

LIVING STONES HANG TOGETHER

1 Peter 2:4-10

We use familiar sayings to express profound truths:

In physical realm we say: "A rolling stone gathers no moss."

Similarly, in Spanish people say: "A closed mouth catches no flies."

In the spiritual realm, Peter points to another saying we could coin:

"Living stones hang together."

Jesus is a living stone. WE are living stones.

God considers living stones to be precious—valuable to Him.

God accepts and values *the* Living Stone;

He accepts and values living stones, because we're in the Living Stone.

GOD USES THE VALUABLE LIVING STONES HE'S CHOSEN TO BUILD A SPIRITUAL HOUSE FOR HIMSELF.

References to priesthood and sacrifices indicate that this spiritual house is considered God's temple. (As Paul does in 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19-20)

To be spiritual house God wants us to be, *we must hang together!*

That's the way God made us.

We're one house one priesthood one race one nation
one people ... set apart to serve, glorify and praise God
together, for His glory.

As God's people, we identify with Christ, the Living Stone, and with His people, the living stones.

As God's people, united in Christ, we ought to work together.

We're a priesthood, established to minister to one another, to build up the entire body.

We're to join together in serving God and praising Him who called us.

On negative side, Christ was rejected by leaders of His day;

They're rejected by the leaders of their day. We can expect rejection too!

Christ was chosen and valuable to God; we've been made acceptable to God.

We've been called out of darkness into light.

We who were not His people, are now His people.

We who had not received mercy, now receive God's mercy.

We've all received what we didn't earn and didn't deserve.

**WE HAVE A LOT IN COMMON,
therefore, WE OUGHT TO STICK TOGETHER.**

We should serve Him together, unite in one great praise song to God.

5th characteristic of those who have their hope fixed in Jesus Christ:

Reverence–Holiness–Love–Desire for God's Word + ...

IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST AND HIS PEOPLE 2:4-10

We're identified with Christ and with one another.

2:4-5 *"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."*

We have all come to the same rock.

God is building us into one building and one people.

Two issues involved in this identification:

DOCTRINAL Issue => Focus on *CHRIST*

All we are and have as God's children is because of Christ.

–NOT because we've earned it.

BASIC CONTRAST: Two distinct views about Jesus:

Human view: REJECTED—considered useless—worthless

2:4, 7 *"As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men ...
⁷...to those who do not believe, "The stone **the builders rejected** has become the capstone,"*

God's view: CHOSEN and PRECIOUS

2:4, 6a “As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men **but chosen by God and precious to him**—...⁶ For in Scripture it says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a **chosen and precious** cornerstone, He’s been: picked out, selected; & honored, prized, highly valued

God’s people accept God’s view: Jesus is precious.

These **2 views**, reveal **2 different functions** Christ fulfills. **Christ is the living stone**, as such:

For the natural man—refuses to trust Christ—wants to “do it himself”

He rejects the stone as useless (2:7), to that person, . .

Christ is a stumbling stone 2:8 We trip over Him.

⁷ *To those who don’t believe, ... this stone has become...*⁸ “A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.”

We trip over Him, because we don't want to trust Him.

We try to make our own way rather than trust Him

Rom. 9:30-33

“What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith;³¹ but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it.³² Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the “stumbling stone.”³³ As it is written: “See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”

For people who don’t trust Christ, the Living Stone is “a stumbling stone,” but

For the person who trusts Christ— ... who receives Him as a precious stone, for that person, ...

Christ is the corner stone 2:6, 7c

He's the key One—the basis for *everything*!

On this stone the rest of the house is built.

We build our life on Him.

For every person Jesus will be one of these two

– **Either He'll be their stumbling stone**—they'll trip over Him,

– **or He'll be their cornerstone**—they'll build their life on Him.

So, which is He for US?

Practical Issue—How should this concept affect our life?

Christ is "*the* living stone" 2:4

In Him WE become "living stones" 2:5

On Christ, the corner stone, the whole spiritual house is built.

Cornerstone unites two walls; it's built into the corner of the foundation

and serves as the starting point for the building.

All the living stones become part of that house.

Barclay: "The Christian is likened to a living stone and the Church to a living edifice into which he is built.... *Christianity is community*; the individual finds his true place only when he is built into that edifice. "Solitary religion" [trying to go it alone] is ruled out as an impossibility.

Spartan king boasted to a visitor about the walls of Sparta. The visitor could see no walls. He said to the Spartan king, 'Where are these walls you boast about? His host pointed at his troops. 'These are the walls of Sparta, every man a brick.'

So long as a brick lies by itself it's useless;

it becomes useful when it's incorporated into a building."

As *the* Living Stone is precious, the living stones share the honor:

2:5, 9 "**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.... **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."*

Instead of embarrassment, shame, or disappointment (2:6), believers share His honor as part of what He is (2:7).

If God sees us this way, we ought to view ourselves, *and one another*, as valuable living stones—part of God's spiritual house.

We build up one another as a spiritual house

This could be a statement of fact.

Or, it could be a command—to build up one another

[BOTH are true! *Because it's a fact; we should act like it!*]

It could focus on our *ministry to one another*, or our *ministry together* as one.

In either case, the practical effects are the same [& both are true!]

Because of who we are, we join together in ministry for God's glory.

As one spiritual house, . . .

we build up one another &

we are built together. BOTH are true!

We're a holy priesthood 2:5, 9 "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.... 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."

A priest ministers on behalf of the people in God's presence.

We offer acceptable sacrifices by means of Christ.

As a holy priesthood,

we minister to one another

we minister together.

In contrast to blood sacrifices, our sacrifices are spiritual => a higher order:

Offering our lives to Him (Rom. 12:1); giving (Phil. 4:18); singing praise (Heb. 13:15); doing good; and sharing (Heb. 13:16)

They're well-pleasing (acceptable) to God because we're in Christ.

It's still *one* priesthood.

We share that ministry. We serve one another

Peter writes to encourage us to be *interdependent*; Some Christians use this as a declaration of *independence*.

God doesn't tell us we're all priests, so we can handle our affairs alone, without anyone else.

God tells us that to show we're all to be involved in priestly ministry.

We serve one another!

We're a royal priesthood so we can *join together* in serving God; so we can intercede for one another.

Wiersbe: Social scientists have written books dealing with what they call the "me complex" in modern society. ... Take care of yourself; forget about others ["Look Out for #1"]. That attitude has crept into church.

O.T. SUPPORT FOR CHRIST AS THE STONE 2:6-8 *"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."*

3 O.T. references point to what Peter wants to say:

2:6 < Isa. 28:16 God has chosen a precious stone in Zion.

Whoever trusts Him will never be disappointed.

2:7 < Ps. 118:22 The stone is rejected by the builders.

But, it becomes the head of the corner.

2:8 < Isa. 8:14 He's a tripping stone and an offense.

Many stumble over Him.

"Disobedience to Word" places them among those who rebel against God.

It could mean simply that they haven't believed.

But seems to indicate deliberate rebellion.

They stumble because they don't *want* to do God's will (Jn. 7:17)

Their rejection is no surprise to God; it's part of the plan.

So is the persecution. God is in control.

He established this end, as He established the Living Stone in Zion (2:6).

[Having established the principle of our identification with Christ the Living Stone, and with one another as living stones,

Peter lists some things that are true of us because we're in Christ:]

WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST 2:9-10 *"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."*

New image of ourselves!

How we see ourselves determines how we act.

What determines **who we are**?

Who our culture says we are?

Who the schools say we are?

Who our parents say we are?

Who our spouse says we are?

Look at who God says we are in Christ!

If we live as if it's true—what difference will it make in our lifestyle?

I made a list of who Peter says we are. That ought to get us excited!

We're only going to focus on those Peter uses in conclusion in **2:9-10**.

This should encourage *them* in time of suffering they're experiencing.

It should encourage US too! How does GOD see us?

Look at adjectives: Chosen—royal—holy—possessed (preserved)

Look at names given: Race (lineage)—priesthood—nation—people

We're one family—chosen by God (= chosen race, lineage, heritage)

While we might brag about being chosen by God, Moses indicates that Israel had no cause for boasting. God chose them because of His love for them. Deut. 7:6-8 The same is true of us. God chose us—**by grace!**

While we're not called to be a clique, we are to have family unity. ... pull together, stand up for one another, seek the common good.

We're one royal priesthood—priests, called to serve King—in His house!

We're one holy nation—set apart by God

We're one people—bought by God

We've attained new value, because we're **God's possession**.

We're now His people—the people of God 2:9-10

We who had nothing to do with God's promises now receive His promises. *Doesn't* mean we've taken the promises away from Israel (Rom. 11).

We're united into one people. Hos. 1:6, 8-9, 10; 2:1, 23

We've been set apart to "proclaim" His greatness to world around us.

We're to join together to glorify Him in a world that lives in darkness.

IMPLICATIONS?

WHAT DIFFERENCE SHOULD THIS MAKE?

These truths concerning who we are in Christ ought to help our self-image. They ought to transform our lifestyle to make us holy.

They ought to motivate us to hang together

–live such a lifestyle in a dark world that will never understand it.

... So they'll hear the message of life in Christ we proclaim and be attracted to Him; join us in giving praise to Him

WHAT WE ARE IN CHRIST	
2:5	We're living stones.
	We're a spiritual house.
	We're a holy priesthood, offering acceptable sacrifices to God.
2:9	We're a chosen race.
	We're a royal priesthood.
	We're a holy nation.
	We're a people that God possesses.
	We're called to proclaim the excellence of God.
	We're called out of darkness into His wonderful light.
2:10	We're God's people.
	We're recipients of God's mercy.