

1 Peter 2:4-12 (NIV)

4 As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men 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." 7 Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone, 8 and, "A stone that causes men 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, a people belonging to God, 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. 11 Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which 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.

60-02-01-The Saints: A Household of Priests

Christ, decision, community, priesthood, testimony, ministry

1 Pet 2:4-12

The Body of Christ is a community where each member is a priest.

INTRODUCTION: (Text as Scripture Reading)

–In this series from 1 Peter on “*The Saints*,” we’ve looked at several descriptions of *who we are* as Christians: *hopeful sojourners, tested believers, holy children, a reborn brotherhood*. Today, our **text** is about how believers are **a household of priests**. In other words, **HOM.idea**. –Jesus was a builder. In saying, “I will build my Church,” He laid Himself down as the foundation. Peter describes this in this passage. –In v.4, Christ is called “*the living Stone*,” and He has made us to be...

I. The Living Stones of God’s Household

- A. Our identity as “*living stones*” is in our identification with Christ, the primary “*living Stone*”– v.4, *As you come to him, the living Stone— rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him...*
1. It’s popular to say “*all faiths lead to God*,” but only a faith that God establishes can bring people to Himself– v.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.”*
 2. We must choose the right faith– v.7a, *Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. (But we must also act on our belief – Mat 7:24-25. Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.)*
 3. What happens if we don’t believe?– v.7b-8a, *But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone, and, “A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they disobey the message... (AND what happens if we don’t build on Christ’s word?– Mat 7:26-27, *But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.)**
- B. A foundation is for a building to be built– v.5a, *you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood...*
1. We’re called “*living stones*” because we are people being made into

a temple—a household of priests. [A Spartan king boasted to a visiting monarch about the walls of Sparta. The visitor, seeing no walls, said, “Where are these walls you boast about?” The king pointed at his troops. “These are the walls of Sparta, **every man a brick.**”]

2. [Bricks are useless until joined to form a building.] A Christian’s *destiny* isn’t to remain *alone*, but to be part of the fabric of the Church.
3. [In wartime, a man trying to defend his country on his own will fail. His goal is accomplished only by standing shoulder to shoulder in an army of soldiers with the same purpose.] *Individualism* is an absurdity for Christians; we are a Body of saints, a community of spiritual fellowship.
4. We are a “*spiritual house*”—a fulfillment of the *historical temple of the OT*. (Our bodies form the *physical building*; our born-again souls provide the *holy place of worship* [Church: Eng. trans.= *kirke*, a building; Fr. trans.= *église* from the lit. Grk., *ekklēsia*, “called out ones”].)

TRANS: We have a larger destiny than *individualism* offers. Our faith puts us on the rock-solid foundation of Christ, “*the Living Stone*,” and we become “*living stones*” in God’s household, the Church. But what are...

II. The Spiritual Sacrifices of God’s Household—v.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.*

- A. The idea of “*every church member a minister*” comes from our identification as “*a holy priesthood*”—v.9a, *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God...*
- B. As “*a chosen people*,” Israel failed in their calling—Exo 19:4-6. You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ (The OT gives us examples to follow and errors to avoid.)
 1. As with Israel, God delivered us from a dark captivity—v.9b, *that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.* (Sin blinds us, but God’s grace enlightens us.)
 2. We were called from insignificance to a special significance—v.10a, *Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; (It’s okay for you to feel special as a Christian, because *you are!*)*
 3. But what makes us special isn’t us—it’s God’s love shown by His grace and “*mercy*” — v.10b, *once you had not received mercy, but now*

you have received mercy. (God’s love covers our situation fully: His grace blesses us with what we don’t deserve, and mercy spares us from getting what we do deserve. ”)

- C. God’s people experience a special sense of fulfillment because we’ve been given special work to do—v.5b, *offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.* (How do we do this?):
 1. We are to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, by declaring “*the praises of him*” [Sharing time is *testimony time* of the blessings coming to us through Jesus Christ— Heb 13:15, Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name.]
 2. We’re also to offer the testimony of a redeemed life—v.11-12, *Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. 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.*
 - a. We’re to be “a holy nation” in the midst of national sinfulness.
 - b. We’re to be “a people belonging to God,” shining His light in a dark world—Mat 5:14-16, You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

CONCLUSION:

—**The Body of Christ is a community where each member is a priest.** [The Latin word for priest, *pontifex*, means “*bridge-builder*.” Isn’t that an appropriate name? It aptly describes our Christian calling!]
 —As a *household of priests*, we’re to be *bridge-builders*, helping others *come to God*. That means getting to know God better ourselves, while trying to introduce Him to others. ***What are the sacrifices we have to offer?*** Our testimony of praise for what Jesus has done for us and our testimony of living the new life which He purchased for us on the Cross.