from God's perspective.

1 Peter 2:7-10 (NIV) Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone, 8 and, "A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message--which is also what they were destined for. 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. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

## What benefits come to those who believe in Jesus?

- a chosen race: God chose Jesus' followers, both Jew and Gentile, to be His children and heirs.
- a royal priesthood: a holy nation, Every believer is a priest and is adopted into the family of God through faith in His Son, Jesus. Christians are ambassadors of God to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.
- a people for his possession: we are set apart, called out of darkness that is controlled by Satan.

When someone hears the gospel of Jesus Christ and rejects it, God holds that individual accountable. This person will suffer the consequences of his or her decision, both in this life and in the next. Many of the Jews rejected Jesus and His claim to be the Son of God.

Many of Peter's readers had also rejected Jesus. Many of the people tripped over Jesus and His offer of eternal salvation. Peter said, "They stumble because they disobey the word; they were destined for this."

God places high honor on those who believe in Him. They were called to proclaim God's praises and share how God changed their life.

What changed about their lives?

- God's rescue from the darkness of sin
- rescued from the rule of sin in their lives
- brought to the Light of the Gospel
- now God rules their lives – free from sin

In what ways will God change a believer's life?

- joy, peace replaces fear
- gave a purpose for living
- empowered for service, for ministry
- produce fruits of righteousness in our lives
- took away bad habits
- gave up bad language
- changed how we use our time
- helps us through difficult times

Listen for how believers are to live.

1 Peter 2:11-15 (NIV) Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. 12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. 13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, 14 or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. 15 For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men.

Peter admonished the readers to live as stranger and exiles. He said Christians are not permanent residents on the earth. We have been given the gift of eternal life. Being a Christians, does not keep us from suffering pain in this world.

Peter urged his readers to abstain from sinful desires. We are not to love this world or the things of this world. Peter warned us to avoid "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of one's possessions." Paul also warned Timothy (and us) "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (I Timothy 6:10). These sins wage wars against the believer's soul. Paul challenged the believers in Ephesus to get dressed for the spiritual battle in the full armor of God (Ephesians 6:10 -17).

Christians can and should demonstrate good works to nonbelievers by being good citizens. Peter urged his readers to live honorably among nonbelievers. Peter said do not be conformed to the desires of their former sinful lives, but rather be holy in all of their conduct.

What is to be our response before our government even in harsh or sinful situations?

- respect, honor to the office
- in the US, we have the right and responsibility to vote for them or against them
- pray for them – for wisdom, for their salvation
- respect the guidelines for each phase of the COVID-19

What is the goal of godly living before others?

- glorify God
- point them to Christ
- demonstrate the joy and peace of knowing Jesus as savior
- show how being a believer makes you different (in a good way)

## Application

Be honorable.

- Start your day by asking the Lord to make you mindful of ways you can honor Him as you go through your day
- Small steps of obedience lead to a long path of godliness.

Be submissive.

- Is there a person or agency of authority that you've not lovingly submitted yourself to as unto the Lord?
- Confess this to the Lord and seek to make it right with that person as soon as possible.

Be outspoken.

- Someone in your circle of influence needs to know of your hope in Christ.
- Think of a tangible good that you can do for someone who may be ignorant or critical toward the gospel.
- Show the love of Christ to them with no strings attached!