

1 - Read

Read 1 Peter 2:4-10. You may find it helpful to read aloud.

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

2 - Consider

- 1) What v Who - In the Introduction to his message on Community, the 3rd Pillar of our 4 Pillars series, Jamie Brown stated, “Community is not about what we do. It is about who we are.” What is the importance of this distinction?

What are the dangers of seeing and thinking community is synonymous with activity?
One of the dangers of thinking community is synonymous with activity is that you can opt out. What does this mean? Give an example. And why is it a danger?

- 2) Church - Bearing in mind it is important to remember who we are, look again at 1 Peter 2:4-6. To whom are we called (See v4.)?

If it is important to make the distinction between who we are and what we do, who are we? What is Peter’s description of our identity? Do you believe, by the grace of God, this is your identity? In other words, this is what is true about you now! Does it inform how you see and think? Does it elevate your vision and give you purpose? Why? Or Why not?

- 3) Jesus' Roles - In his description of the distinctives of the church, Jamie Brown pointed out Jesus' three roles in the process of building a spiritual house (v5). Can you identify all three? He is the:
- a) Foundation - Jesus is the foundation. The church is built upon the foundation of Jesus. What does this mean? Why is it important?
 - b) Builder - Jesus is the builder. "You yourselves like living stones *are being* built up as a spiritual house" (v5). What does this mean? Why is it important?
 - c) Bond - Jesus is the bond that holds it together. See Colossians 1:17.
- 4) Distinction and Purpose - See v6-8. Why does Peter make a distinction between those who believe and those who do not believe? Can you state two reasons? Complete the sentence, "The church is"
- a) Clear - The church is clear about its identity. This is who we are.
 - b) Christ-like - The church is clear about its purpose. This is what we do, that is, to be Christ-like to those who do not believe. To be gracious, loving, merciful, patient, serving, and more!
- 5) Who and Why! - See v9-10. Peter, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, tells us who we are and why we exist! This is a beautiful, miraculous, and powerful passage. Pause to consider it. Do you see yourself as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession"? Do you know this is true about you now? Do you understand it as your new identity in Christ because of what he has done? And what he is doing?

And why? What is your purpose? "To proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (v9). Does this inform your sense of place and purpose in God's redemptive story? Why or why not?

3 - Reflection

Consider the following lyrics to the first three stanzas of "Take My Life and Let It Be." This is the cry of your regenerate heart! Reflect on it. Let it be your prayer.

Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love;
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee,
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing
Always, only, for my King;
Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee,
Filled with messages from Thee.
- Francis Ridley Havergal

4 - Prayer

Gracious Father, we pray for your holy catholic church. Fill it with all truth, in all truth with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in anything it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of Jesus Christ your Son our Savior. Amen.