

Sunday, July 4, 2021 pm

STUDIES IN 1 PETER (9) Being Built a Spiritual House 1 Peter 2:4-10 (1)

Today, we continue our study of 1 Peter, a letter written to Christians facing trials and tribulations. He has sought to encourage them to hope in Christ, but also to grow so that they could endure whatever they faced. The past few lessons contain applications for living the Christian life. We have talked about purifying our souls, loving one another, laying aside hypocrisy and craving the pure and unpolluted milk of the word as a baby craves milk (regularly). Today, we find a description of our relationship with Him – actually it is two descriptions, that of a spiritual house and that of a priesthood. We will address each of these individually, though they are certainly related.

The spiritual house is the temple (the place where God meets with His people), and the priesthood is those qualified to serve therein, offering unto Him sacrifices. In this lesson we want to address the holy temple, and in the next the holy priesthood.

I. A spiritual house

a. We come to Him as living stones

- i. **First note that we come to Him** – meaning that we approach Jesus, or accept our relationship with Him. That means obey the gospel (Galatians 3:27, Hebrews 7:25 speaks of His being to save those who come to God through Him)
- ii. **As a living stone** – this first usage describes Christ as the living stone. Truly He is a stone and living (having been raised from the dead). More on this in our next point.
- iii. **He was both rejected by men but chosen by God and precious.**

b. We also (like Jesus) are being built up a spiritual house

- i. **We also are as living stones** – Just as Jesus is a living stone, so are we. BUT let us not forget that our life is in Him. Colossians 2:13, speaking of Gentiles, notes that they had been made alive in Him. Ephesians 2:4-5 associates this with the grace of God that saves us. Romans 6:3-4 speaks of being “raised to walk in newness of life.”
- ii. **We are being built up a spiritual house** –
 1. The idea of being built up is ongoing construction. One earth, we are never done with our work.
 2. Is the spiritual house a reference to each of us as individuals, or the church? A good case could be made for this being the church –
 - a. The church is made up of individuals, and each of us are part of that “structure” – 1 Corinthians 12:27 speaks of being the body of Christ and members individually
 - b. Hebrews 3:4-6, *For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God. And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.*
 - c. 1 Corinthians 3:9-11 which speaks of us being “God’s building” and building on the foundation of Jesus (more about the foundation later)
 - d. 1 Corinthians 3:16 makes reference to the congregation being “the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in you.” I contend that the “spiritual

house” in our text could be a spiritual temple. Why? Because of the work being done therein.

- e. Ephesians 2:19-22 speaks of how we are fellow citizens and members of the household of God, *having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.*
 - f. Thus we can see continued references us being a building, being built up with Christ being the living stone where we begin.
3. The point here is that in Christ, we are being built up (together) to be able to faithfully serve Him together. Be reminded that in dealing with outward forces, we need each other (1 Peter 1:22, 2:1, etc.)
- c. ***Even a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices*** – priests did their work in the temple, especially the sacrifices. But ours are spiritual sacrifices. (Our next lesson)

II. Jesus, a stone

- a. ***Recall that in vs. 4, Peter refers to Jesus as a living stone*** – this is interesting as stones are typically inanimate objects, and even when we metaphorically refer to something as a stone, we usually mean it as that (Or acting like that, e.g., stone cold, stone faced, he froze like a stone, he stood firm like a rock, etc.). In this, I believe the ultimate point of a stone is something strong and immovable (especially in building).
Jesus has that quality, but He is CLEARLY living, even as Peter wrote! (1 Peter 1:3 & 21). And He is a solid rock that cannot be moved.
- b. In that verse (2:4), He is described as:
 - i. ***Chosen by God*** – Jesus is the ONE God used to obtain our forgiveness – Ephesians 1:3-7, John 3:16, etc.
 - ii. ***Precious*** – He is of great worth. Just consider the life of Jesus, how He lived for the Father. He obeyed Him in all things, gave Him the ultimate glory, and even submitted to a horrific death for us. Therefore God has highly exalted Him (Philippians 2:9-11). Also consider when the voice of God spoke in the presence of Jesus (Matthew 3:17, 17:5 & John 12:28).
- c. Peter here appeals to a handful of Old Testament scriptures that address stones figuratively. The idea of a stone is something that is strong and steady.
 - i. ***Isaiah 28:16*** which declares that the Lord will lay in Zion a foundation stone... Leading up to this, the corrupt rulers (including spiritual rulers) are being judged for their corruption. In this passage, we find YHWH is promising “in Zion” a foundation with promise – a true ruler who cared for them and would lead righteously. Any who accept Him will not be ashamed. Of course, that ruler is Jesus. See Ephesians 2:19-20 again.
Peter refers to Jesus as “the cornerstone”, which would be the very corner where a building is constructed. Everything is gauged from that point. That was Paul’s point in 1 Corinthians 3:11 Paul notes that you cannot build on any other foundation and be safe (or saved).
 - ii. ***Psalms 118:22***, the stone rejected by the builders has become the chief cornerstone. In a psalm where the LORD is praised for helping and delivering His people. In our verse, we find how the one that builders (in this case enemies seeking his life) rejected, has triumphed and become the “chief cornerstone” or predominant one.
 - iii. ***Isaiah 8:14*** A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. In this text of Isaiah, there is a call to trust in the LORD and fear Him. Then He will be a sanctuary (to you), BUT a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, to BOTH houses of Israel – those who reject Him and His prophets.

- iv. **ALL 3 of these texts** – were descriptive of the Jews that rejected Jesus and His apostles and disciples.
 1. Truly, Jesus DID become the foundation that they could NOT stop
 2. And He WAS rejected by the leaders, who tried feverishly to stop His movement to no avail
 3. His teachings, which FULFILLED the LOM (cf. Luke 24:44) and clearly declared Jesus as Lord, were rejected by the Jews and thus caused them to be rejected by God. As Paul noted in Romans 10:1-3, they rejected God’s righteousness and sought to establish their own. Paul even quoted from Isaiah 8 in Romans 9:31-33 as he explained why God turned to the Gentiles.
- v. Peter’s point in this text and quoting these verses – they that reject you, know that they are actually rejecting God. Luke 10:16 Jesus even taught His disciples about this. Also John 13:20, as Jesus encourages His disciples on His betrayal night. God notices and will not forget this!
- d. Applying this – consider how Jesus was accepted by some and rejected by others.
 - i. Is today any different? Certainly not! People react differently to the gospel call. And we see that throughout scripture, where in audiences some accepted, while others rejected – cf. Acts 13:46, 17:32-34, etc.
 - ii. There are some today who will come to Jesus and follow Him.
 1. To them Jesus IS the cornerstone, their foundation. They will surrender to Him.
 2. Recall as Jesus concluded the sermon on the Mount He gave the parable of the two builders – one on sand and the other on the rock, the solid foundation (Matthew 7:24-27).
 3. These are searchers like Cornelius (Acts 10:33), the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:30-36), the Philipians jailer (Acts 16:30-34), etc.
 4. These are the ones who when they obey, they become stronger and grow in their faith.
 5. These are the souls we ought to be looking for.
 - iii. Others (sadly the majority) outright reject Him, many even in face of the teachings of His word.
 1. Jesus is a stumbling stone to them. He gets in their way of living the way they want to live. So they reject Him. Like the rich, young ruler, they walk away (Matthew 19:22)
 2. He is even offensive to many – an increasing number today. The Bible is politically incorrect, and always will be. If you even try to challenge their behaviors they are “offended”. Just like the Jewish leaders who were intent to put Jesus to death.

So what is the take away from this text? It is to ask, HOW are you coming to Jesus? Is He a living stone, or a stumbling stone? The choice is up to you. Let me urge you to choose wisely, as that decision has eternal consequences. Think about it!