

XVII. I Peter in Biblical Perspective

The Elect in the Exile

“Foundations, Part 2”

I Peter 2:4–10

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I Peter 2:4–10 says [4] *As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, [5] you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus*

Christ. [6] 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.” [7] So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected

has become the cornerstone,” [8] and

“A stone of stumbling,

and a rock of offense.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

[9] But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. [10] Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

There are many things my family has had to endure with me being a husband and father. One of those things would be, while other families went to Disney World we would go to places of historic significance from the 18th or 19th century and it was a whole lot cheaper. One of the things I would do to make it relevant and significant was to get books of what the city looked like now and what it looked like then when that historic event took place, then compare them from the then to the now.

There is one place I’ve been a number of times and today it has a hotel that is six stories high. Back when some historic significance took place where this hotel is the hotel then only had two stories. As I looked at the original picture of this hotel I assumed that somebody very brilliantly anticipated the fact that hotel would grow so they must have laid a foundation that would handle adding four stories to it at a later date. Then a citizen of that town disabused me of that fact and told me he was alive as a little boy when they added those four stories to the hotel. The verdict was that the foundation could not handle that height and weight therefore they lifted up the hotel and dug underneath and poured in more foundation to make it thicker and deeper to handle the height that was going to be added.

It is really interesting how that happened but that is what Peter is doing to us right now. Peter as a shepherd, teacher, pastor to a church he has likely never visited is giving them their direction as elect exiles. They are resident aliens on a green card to serve Christ in this world and he is doing it by telling them who they are and what they do. But he is maintaining insistently and incessantly a certain pattern that can’t be missed. The New Testament writers do

it and Paul and Peter are experts at it. They never tell you the Gospel commandments, what you do for Christ until they tell you the Gospel blessings, who you are in Christ. They lay the foundation of Gospel blessings in order to build upon it with a Gospel commandment of life.

Why do they do this? It is because we have this tendency that when we hear a commandment we think we're saved by what we do rather than we do what we do because we're saved by our Savior. They want to build story after story upon your life in and for Christ but they want you to understand who you are in Christ. Elect (identity) tells you who you are in Christ before the foundation of the world by the love of God that has been placed upon you. Exile (calling) tells you how you live for Christ on mission, on message, on ministry in this world. Your supreme allegiance to your King is what sets you on your course of life for Jesus Christ as a sojourner, a pilgrim for Christ in this world.

In I Peter 1:3–12 Peter calls this our great salvation and in it he tells us what God has done for us in Christ. In this text we learned four things. One is an imperishable inheritance is kept for you. Two you are kept for your inheritance through trials. Three You are justified by the imperishable blood of Christ. Four is you are born again, regenerate by the imperishable seed of the Word of God preached.

Then Peter leads us to three framing Gospel commands that we see in I Peter 1:13–2:3. One is a Divine summons to the personal pursuit of a pervasive holiness. You are uniquely set aside so that whatever you do you do for the glory of God. This is not a holiness to be saved because Christ has already done that. Two is a Divine summons to sincerely (no hypocrisy) and earnestly (with intention) love one another from the heart. We ask God to help us love our brothers and sisters from the heart with patience, kindness, not keeping account, with gentleness and perseverance. Three is a Divine summons to nurture a relentless appetite for the preaching of God's Word. God give me a ravenous appetite for the Word of God preached which helps me to grow in God.

So Peter has now laid a foundation and built upon it with three framing commandments. Now before he gives us more commandments he is going to lift us up by digging down to pour in more foundation because he wants us to go higher. To build this foundation deeper the first thing he does in I Peter 2:4–10 is to tell us who Christ is. He starts off with the phrase 'as you come to Him...' This is not something you do one time when you're converted, it is a lifestyle. When you have an appetite for the Word of God what you are really doing is coming to Him. Peter tells us that as we come to Him he wants us to know something about Him.

Peter goes back and grabs some Old Testament themes, terms and texts to show the Old Testament trajectory to Christ and how that affects you. Jesus tells us that we search the Scriptures thinking that in them they have life but the Scriptures bear witness of Him and starting with Moses and all the Prophets He explained Himself in all the Scriptures (Luke 24:27). The Word of God is bringing you to the God of the Word. As a lifestyle of coming to Him who is Him? It depends on who you ask. Peter is telling us who God says He is by going to the Old Testament Messianic prophecies that pointed to Jesus as a Living Stone, the Rock.

Interestingly, Peter is the one telling us and his name was changed to stone. I like to say that rocky is telling us who the Rock is. I know there is this big discussion when Jesus says 'Upon this rock I will build My church.' Is the rock Peter? Is it Jesus, but Peter is telling us the Rock is Jesus. Before he tell us who we are he tells us who Jesus is because who we are is tied to who He is. He quotes from the Psalm and Isaiah as well. He quotes from over a dozen Scriptures in the Old Testament.

We learned four things about the identity of Christ according to God in this passage in I Peter. He is a Living Stone, a Precious Stone, a Chosen Stone and a Cornerstone. Jesus is all of this as He is the Rock of our Salvation. But that is not who He is according to unregenerate men and women for according to them He is a rejected stone, a stumbling stone and an offending stone. Peter even quotes from a text of builders rejecting the Stone.

When my wife and I were building a house in Charlotte, North Carolina we had laid it out for the purpose of ministry and one of the things we wanted was a dry stacked fireplace. On a few occasions I had the privilege to watch those stone masons as they put that fireplace together and it was unbelievable. One of the ways to build a dry stacked fireplace is to always evaluate the stones, if and where they will fit. That is what we tend to do naturally. The Scripture even says the whole human race is destined to do this. So unless God does something to us we are destined to reject Him.

What is He to those of us who believe? Peter gives us the identity of those who come to Christ, those in whom He is the rock of their salvation. We have already learned four of these blessings of who we are in Christ as Peter pours more into the foundation. One we are living stones. We were stone dead but by God's grace we have become living stones. Two we are being built up unto the dwelling place of God, a spiritual/living temple of God. He dwells not only in us individually but in His people collectively. Thirdly, we are a holy priesthood. In God's family we don't have a class of people called priests for we all are priests. If we have a temple we have to have a priesthood and the priesthood is the people who make up the temple. The temple is the living stones with Christ in them. Fourthly, priests bring sacrifices and we are all living sacrifices, not dead sacrifices like in the Old Testament.

We saw this in Romans 12:1 that says *[1] I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.* Every Sunday we bring sacrifices of praise to Him in worship because we are the sacrifices. We bring tithes and offerings which are sacrifices of giving and we do this because we are the sacrifice. Because we are the sacrifice of God therefore we bring the sacrifice of praise, giving, and planting the seed of the Gospel in the lives of other people. This is our reasonable service of worship to the Lord.

In this study we are going to get nine more blessings of who we are in Christ from Peter from I Peter 2:4–10. Each one of these deserve its own sermon/study because all nine are rooted in the Old Testament and I'd love to show you how they all have been Christianized in Christ and applied to you, but for the sake of time I will just briefly go through them. So in this study I will pick up with blessing number five out of the thirteen total that Peter gives us to go deeper in the foundation of who we are in Christ.

So the fifth blessing is that we are without shame, the shame has been removed. Romans 8:33–34 says *[33] Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. [34] Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.* I Peter 2:6 says *[6] 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."* Then we see the next blessing.

The sixth blessing is found in I Peter 2:7a which says *[7a] So the honor is for you who believe...* The sixth blessing is we are clothed with honor, honor is bestowed on us. The blood of Jesus took away our shame and the righteousness of Jesus clothes us. The honor that goes to the Son from the Father is now given to us. I know it's appointed unto man once to die and then the judgment so we all have that day coming if Jesus doesn't come first. When I come to that

day there will be no more night, no more tears, no more sorrow or shame and I will receive the honor that ought to be given to Jesus but by His grace it will be given to me so in that day there will be no dread for my name is in the book of Life.

That is where I want you to be. Right now you are either taking man's evaluation of Him where you are rejecting Him or you will take God's evaluation. He is precious and choice. When you accept Him as your Rock of Salvation you no longer will have shame because of His atonement at the cross and your sins are gone. It is finished and there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). On top of that His honor has been placed upon you.

The seventh blessing is you are now a chosen race. A race is a people with a common ancestor and culture. Where are Christians coming from? They are coming from everywhere around the world so how can we be a race? By the way blessings 7 through 13 of who we are in Christ are what is known as collective singulars. They are nouns that are singular but have a collective definition. All of God's people are a chosen race. So here is another way to see yourself in Christ with the family of God. There is no Jew or Gentile, bond or free. There is One Lord, one race so you have a common ancestor and that common ancestor is the God of glory who has saved you through His Son Jesus Christ. In Him you have a common culture.

Ephesians 4:4–6 says *[4] There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— [5] one Lord, one faith, one baptism, [6] one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.* There is our unity where we come from all these ethnicities but we have one Savior, one God who has redeemed us where dead stones become living stones as He chose to save you. You are not a part of this race because you initiated it for this is not a choosing race. You are a part of this race because of a Sovereign God who didn't need you loved you and God sent His Son to the cross to pay for all of your sins for all of eternity. The Father authored your salvation. The Son accomplished your salvation. The Spirit of God applied your salvation. You have been saved by grace, the unmerited love of God. There was nothing in us that caused God to do it.

You might think the reason your saved is because you decided to believe in Jesus. I agree that you have to believe in Jesus but according to Ephesians 2:8–9 it says *[8] For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, [9] not a result of works, so that no one may boast.* You might think you're saved because you love Jesus but you love Jesus because He first loved you. You are what you are by the grace of God. We keep trying to create space that God did what He did to save us when we allowed Him or enabled Him but our allowing or enabling is what God did for us. He is the One who gives the heart to believe. God who had no compulsion upon Him saved a people who needed Him but didn't want Him. Here is a God who wanted us but didn't need us and here we are, a people who needed Him but didn't want Him. God chose to bring you from death unto life and if we ever grasp that we won't have to be cajoled into a Lord's Day worship service for we'll stampede churches to praise God for amazing grace. I decided because He came and changed my heart and life.

I try to get this across to young preachers. There is a wonderful time in a young pastor's class when someone will come up to them and say 'Preacher, I never heard the Gospel until I came to this church and heard your preaching.' That is a dangerous moment for a young preacher. I want you to know two things here. One is that you have children who grew up in your church that is telling you the same thing. Now they may have grown up in a church that didn't preach the Gospel but likely they did grow up in a church that preached it but they just

didn't hear it. God was gracious to give them eyes to see and ears to hear in the midst of your ministry. So praise God from whom all blessings flow.

You are a chosen race by the unmerited, unstoppable, relentless love of God. He's the Potter and we're the clay. We are going to keep trying to find a way to hone in on the glory as if we did something to get this. No, it's what He did and then what He did in us that set us free to come to Him.

The eighth blessing is that we are a royal priesthood. What tribe did Jesus come from? Jesus came from the tribe of Judah. What tribe did the priesthood come from? It came from Levi. So how can I be a royal priesthood? Jesus wasn't a Levi. Jesus did away with the Levitical priesthood because He was a part of the Mechizedekian priesthood. Jesus fulfilled the eternal priesthood and that's why we do away with the temporal priesthood so in Christ you are a priest from a line of Kings. We are kingly priests.

The ninth blessing is that we are a holy nation. Here is a spiritual nation being drawn from men and women as the Gospel makes disciples of all the nations. We are set apart by God as we reside in the nations of this world as elect exiles.

The tenth blessing is that we are a people for God's own possession. When those in this world appealed to us through the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the boastful pride of life they had us but then God's grace forgave us of all of our sins, fill our hearts and now we can renounce every claim of ownership on our life so that Christ alone would own us. To live is Christ. Die to ourselves and live unto Him. We renounce the ownership of the world to exalt the ownership of Christ.

The eleventh blessing is that we are a called people. We have been called out of darkness into His light. You called upon Him because He called you. There are two ways that God calls you. One is externally where someone with a lifestyle of evangelism came and shared the Gospel and it was probably more than one person. And a preacher preached the Gospel and this is the external call. Then came the internal call where He called you through the external call by the internal call of the Holy Spirit and gave you eyes to see and ears to hear and you came to Christ. That is why the Bible calls us the 'called ones.' We were called by Him and set free to call upon Him as Lord and Savior.

Blessing twelve is that we're a changed people. Again, we were called out of darkness into light, away from the oblivion of my self-reliance into the glory of relying on the Word of God by the Spirit of God to live for the Son of God. So here are all these identifying marks of who we are in Christ, why?

It was for blessing thirteen which is that we are a purposed people. Don't look around in envy at anyone or everyone. Look to Jesus for He saved you and we all have the same purpose. He saved you to proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. We once were a people who had not received mercy and now we have. He has called you to Himself externally with the Gospel and internally by the Spirit so that we might exalt Him in worship and evangelism.

A lifestyle of worship is what we have been called to do. We are to exalt Him. A lifestyle of evangelism is exalting Him before the lost as we share with them the Good News of salvation that Jesus saves any kind of sinner from anywhere which is our purpose. We have the opportunity to exalt Christ by loving one another but we now have a lifestyle of proclaiming Him who has called you from death unto life.

So here are your takeaways. The first one is don't miss the two bookends. The reason you proclaim Him is because you come to Him. It starts off by saying come to Him and it ends

with proclaiming Him. Those are the two bookends. We have seen who we are and who we are in Him when we come to Him and this is what you do when you come to Him and you can't proclaim Him until you come to Him. When you come to Him He saves you to proclaim Him. You not only have a Divine identity but a Divine purpose.

The second takeaway is He saved you on purpose and for a purpose. Have you seen how our society struggles for identity? Everyone is looking for an identity. You have yours. You have a great salvation. You have an inheritance. He is keeping it for you and He is keeping you. Your shame has been removed. His honor has been given. You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, you are a people of God, you're called and those whom He has called He will not let them go. You are now set aside as a holy nation. You have received mercy. He has changed you and is changing you.

People are constantly searching for the answer to these four questions; who am I, where did I come from, why am I here and where am I going. Peter just answered all of these for us. Who am I? I am a child of the living God – living stone, choice and precious through your Living Stone, Jesus. Where did I come from? A sovereign God has chosen to place His love upon you and it will not let you go. Nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ and you know where you're going. You are going to be with Him because He will lose not one. You also know why you're here and that's to proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

The third and last takeaway is your relationship with Christ, the Rock of Salvation determines the issue of life and eternity. Is He the Rock of your salvation or is He the Rock that you have rejected? I would like to close by sharing with you words from the hymn *'Tis Not That I Did Choose Thee*;

*Lord, 'tis not that I did choose You;
That, I know, could never be,
For this heart would still refuse You
Had Your grace not chosen me.
You removed the sin that stained me,
Cleansing me to be Your own;
For this purpose You ordained me,
That I live for you alone.*

God called you here today. He is calling you to Himself and if you haven't come, come just as you are. He loves to save sinners. If you have come to Him He is now sending you to proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for these moments in Your Word. Holy Spirit do Your work in the hearts of those who are reading this today. Perhaps some reading this need a new heart, so would You cut out the old heart and give the new heart so that they become living stones, believing in Jesus, the Rock of their salvation? Father for those who have been called by Your grace from darkness into light, would You plant within us an unstoppable desire to proclaim the excellencies of Him who called us, through worship, evangelism, and by loving one another? Father, lay the

foundation sure and keep building story upon story that we might ascend to the heights of selfless exaltation of the preeminent Christ. I pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Power Point

THE FOUNDATIONAL GOSPEL BLESSINGS FOR ELECT EXILES (1:1–12)

1. An imperishable inheritance kept for you.
2. You are kept for your inheritance through trials.
3. You are Justified by the imperishable blood of Christ.
4. You are “born again” —Regenerated by the imperishable seed of the Word of God preached.

THE GOSPEL COMMANDMENTS FOR “ELECT EXILES” (1:13-2:3)

A Divine summons to the personal pursuit of a pervasive holiness.

A Divine summons to sincerely and earnestly Love One Another from the heart.

A Divine summons to nurture a relentless appetite for the preaching of God's Word.

MORE FOUNDATION GOSPEL BLESSINGS FOR “ELECT EXILES” (2:4-10)

1. The Identity of Christ according to God...

- Living Stone
- Precious Stone
- Chosen Stone
- Corner Stone

2. The Identity of Christ according to Man...

- Rejected Stone
- Stumbling Stone
- Offending Stone

IDENTITY OF THOSE WHO COME TO CHRIST

1. Living Stones
2. Spiritual/Living Temple
3. Holy Priesthood
4. Living Sacrifices
5. Without Shame – Shame Removed
6. With Honor – Honor Bestowed
7. Chosen Race
8. Royal Priesthood
9. Holy Nation
10. A People for God's Own Possession
11. Called People
12. Changed People
13. Purposed People {note}

LIFE TAKEAWAYS

I. Don't miss the two bookends

II. Saved on purpose and for a purpose

III. Your relationship with Christ the Rock of Salvation—determines the issue of life and eternity