

“Standing Firm in the Grace of God Series”

Lesson #2 “Living Stones”

1 Peter Chapter 2:1-10

Scripture: 1 Peter 5:6-7 “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.”

Introduction:

Scientists spend quite a bit of time studying construction design and materials for building houses that will be fire resistant, durable and even hold up under harsh conditions.

It really rains long and hard in some areas of the country and special building procedures have to be taken to protect those homes.

Then it really snows a lot in other areas and extra measures of construction and insulation have to happen for those areas.

Then in the South West temperatures can be off the chart hot. Special construction has to take all these needs into question and build to protect the occupants and the structure.

What about Hurricane areas?

Test laboratories set up test walls and fire 2X4's at them through cannons to simulate triadic conditions. They build structures on platforms that shake to see how they would fair in an earth quake and so on.

Transitional Statement: All this points to the fact that our houses are pretty important places.....So, what is your house made of? Brick, Vinyl Siding, Plaster? Today Peter is going to show us God's house he begins in an most unusual way.

Lesson:

I. First he says, Christians need to get their hearts in order

1 Peter 2:1-3

“Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, 2 like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, 3 if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

- A. “Therefore” refers back to 1 Peter 1:22, where we were instructed to fervently love one another from the heart.
- B. And here Peter tells these folks that they must rid themselves of the following things which work in opposition to love.

1. First he mentions Malice

- a. Nelson's Bible Illustrated Dictionary says that "malice" is a vicious intention to hurt someone else thinking that they are trying to do the same to you.
- b. Church, this is one of Satan's most prize weapons, because it causes division and Jesus says that house divided against itself cannot stand (Mark 3:25).

c. At the core of a malicious heart:

- Fear
 - Afraid of getting hurt
 - Feeling of unfairness
 - And wanting others to feel the same

-Self centeredness

- Lack of trust in God
 - Wanting to be the judge, jury and executioner

*Basically, malice is the product of an unforgiving heart that doesn't understand love.

d. The Apostle Paul mentions the same thing in Ephesians 4:31-32

"Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice."

With the solution of verse 32:

"Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."

e. Paul also says in Philippians 2:3-4

"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."

2. Next he talks about Deceit or Guile

a. Here deception is the key word. This comes with the idea of misleading people for some personal gain or advantage.

-It's very interesting to see where deception will raise its ugly head in our lives.

-Will it be getting too much change at the cashier and walking off with the justification that they should know better and somehow this will help them learn.

-What about tax time.....

-I've already paid enough for a life time, what will it hurt if I fudge the numbers a bit.

-When asked how things are going...sometimes do we casually answer fine when things are falling apart?

-Deception can even be as small as a bible teacher not wanting to say "I don't know" to somehow maintain an image of perfection.

b. Christians are to count on God to fill their needs of their heart. We need, ...no we must remove all secret scheming from our friendships, business practices, our families and associations with brethren.

c. Ephesians 4:22 "that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,"

*I really like the idea that anything you get from misleading someone isn't worth having.

d. And since God is a God of truth, His people must be truthful

3. Then, Hypocrisy

a. Hypocrisy has to do with "insincerity" i.e. saying or claiming one thing while doing another. Does the word Pharisee ring a bell? Jesus says to the Pharisees in Matthew 23:27-28

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. 28 "So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness."

b. The Greek work here is linked to the idea of clay pottery. When the potters of the 1st century made pots from clay they would fire them in oven and a dishonest potter would take the ones with cracks and cover the cracks with wax and then paint them and sell them as a perfect pot. i.e. a misrepresentation of the truth

1. All the way back to the Garden of Eden people have tried to hide from their failures.

2. God encourages us to own up to them and make the necessary changes in our lives

James 5:16 "Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."

4. He also mentions Envy

- a. Basically wanting what someone else has...jealousy
- b. Perhaps it's normal in some way as we go through this life to look around at others and their circumstances in order to determine our own normal position should be.

-You know the idea if everyone has a new Ipod I need one too.

- c. But, God gives to each one of us according to His needs.

-Maybe God needs you to be wealthy because with your generous heart you will serve Him with it, and God has so blessed some.

-Maybe God needs you to be poor so you can reach a neighbor that will otherwise have no hope of hearing the gospel.

-Maybe God wants you to be really smart, because you're a humble person and He knows you won't lord it over others but humbly use it to serve Him.

-Maybe God knows you might be tempted with lots of wisdom so He has chosen to keep you humble by limiting your intellect.

- d. Well, whatever the case we should praise God right, because we only need what God has given to each of us individually. We need to trust God knows each one of us personally and understand that his grace in our lives is sufficient toward His needs.

- e. Esther 4:14 ".....And who knows whether you have not attained _____ for such a time as this?"

*Fill in the blank with your situation:

- Royalty
- Poverty
- Disability
- Super Intellect
- Other

- f. Instead of longing for someone else's position maybe we ought to be asking what Kingdom work we should be doing from our own position.

5. Slander

- a. Slander simply means to speak evil against

-The definition itself gives great reason for all

backbiting gossip

POINTS TO NOTE:

Peter says that we are to get rid of all these things because they represent what is perishable. They break down and destroy the very foundations of brotherly love. They actually tear apart our relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ. These things are usually brushed aside with future thoughts of working on them. But, they are like a slow growing cancer that left unchecked will lead to death.

Peter uses the term “putting aside” this Greek word is usually used in reference to getting rid of a piece of clothing, casting it away much like we would do with an old nasty soiled garment.

The connection is that we should remember that when we were clothed with Christ (Gal 3:27) that is when we put on the imperishable, His garment didn't go over our existing stained garment. We had to de-robe, that is repent and remove the old way and then walk in the new garment (the blood of Christ) and if we allow these old ways back into our lives they will not only soil us but those around us that we should be loving and holding dear.

Also, Peter also uses the Greek aorist tense in regards to “putting aside” which simply means a one time action. In other words Peter is not saying I want you guys to work on these things the best you can, he is saying to stop these things and be done with them.

C. And then, Peter points out that we should have a deep longing for the word of God, like a baby craving milk.

-When babies need a bottle nothing can quite them down and a pacifier won't satisfy them anymore.

-We should have this kind of desire for God's word

-Many babies have learned to walk reaching for a bottle of milk.

-Because it is the desire of their heart!

-To this end Jesus says in Matthew 5:6

*“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst
for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”*

-Did you notice that Peter throws in the word pure in relation to God's word? He is basically implying that the word of God is complete truth and traditions and opinions, that were very heavy under Judaism, must be put aside.

-Psalms 119:160 “The sum of Your word is truth,...”

*And all this for spiritual growth

D. If you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

-As Christians we have excepted the invitation of Psalms 34:8 “to taste and see that the Lord is good”

-With this knowledge we are to fervently love each other not allowing these perishable things in our lives.

II. Because Christians are Living Stones, being built into The House of God

1 Peter 1:4-8

“And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For this is contained in Scripture:

"BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER stone, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

7 This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED,

THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone,"

8 and,

" A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE";

for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.

A. In this section Peter talks about God’s intention for His house.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

1. The Old Covenant was merely a shadow of the truth (Heb. 10:1) and was put in place as a teaching device to direct people to the reality of God’s intention under His son Jesus Gal. 3:24
2. God’s house under the Old Covenant was a physical house made of lifeless stone (The Temple) Matthew 24:1-2.

a. The temple was built upon a legal system where death reigned

-Only the Priest could serve

b. But, God’s intention was not to have a physical house

Acts 7:48 “However, the Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands;...”

B. God’s Intention came with the New Covenant and His house was to be a Spiritual House

1. God sent His Son, not only for the redemption of mankind, but also as the first building block for His Spiritual House (The Church)

a. Matthew 16:16-18

“ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.”

b. Jesus was a living corner stone as contrasted to the lifeless stones of the temple and He represented God's final intentions

-Ephesians 1:9

“He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him”

2. In God's Spiritual House Life was to reign

3. So, God's new dwelling is not built of stone, but He dwells in the heart of the worshiper 2 Cor 6:16

-Now all worshippers can serve and make sacrifices before God.

C. A lot of the Jews rejected Jesus, the corner stone sent by God (John 1:11)

1. They didn't want to leave the class room (Old Covenant)

2. Not only did they cast Jesus aside then they kept on trying to build a physical house through the Law which was killing them spiritually.

a. And all the while tripping over the very building block that God had sent them which was Christ

b. Tripping because of disobedience

D. Paul states it very nicely in Ephesians 2:17-22

“AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR; 18 for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.”

III. And being a part of God's House means proclaiming His excellencies.

1 Peter 1:9-10

9 But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY."

A. Here Peter says "BUT YOU" in contrast to Jews under the Old Law ARE:

1. We are a Chosen Race
 - Hand picked or select
 - Representing God's own intention
2. We are a Royal Priesthood
 - Established by the King of Kings (Jesus)
 - Here we don't have to be Levites to serve
 - But, Christians
3. We are a Holy Nation
 - Sacred
 - Set apart and pure
4. And a People for God's own possession
 - Belonging to God

B. **SO THAT,**

1. You may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

C. Then, You were not a people of God....

1. Lost and separate from God
2. You didn't have God's Mercy
 - *Because you didn't have Jesus

D. But Now, you are "The People of God"

1. Have Mercy because of your relationship with Christ
2. You are:
 - "THE NEW ISRAEL"
 - "THE HOUSE OF GOD"
 - "THE CHURCH"

Conclusion:

-Today, do you need to get rid of some Malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy or slander toward a fellow brother or sister in Christ?

-Even though we are suppose to be living stones built into God's house has your heart become lifeless and hardened like the stones of the temple?

-Have you turned away from God's corner stone (Jesus) in your heart?

-Have you been proclaiming the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness and into His wonderful light.

-Or has darkness overcome you?

-What kind of house are you living in?