

*The Cornerstone of Christ*  
 1 Peter 2:4-10  
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There is something about having a place you call home. All people long for a home. You can go anywhere in the world, and one common desire is to have a place to call home, a house. When I went to Kenya, and our team did work in East Kenya, the villages were made up of mostly mud houses. When we walked through the villages, many of the people were working on their houses or building houses. When we worked in Nairobi, Kenya, we worked in the slums. Even in the slums, people were working to build houses out of sheet metal and wooden poles. In Turkey and Iraq, it was the same way. One day our guide took us outside of Dohuk, and we climbed the side of a large hill and looked at the rubble that was left from his house. Saddam and his troops had destroyed it. He wanted to rebuild it because it was home. In India, people were working in order to provide a home for their family. When we met with people there, they would take us to their home. People long to have a home.

That is something God has built that into people since the Garden of Eden. Ever since Adam and Eve were exiled from the Garden, God's people have been longing to go home.

The Apostle Peter begins his letter, *"To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion."* Later in 1 Peter 2:11, he is going to call the church *sojourners*. His point is that God's people are not at home in our life on this earth. We are *exiles and sojourners* who are passing through this world on our way to our heavenly home, and we long to be at home with God.

What we are going to see in 1 Peter 2:4-10 is that it is rich with Old Testament imagery of what it means for God to build us into a spiritual house. There could easily be four or five sermons on these verses because there is so much Old Testament imagery that has been fulfilled in Christ, and we see it brought to bear in these verses.

However, for our time together, we are only going to do one sermon, and I only have two points—the foundation of the people of God and the ministry of the people of God.

#### I. The Foundation of God's people is Jesus (1 Peter 2:4-8)

Verses 4-8 are driving home the point that Jesus is the Cornerstone of the church. All of the imagery in these verses is what we might call *"familiar Christian language."* It is biblical imagery, but the problem is that even Christians do not do well moving from imagery to reality.

Likewise, people outside of the church do not understand this kind of language. They may understand the words, but somehow the meaning of the imagery is disconnected from everyday life. For imagery and metaphor to help us make application, we must dig into God's word. We have to search and meditate on God's word.

To help us get our minds around the imagery, let's do a quick biblical survey. These texts will help us get a bigger picture of how *Jesus is the Foundation of God's people?*

Jesus said at the end of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7:24-27:

*"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. <sup>26</sup> And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. <sup>27</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."*

Jesus is teaching us that the person whose life is built on Him and His words will stand when trials and suffering hit his life like a category five hurricane. Not only will he persevere daily trials but on the Day of Judgment will be standing as well. It is those whose faith is in Jesus that will be protected from judgment. Our lives must be built on the person, work, and words of Christ. Just any old rock will not work for our lives to endure.

In Acts 4, the Apostle Peter, preached his sermon to the Jewish council, and he drove home the point that Jesus is the Foundational Cornerstone of God's people:

*"Let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him, this man is standing before you well. <sup>11</sup> This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. <sup>12</sup> And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."*

The Jewish council knew exactly what Peter was talking about because he had just quoted Psalm 118 and Isaiah 28. He confronted the Jews for rejecting Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament Cornerstone prophecy. He told them that because they were rejecting Jesus as the heart of the Old Testament teaching, they were missing salvation.

Then the Apostle Paul told the church in Ephesus that the church was built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, but Jesus is the Cornerstone teaching of the foundation. Listen to Ephesians 2:19-21:

*“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,<sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,<sup>21</sup> in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.”*

Paul is saying that the foundation was laid in God’s word in the Old Testament, and the Apostles confirmed that foundation, but Jesus is the Cornerstone, the most important stone, of all of the teaching of the Old Testament and the Apostles in the New Testament. The New Testament church is built on Jesus.

So, we see from our biblical survey that to build your life on the Foundation of Jesus means to know Jesus, place your faith in Jesus, and even in the various trials of life, He will give you strength, hope, power, and faith to persevere. It means that when you stand before God on the Day of Judgment, that because you have repented of your sin and trusted Jesus as your substitute on the cross to pay for your sin and lived your life in light of this, God will let you into Heaven based on Jesus’ work on your behalf.

So, with this underneath our understanding behind what it means to have Jesus as the Foundation of our lives, let’s dig into our text.

Look in v. 4. He says, *“As you come to him.”* The idea in this phrase is that you don’t simply come to Jesus one time, but you continually come to Him for the rest of your life. Coming to Jesus is never a *“one and done”* experience. Faith in Jesus means a continual coming to Jesus and falling before Him in worship. It is a daily taking up your cross and obediently following after Jesus. It is daily reading of God’s word for strength, wisdom, and then praying that word. It is committing that word to your heart through meditation on the word or Scripture memory.

Then Peter tells us that in coming to Jesus, we are coming to a *Living Stone*. If you remember, in chapter one v. 3, Peter told us we are born again by Jesus into a *Living Hope*, and now we come to a *Living Stone*. Brothers and sisters, Jesus is alive, and when we come to Him, we are coming to the Living Savior who is with us right now through the Holy Spirit.

Let’s unpack the Living Stone in vv. 4-5. First, it means that Jesus is the object of our faith. We continually come to a Living Savior who is the *Living Stone*, and He gives us *Living Hope*. Jesus is not some piece of inanimate marble or a statue or a nice historical story. Jesus is reality and to *continually come to Him* means we believe He is the Son of God. We daily put our hope in Him for strength to live in obedience to Him every day because we love Him.

Verse 5 says that by coming to Him and resting the weight of our lives on His person and work means that we become *living stones*. By coming to the Living Stone, we begin to take on the characteristics of the Ultimate Living Stone. This happens through our union with Christ. He takes us as living stones and begins to build us into the spiritual house He is constructing.

As Jesus builds us into His spiritual home, we realize our longing for home begins to be met on this side of heaven. Christ’s church becomes our new home. When Christ’s church becomes our new home, we can be home no matter where we are in the world. We are always at home in Jesus.

I remember when we took our team to Nairobi, Kenya, and we worshiped at Ridgeways Baptist church. It was just our handful of white Texans and about 1000 Kenyans. We sang songs of praise to Jesus and heard the gospel preached, and it was amazing. I felt at home. This happens because the Living Stone builds us into living stones in His spiritual house, the church.

Notice what else happens by our union with Jesus. Verse 4 says that Jesus is God’s *Chosen and Precious Cornerstone*. Now, by our union with Jesus, v. 9 says we have become part of God’s *chosen race*.

You cannot listen to the news today without hearing about race and racism. I understand what is going on with the racial problems in our country and the desire for social justice. As Christians, we must do all we can to be a part of the solution. God’s solution to racism is to create a new race of people in Christ. They are not united by their blood, their DNA, or their ethnicity, but by the blood of Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Brothers and sisters, we should celebrate the diversity that God has created. He created us all in different ethnicities, sizes, shapes, and colors. He placed us in locations all across the globe, and all through history and He has united us by the death and resurrection of the Son of God for His glory.

Brothers and sisters, do not be caught up in the *solutions* for racism by unbelievers in this world. *Do not hear what I am not saying*. I am not saying do not strive to solve racial problems and social justice problems in our world. We should do that, but we

must keep in mind that those who do not follow Christ are stressing solutions that are contrary to Scripture. Tearing this nation down and starting over is not a solution.

We have a higher calling, and if solutions are not built on the foundation of the Living Cornerstone, then it will not stand. This is where our faith must rest at all times, whether in times of peace and prosperity or in times of turmoil and war.

Verse 6 makes it clear where our faith must rest:

*“For it stands in Scripture: “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”*

Peter quoted one more Old Testament text, Isaiah 28:16, to show that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Cornerstone prophecy and that whoever places their faith in Him *not be put to shame*.

In our *shame culture* today, *there is nothing more relevant than coming to terms with what you will do when you are faced with being shamed for following Jesus and believing the Bible*.

I remember eleven years ago preaching something along these lines and telling our people at Grand that the day is coming when our culture will rise up and begin to shame and persecute Christians for their faith in Jesus. Well, I can now say that it is finally here in America.

There has always been a measure of shame given by unbelievers in the United States, but now with the advent of social media and secularism in the media and culture, it has been ramped up exponentially.

Brothers and sisters, the *shame and cancel culture* is coming for those who follow Jesus. Settle it now how you will respond when you become the point of ridicule and shame in order to silence you or remove you from your job or position. It may cost you your income, reputation, and it may even cost you your life but the day has now arrived for us to follow Jesus to take this text and drill it in our hearts that no matter what the world says God says His people will not be put to shame.

Not only is there *no shame* for faith in Jesus, *but* the gospel reverses the curse of shame and makes it an *honor*. *Verse 7a says it is our honor to believe in Jesus*. Brothers and sisters, the gospel turns the shame culture inside out because they are not sovereign—God is. They do not make the rules—God does. We will not stand in judgment before the shame culture. We will all stand before God as the King of Kings and Lord of Lord. He is the One who will pronounce judgment on the shame culture unless they repent and turn to Jesus.

In the last part of v. 7 and v. 8, Peter addresses those who reject Jesus as God’s precious, chosen, Cornerstone. To explain their rejection, he again goes to the Old Testament and quotes Psalm 118:22. In order to get the context of v. 22 I want to read Psalm 118:22-26a:

<sup>22</sup> *The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone.*

<sup>23</sup> *This is the Lord’s doing;  
it is marvelous in our eyes.*

<sup>24</sup> *This is the day that the Lord has made;  
let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

<sup>25</sup> *Save us, we pray, O Lord!*

*O Lord, we pray, give us success!*

<sup>26</sup> *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!*

If you remember, Psalm 118 was prophetic in that this was what was happened for Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The Pharisees told Jesus to silence His followers from using Psalm 118. Jesus replied that if He told them to stop, then the very stones would cry out in worship.

Ironically, the metaphor becomes a reality when a person is born again. God changes their *heart of stone* into a *heart of flesh*, and they cry out in worship and praise of Jesus.

Jesus is the Promised Living Cornerstone that God sent to save the lost and judge the wicked. But the Pharisees rejected Jesus as God’s Cornerstone. Yet, it is not just the Pharisees that stumble over Jesus as the Cornerstone, all people do.

The Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1:22-23 that Jesus is a *stumbling block* to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks. To this very day, Jesus is exactly what v. 8a says. He is a *“A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.”*

Bottom line: the gospel is offensive to unbelievers. We must not be surprised by this or ashamed when they try to shame us for the gospel. Jesus has taken our shame on the cross, and He has given us honor. His taking the shame has reversed the curse of sin and the shame culture.

The last part of v. 8 is a difficult verse. Listen to it again, “*They stumble because they disobey the word as they were destined to do.*” We get that people stumble over the command to repent and believe the gospel, but the last phrase is where we struggle, “*as they were destined to do.*”

What does that mean? Think about it this way. Everyone who has ever been born is born, a child of Adam and a sinner separated from God. We are all born under the power and penalty of sin. This means we are all *destined to disobey and reject the gospel*. And God would be justified to leave us in our sin and let us die in that condition. He does not have to save us.

However, God in His great mercy decided to save some of the vessels of wrath, and He changed their destiny by sending His own Son to come in the form of sinful humanity and give His life as a ransom to pay for their sin on the cross. The *Living Stone of God’s Son was crushed under the weight of our sin*. He was broken for sinners. As Peter will say in 3:18, “*For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that we might bring us to God.*”

However, for some, their destiny remains the same. They are destined to stumble over Jesus. What we do not know is that will there be a time when God will change their destiny for them? When will the time be that they stop stumbling and begin believing? *That is not a question we can answer*. That is left in God’s sovereign plan, and He has not given us that insight. So, our responsibility is to keep sharing the gospel with those who continually stumble over the gospel. We must continually share with those who are offended by the gospel and shame us for believing it. That is our calling and our responsibility.

We need to also think about this text this way. Peter wrote to a suffering church that was persecuted and shamed for their faith in Jesus. Peter aims to comfort God’s people.

His comfort comes by reminding them that just because there are those who actively work against the church and seek to destroy, it does not mean these things are out of God’s sovereign control or plan. There are those destined to remain in their sin, and yet God has folded their persecution of His church into His plan to save sinners.

There is no greater example of this than the Apostle Paul. He was a persecutor of the church, and yet God sovereignly saved him. God will continue to save sinners as the church stands in the face of persecution and shame, and boldly declare the gospel and their love for Jesus. Some of those persecutors will be saved. Persecution and shame do not stop the gospel; it provides bridges for evangelism with a lost world.

Just as Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost that those who crucified Jesus had accomplished what God’s power and will had decreed should happen beforehand so also as the world persecutes the church what looks like defeat is really in God’s sovereign plan to save sinners. Remember, after that sermon, 3,000 were added to the church that day. Yet, some remained in their unbelief.

Sinners will stumble over Jesus, and they will be offended by the gospel and the word of God, yet God will save many of them by our faithfulness in our suffering. Brothers and sisters stand firm on the Cornerstone of Jesus. Your suffering is not outside of His control.

## II. The Ministry of God’s People is Worship (1 Pt. 2:9-10)

Verses 9-10 explain the ministry God’s people have as a result of being made living stones united to the Living Stone.

Verse 5 says God builds His people on the Foundation of His precious Cornerstone into a spiritual house, a holy priesthood who offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God.

Then vv. 9-10 build on v. 5 by explaining that we are a *chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession who are called to proclaim the excellences of our God who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light*.

In vv. 9-10, we see the ministry of the church. *Think about it this way; the church is constantly at the crossroads of history and culture carrying out our ministry based on our identity in Christ*.

Here is what I mean. Think Old Testament with me for a moment. *Geographically Israel* was situated at a major crossroads in their day. The world had to pass through Israel, and as they passed through Israel, they would be exposed to what it means to worship Yahweh as the Living God.

As a God’s chosen people, at the crossroads of the known world, they carried out the ministry of the priesthood. They were supposed to teach the nations how to be made right with God. They were supposed to be the display of God’s glory as a holy nation. They were supposed to be God’s witness to the nations who passed through. However, Israel failed to declare the glory of God to the nations, and they found themselves exiled.

The church is the new people of God, and we are not locked down by geography. The church is the new temple of God, where God dwells in Spirit. Where the gospel goes, the church does and is always at home on whatever continent or with whatever people group it finds itself. Because God is Spirit, His words are Spirit, and His church is Spirit; it always finds itself at the crossroads of culture and history. The question is: will we carry out the ministry God has given us?

What is the ministry God has given us as God's new people? First, we are a *chosen race*. *We are a new race of people called Christian*. We are not the physical descendants of Abraham, but the spiritual descendants who, by faith, love Jesus. We are *children of promise* who are made up of people from every tribe, every people group, and every language imaginable.

We are God's people because we have been born into God's family through the message of the gospel. God used the means of evangelism to create a new race of people when they repented of their sin and trusted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. As God's new race of people, we are to go into all the world and make disciples, teaching them God's word, and baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Next, we see that God's people are a *royal priesthood*. In v. 5, Peter called them a *holy priesthood*. The Greek phrase *royal priesthood* can also be translated *the king's priesthood*. These are priests in service to the King. They are royal and holy, and their priestly duties are to *offer spiritual sacrifices through Christ Jesus*.

This means we, as the church, are actively participating in worship of King Jesus. We mediate between God and a lost world by laying down our lives in order to see others come to Jesus. We go to hard places and pour out our lives as a drink offering for Jesus. We pray for the lost. We declare to a lost world how Jesus dragged us out of the darkness and into His marvelous light. When we gather here on Sunday mornings, we declare the excellences of His great name. We are a church at the crossroads of culture and history carrying out the ministry of a *royal priesthood* to a lost world. As God's *royal priesthood*, we are teaching people wherever God has placed us that they must worship Jesus.

Next, in v. 9, we see we are a *holy nation*. *The church is a nation without borders*. King Jesus has positioned His church on every continent to share the gospel in their unique place under all kinds of governments. Some of the governments oppress the church, and others are less oppressive. Whatever geographic nation Jesus has placed the church and under whatever kind of government, the *holy nation* of the church is to be the righteous representation of King Jesus on the earth. It is a *holy nation* who is actively sharing the good news of the gospel, and Jesus is creating new citizens of His Kingdom with every born-again believer. The gates of Hell cannot prevail against Jesus' *holy nation*.

Finally, in v. 10, Peter puts an exclamation point on this text. He goes all the way back to Hosea to show that Hosea's prophecy has now been fulfilled.

If you remember, Hosea 1, Hosea was commanded to name his children: *Jezreel*, which means *the Lord scatters*, and his daughter *Lo-ruhama*, which means *no mercy*, and was to name his son *Lo-ammi*, which means *not my people*. This was God's prophecy against the disobedient nation of Israel.

Then in Hosea 2, Hosea begins says that eventually, Yahweh will say to His people you are *gathered as a nation, you have received mercy, and you are my people*. However, we never saw that fulfilled in Hosea's day. We only saw judgment.

Now, in 1 Peter 2:9-10, Peter tells us that Hosea's words are fulfilled. This is amazing! When you repent of your sin and turn to Jesus in faith, you become part of this fulfilled prophecy. If you are in Christ, then Hosea 2 was written for you all the way back in 750 BC. Take time this week just to ponder the fact that when Hosea wrote these words, God was thinking of you.

Are you longing for home? I am. The more crazy this world becomes, the more I long for home. Let me close by reading about home in Revelation 21:22-22:5:

*"And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. <sup>23</sup> And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. <sup>24</sup> By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, <sup>25</sup> and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. <sup>26</sup> They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. <sup>27</sup> But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup> through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup> No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. <sup>4</sup> They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever."*

Never stop longing for home. Read about it often and invite as many people as you can to join you in our heavenly home, where God dwells in pure light.