

1 Peter 2:4-12

Live out your calling (let your light shine)

Last week Chris talked about how Peter was calling the Christians at the time to be holy because God is holy. Then he said the way you do this is by choosing holiness through ridding ourselves of these social sins that slander others. The way we do that is by craving the Word of God.

Now Peter continues that thought as he explains how we are now an identified people of God through what Jesus did.

2:4-12

v. 4-8 –When you build a building where do you start? Do you start at the bottom, the middle or the top? You begin at the bottom of course. Imagine a building made of laid out stone pieces that were smoothed out and placed on top of each other. Now imagine you are laying these stones down and you get to the end when you have to start laying another wall – the corner piece was very important for the foundation because without it, the whole structure wouldn't be sturdy. This was called the cornerstone. Here Peter brings in the OT in order to truly explain how important Jesus Christ was to our faith.

v. 4 – The living Stone is Christ because of His resurrection. This is the most important building block when it comes to the spiritual building called the church. We are also part of the church and are living stones as well.

v. 5 – We no longer offer animal sacrifices to atone (take the place of) for our sins in front of a holy and righteous God. We now sacrifice ourselves, God wants not just our hearts but our whole lives.

Romans 12:1 – Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. We give the Lord our abilities, gratitude, service, prayers, and our praise.

Hebrews 13:15-16

“Through Jesus Christ” – only because of Jesus can we even approach God – He is so perfect and holy that our sin cannot be in His presence. But because of Jesus we can now offer acceptable sacrifices. Our sacrificial lives of devotion are not what make us acceptable to God. It is Jesus himself who made the ultimate sacrifice that does through the work of the Holy Spirit.

v. 6-7 – The cornerstone is part of the foundation. It is the base of perpendicular walls that kept them aligned. The capstone is the “head of the corner” the topmost piece. This is the finishing touch that would be most visible. From beginning to end the church is built on Jesus.

In the OT – the nation of Israel – God's people – would travel with this giant tent called the tabernacle. It was to serve as the temporary temple after Moses said “let my people go” until they got to the Promised Land. In Isaiah 28:16 – God promised to restore His people on a firm and precious cornerstone – now Peter reminds the readers of his letter that God is doing that through this thing called the church. “Peter clearly identifies the church as God's new temple.”

Trust – Pisteuo – to place confidence in (Faith) – Peter was emphasizing the fact that in the midst of persecution they had to trust God – when they did vs. 9-12 would happen as a result of their faithfulness.

Jesus also referenced this verse in Matthew 21:42 – You will reject me but I will be glorified and everything will rise and fall on me.

Psalm 118:22 – the stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone – men killed Jesus, the son of God, who now is the cornerstone of everything we believe. “The religious leaders despised Jesus by crucifying him. But God made him the cornerstone by raising him.”

v. 8 – Christ is either the means of salvation to those who believe or He is the means of judgment to those who reject Him. Basically this is referring to a stone in the road that causes a traveler to fall. Have you ever stepped on a stone while walking?

“They stumble because they do not obey” Disobedience is a failure to trust God. Humans stumble because of rebellion, because they do not want to submit to God’s lordship.

“They were destined for” – I love this verse – it shows how God is sovereign and knows every choice we are going to make – it also shows how he orchestrates things in our lives. Additionally it shows that we have a choice to obey or disobey. But, at the same time He planned for that choice to happen. It’s something theologians have wrestled with for years! Free will or predestination – this verse says it’s both!

The result of the disobedience against God - which is to not trust in Jesus – is rejection from God for eternity.

v. 9 – Peter really loves bringing in the Old Testament – here he calls us a royal priesthood – referring to the Priests in Exodus who were set apart for special service to God and His people. He was trying to encourage the persecuted Christians because they can now “face suffering in light of the fact that they belong to God and that He has transformed their identity and lifestyle.”

The purpose of the “house/church” is to function as a holy priesthood. – “You as a spiritual house are being built up ‘to be a holy priesthood.’”

This is not saying we are all priests now – no, it is the notion that we as a community are a royal priesthood. All believers have direct access to God by virtue of the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

“Show others/declare the praises” – the royal priesthood is not something for you but actually an evangelistic calling on your life.

Darkness to light – move from death to life 2 Corinthians 4:6

Wonderful - “The beauty and glory of the new life is conveyed by the image of light in contrast to darkness.”

v. 10 – **Hosea 2:23** – God refuses to associate with His people because of their sin. However, because He is a forgiving God he pledges to have mercy on them and make them His people

again. Now Peter explains how once you were not part of God's family, but he has mercy and now you are adopted into His family and receive his mercy, even though they didn't deserve it. What an encouraging statement with the persecution that was going on.

“Peter reminded the readers again that they are recipients of God's grace, **that the foundation for obeying the imperatives is God's mercy in Christ!**”

v. 11 – aliens and strangers – They were not living together but were dispersed due to the persecution. However, he was still trying to bring them together by talking about being a part of the bigger picture; the church, a holy nation, a royal priesthood.

v. 12 – Peter is reminding the Christians that holiness doesn't just mean set apart **from** something (sin and its worldly systems) something but also set apart **for** something (God's glory).

Peter was explaining how believers are called to live differently than those who are not followers of Jesus by not giving into temptations because they “wage war” against our souls – meaning there is a constant battle within us to do what we want vs. what God wants. However, he says that they should also reach out to their unbelieving neighbors in order to bring light to those who live in darkness, instead of keeping it to themselves.

“**We must neither imitate those who live in the darkness, nor isolate our light from them.**”

“Peter's hope was that unbelievers will be compelled to admit that the lifestyle of believers is morally beautiful, and this admission will bring them to saving faith so that God will be glorified on the Day of Judgment.”

Christians were viewed with suspicion and hostility because they did not conform to the unbelievers' way of life. They didn't honor the typical gods of the community. As a result they were naturally viewed as evil in the social context.

Matthew 5:16 – Jesus says, “let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

Peter wasn't telling his readers to launch a self-defense campaign by defending their morality. He told them to pursue trust in God and live a good life so that their goodness would be apparent to all in society. Then their behavior will contradict what false things people might be saying about them.

How do we do that? We do exactly what Peter was telling the Christians who were being persecuted to do. **We live out our calling by letting our light shine.** We live our lives in front of people in a way that shows we are pumped to be called a royal priesthood who was called out of the darkness and into the light. We have taken the red pill! We are no longer living in darkness we are now a people of God who have received his mercy and will not get his judgment.

When we live such good lives – people will want to praise God!

Can you imagine if people started praising God because of how you let your light shine? If you lived like the wonderful light of God was shining through, if you acted so excited to be called out

of darkness because you have moved from death to life in Christ! Are you living as if you are no longer your own but a living and holy sacrifice who does everything for God? People would know God is real on this campus!

Questions:

- How do you make sure the light of the Gospel is shining brightly and clearly to those around you? Matthew 5:14-16, Philippians 2:14-15, Romans 12:2
- Is it showing love when you focus on sharing the light of God with others or is it just making them a project?
- How does someone live a life that will make unbelievers take notice?
- What are some sinful desires? How do we know they are sinful? How do they war against your soul?
- Has there been a time when your life as a Christian clashed with how society lives?

Even though you think you are scattered and persecuted and alone and helpless...you aren't. You are part of the Church and the bigger picture. God has a plan to use you beyond what you could ever see or even imagine. It's all because the foundation of the church is in Jesus—that you are now part of His family. You have been called out of darkness and into his WONDERFUL light. As a result, you have received God's mercy—instead of what you deserve. So you should abstain from sinful desires and live in a way that makes people want to glorify God.

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