

CHOSEN TO PROCLAIM / Sunday School- November 8, 2009

Unifying Topic: A CHOSEN PEOPLE

Lesson Text

I. Spiritual Milk (1Peter 2:1-3)

II. The Living Stone (1Peter 2:4-8)

III. A New People (1Peter 2:9-10)

Unifying Principle: The way we live sends a clear signal about who we are, and what we believe. What distinguishes members of the Christian church from other groups? Peter teaches that we are "a royal priesthood" a "holy nation," whose purpose is to declare God's mighty acts as recorded in Acts 4.

Lesson Aim: To help students clearly understand who they are as Christians.

Life aim: To teach Christians to develop a hunger for God's Word, to know the royal identity they have as Christians, and to affirm the saving and everlasting power of Jesus Christ as our 'Living Stone'.

C -- Choosing	P — Preach
H – Him	R —Remembrance
O – Over	O —Of
S -- Sin	C — Christ's
E -- Even	L — Life
N – Now	A — And
TO	I — Instructing
	M —Multitudes

- 2:1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,
2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:
2:3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.
2:4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,
2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.
2:6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.
2:7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,
2:8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.
2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:
2:10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

1Peter 2:1-3: Spiritual Milk

I. A CALL TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH (1-3)

A. WHAT TO LAY ASIDE (1)

1. All malice, all deceit
2. Hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking

B. WHAT TO DESIRE (2-3)

1. The pure milk of the word
 - a. As newborn babes
 - b. That you may grow thereby

Peter is writing to Christians in Asia Minor in 64 A.D. to encourage them to bear up during a difficult time of political, social, and personal suffering. First, we must realize our need for the Word of God (2:1-3). When these people in Asia Minor became Christians, their friends began to malign, ridicule and challenge them because they were no longer involved in sensuality, drunkenness, and idolatry. But here Peter encourages them to "turn the other cheek," to "walk that extra mile," to not react as they used to. Thus he directs them to "put aside" as a lifestyle, first, "all malice." "Malice" is wickedness in all its forms—sensuality, drunkenness and idolatry. "Guile," is craftiness, deceit, setting traps. (Here Peter may be referring to shady business dealings.) "Hypocrisy" is play-acting, which is the opposite of the "sincere love" he talked about in the previous chapter. "Envy" is displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the prosperity of others. Finally, Peter says, having put aside slander, keep putting it away for slander is backbiting, cutting down, gossiping, character assassination.

Five things in particular are mentioned, and all five have to do with what has just been said in the former passage

(1 Pt. 1:22). We are to love one another with a pure heart fervently. The very things we are to strip off are the things that dirty and soil our love.

- Believers are to **strip off "malice."** The word means two things:
 1. In a general sense it means wickedness, all kinds and forms of evil. It is a word that strikes at all the vices of men.
 2. In a narrow sense it means malice, deep-seated feelings against a person; hatred that lasts on and on; intense and long-lasting bitterness against a person. It means ill will, actually wishing that something bad would happen to a person. It means vicious, spiteful, and to hold a grudge. It means that a person has turned his heart over to evil.
- Believers must **strip off 'guile.'** The word means to deceive and mislead people; to set bait so as to catch them; to bait or deceive in order to achieve one's own end. It means to be two-faced. When a person wants something, he looks at the other person's weakness or ignorance, and he tries to appeal to it. He appeals to it by deceiving and beguiling the person.
- Believers must **strip off "hypocrisies."** The word means one who pretends, puts on a show, acts out something he is not. A person is a hypocrite...
 - when he acts as though he loves and believes God, but he does not live like God tells him to live;
 - when he pretends to be following God, but he is living like he meant to live;
 - when he shows a concern for the things of God, but his real concern is for the things of the world;
 - when he professes to believe God's word, but he questions it and adds and takes away from it;
 - when he acts as if he cares for people, but he is really full of selfishness, self-seeking, possessiveness, hoarding, envy, and pride;
 - when he acts friendly, but he could care less;
 - when he promises, but never intends to keep his promise.
- Believers must **strip off "envies."** The word means that a person covets what someone else has, covets it so much that he wants it even if it has to be taken away from the other person. He may even wish that the other person did not have it.
 - A person who envies does not have peace or happiness. He is dissatisfied with what he is and has and is always wanting more and more of what others have;
 - This envy often drives a person into crime and lawlessness in order to get what he craves;
 - This envy often leads to physical problems such as migraine headaches, high blood pressure, ulcer, and other illnesses;
 - Envy also causes emotional problems ranging from mild neurosis or depression to psychotic behavior.
- Believers must **strip off "evil speaking."** This means to criticize*, judge, backbite, gossip, censor, condemn, and grumble against another person. It means to talk about and tear down another person; to spread tales about another person that cut and hurt him, and that lowers his image and reputation in the eyes of others. The word usually means to talk about a person behind his back when he is not present.

NOTE:

*When we criticize a brother or sister in Christ, we are slandering one of God's own children. Just think, we are actually slandering a son or daughter of God. There is never a spirit of evil speaking in the humble and loving person.

Peter shares with us as new believers, first a cleaning of sin, a stripping off, then a feeding within with pure spiritual milk. Peter now moves from the negative to the positive by using a metaphor to illustrate the lifestyle God desires for His children, regardless of the various trials they are undergoing. He commands, "Like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word." Peter is not saying that all Christians are newborn babes. He is saying that, like babes who long for milk, Christians are to have a hunger for the Word, free of the impurities of malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy and evil speaking (slander). Peter calls this Word, "the living word." It's the abiding Word, the imperishable Word, the eternal true Word—the only truth in the universe; it's the truth that helps us cope with reality, truth that is found in the life and in the Words of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:23-25). **Three points:**

1. **The charge** is imperative, a command: (You) "desire" means to crave, yearn, and long for the sincere milk of the Word. "Sincere" means unadulterated, unmixed with anything else. The word "milk" usually refers to the food needed by immature believers.
2. **The purpose** for craving and yearning after the Word is that we may grow. The idea is that we may grow up to full salvation, until we reach full maturity.

3. **The result** of craving the Word is a wonderful promise: taste that the Lord is gracious. God feeds, nourishes, and nurtures us. He grows us more and more into His image. Spiritual milk is associated with experiencing the goodness of God and Jesus Christ in our lives. The early believers have already tasted that the Lord was good. Peter is not asking them to try something that is new to them. Peter wants them to continue partaking or practicing what they have already tasted (experienced) and know that it is good.

"You have tasted of the kindness of the Lord," means you have established a personal relationship with Him. He is the milk and His Word is the milk. His Life and His Words will help us to grow in Him; *Psalm 34*, "O taste and see that the Lord is good." The graciousness of God is not an excuse for laziness in the Christian life; it is the greatest of all incentives to afford! We are to rid ourselves of deceit, hypocrisy, envy, slander, and worldliness, and crave, and hunger for the pure spiritual milk with intensity! The Word of God is for our spiritual growth because God's Spirit is in us to grow us up and be spiritually strong.

- A. Crave to know and rely on the love God has for you!
- Crave to take hold of that which took hold of you!
 - Crave the love of Jesus!
 - Crave to know God!
 - Crave to feel close to God—there is a spiritual security and intimacy from His love!
 - Crave to be confident!
- B. Crave to know the Bible well!
- Crave to know the basics well enough to teach: Within six months be able to help someone all the way through a conversion study series!
 - Crave by having the goal to read the whole bible in a year!
 - Crave a contextual (background) awareness of the bible!
 - Crave to tackle tough questions—apologetic questions!
- C. Crave spiritual depth in your times of worshipping God!
- Crave to have inspired prayer times...using the psalms, hymns and spiritual songs!
 - Crave powerful prayer and bible study times with one another
- D. Crave the powerful life you have as a Christian:
- Great boldness to hold a high level of commitment!
 - Great boldness to call one another higher!
 - Great boldness to evangelize!
 - Great boldness to even preach the message (give a message to the body) –**PROCLAIM!!!**

By craving, we grow from being babes to mature Christians when we drink and pour into us the spiritual milk of the Word of God.

1Peter 2:4-8: The Living Stone

II. OUR PRIVILEGE IN CHRIST (4-10)

A. AS LIVING STONES (4-8)

1. Coming to Christ as to a living stone
 - a. Who was rejected by men
 - b. Who is chosen by God and precious
2. We as living stones are being built up as a spiritual house
 - a. To be a holy priesthood
 - b. To offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ
3. Christ is the precious cornerstone
 - a. As foretold in **Isaiah 28:16**
 - 1) God would lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious
 - 2) He who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame
 - 3) Precious to those who believe
 - b. As foretold in **Psalms 118:22** and **Isaiah 8:14**
 - 1) A stone rejected by the builders, which has become the chief cornerstone
 - 2) A stone of stumbling and rock of offense to those who are

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disobedient
3) To which they were appointed

"As you come to Him, the Living Stone" (v4 NIV). This is an admission to His presence. What was limited in the Old Covenant for the High Priest is the unlimited opportunity and privilege of every Christian. Those who come near Christ will become like Christ. It is to Christ we must come. No one can be a part of His building unless he places himself upon the Foundation Stone, Christ Himself, laid by God. And God is just like all builders. He has a foundation upon which all workers must lay the stones of their lives. Peter described that perfectly shaped stone as a "living stone." Now that's a paradoxical statement since we think of a stone as non-living. We sometimes refer to something as "stone dead." But the stone Peter referred to is a "living stone." It has all the solidarity of stone, yet is alive. Peter establishes the fact that Christ (*the living stone*) was highly esteemed in the sight of God but rejected in the eyes of man. To be trampled upon by men is often the price to be paid in order to truly triumph in God's eyes (Phil 2:5-9; Heb 11:36-38). Men rejected Christ because they wanted to build their lives like they wanted; He didn't fit in with their plans; He was not worth the price.

So Christ is the Living Stone, likewise, believers are living stones because of being in Christ. This is a picture of the great spiritual house that God is building, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Any person who turns to God and lays his life upon the foundation of Christ becomes a part of God's spiritual house. You are the temple of God, the very house of God, the Holy Spirit. In v5 believers are called a "holy priesthood." The chief function of the priest is to stand between God and man, to represent man before God and to present man to God; and man has never felt worthy enough to approach God. Every believer **now** stands, before God as a priest. And we can **now** approach God on our own, and can talk and share with Him whenever we choose. God is not far off and removed from man. As we approach God we are to offer spiritual sacrifices that would be acceptable only to God through Jesus Christ. The only **sacrifices that God accepts** are the sacrifices made within His house.

- We are to sacrifice our body as a living sacrifice to God. We are not to be conformed to this world (Rom.12:1).
- We are to sacrifice our life to God day by day. We are to follow God in love, even as Christ loved us and gave Himself as an offering and sacrifice to God (Romans 14:8).
- We are to offer the sacrifice of praise continually (Heb.13:15).
- We are to offer the sacrifices of good works and gifts and money (Heb.13:16; Jam.1:17).
- We are to offer spiritual sacrifices, that is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith meekness, and self-control (Gal.5:22-23).
- We are to sacrifice our life/service in order to lead people to faith in Christ (Lk.24:47, 49; Matt.28:19-20).

In v6, here the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 28:16, "Behold I lay in Zion* for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation." Christ in the foundation and each believer is a stone**. What are the **characteristics of Christ, the Cornerstone?**

- He is completely trustworthy because He is Truth.
- He is precious to believers because He is God's Son.
- Though rejected by some, He is the most important part of the church because through His death, burial, and resurrection the church came.

NOTE:

*Zion is used figuratively of Israel as the people of God (Is.60:14); Also city of David. The spiritual meaning of Zion is continued in the New Testament, where it is given the Christian meaning of God's spiritual kingdom, the church of God, the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb.12:22; Rev.14:1; Sion, KJV).

**One stone is not a temple or even a wall; one body part is useless without the other. When God calls you to a task, remember that He is also calling others to work with you.

The greatest tragedy in all of history is that He is not considered to be precious by some people v7. These

unbelievers are pictured as disobedient. They just do not believe that Jesus Christ is the foundation Stone for their lives. They do not want Christ enough to give all they are and have in order to get Him! Christ is made Head of the corner anyway despite the rejection of men. Christ is made the Chief

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Cornerstone of the only permanent and lasting building. God selected and elected Him despite man. So unbelievers stumble* over the stone of Christ v8. He is the Rock that offends* them. They also stumble over the Word. What's so awful about this is that the Word of God is the only incorruptible seed on earth that lives and abides forever (1 Pt.1:23-25). If they reject the glorious gospel of God's Word, the glorious gospel that Jesus Christ, is the Foundation Stone of God's building, then they are rejecting the only hope of living forever. They empower themselves to a state of unbelief and disobedience to God. They don't understand:

- How He could be any thing, other than a man, just like the rest of us.
- How He could be born of a virgin, God incarnate in human flesh.
- How He could live a sinless life, live without committing a single sin.
- How His death could be any more than the death of a martyr who died for a great cause.
- How His resurrection is anything but a tall tale made up by his followers to secure more and more followers.

NOTE:

*To stumble, means that we have tripped up and fallen, we damage ourselves.

To be offended means that we hurt ourselves.

POINT:

Simply stated, many people do not understand nor believe the Jesus Christ is the Son of God; that He was sent into the world by God to save men; that he was able to live a sinless life because He was the God-man who had come to earth for that very purpose; that he died and arose from the dead as the Perfect and Ideal Man so that His ideal death and resurrection could cover man.

If they are offended about what He did, they are offended about what you're doing!

"Art thou the Christ? Tell us. And he said unto them, if I tell you, ye will not believe" Luke 22:67.

1 Peter 2:9-10: A New People

B. AS PEOPLE OF GOD (9-10)

1. They are now:
 - a. A chosen generation
 - b. A royal priesthood
 - c. A holy nation
 - d. His own special people
2. They are now:
 - a. To proclaim the praises of God, who called them:
 - 1) Out of darkness
 - 2) Into His marvelous light
 - b. The people of God, who once were not the people of God
 - 1) Who had not obtained mercy
 - 2) But now have obtained mercy

Peter lets the people know that they are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people!" v9. Know who you are! You are not a people who stumble over Christ! You are not a people who stumble over His claim and deity and refuse to believe Him! You are a people who believe Christ, a people who are building their lives upon the Foundation Stone, the Chief Cornerstone—God's Son! You have taken your lives and laid them upon Him! You have entrusted your whole being in the keeping of Christ! Therefore, KNOW WHO YOU ARE! YOU ARE THE PEOPLE OF GOD, THE PEOPLE HE IS BUILDING TO LIVE WITH HIM FOREVER AND EVER!

- Once you believe in God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, you become very, very special to God. God loves His Son so much that when a person really believes and trusts Him, God will do anything for that person. That person becomes a "**chosen generation.**" The Greek words actually mean a "chosen" or "elect race" —a new race of people, a new species that differs entirely from the other races upon

earth. God is actually creating a new race of people upon earth. How? How can it be that believers from China, Russia, Asia, Africa, India, Europe, the Americas, the islands, Canada, and all the other nations of the world form a new race of people? By the Spirit of God! The Spirit of God is changing people inwardly, not outwardly—within their hearts and minds and lives, changing them where it really matters. God is implanting His Divine nature within believers causing them to be born again of incorruptible seed; receive a renewed mind not conformed to this world; become a new creature while old things are passed away; a new man which after God is created; and thereby receiving a new spirit within, delivered from the law.

- Believers become a **“royal priesthood.”** When we receive Jesus Christ as our Savior, God creates us into a royal priesthood. He gives us open access to His presence forever and ever, approaching God at anytime. Why? , Because God accepted Christ's sacrifice of Himself—eternally. The veil that used to separate us from entering into the Holy Place, the Holy of Holies was torn from top to bottom by an act of God when Christ died (Matt.27:51). In fact, God expects us to live in His presence—fellowship, commune, and walk in His presence all day every day. We are priests of royalty, priests who belong to the Sovereign majesty of the universe, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. The priests who rule and reign with Christ and who serve and worship God face to face, day by day, hour by hour and moment by moment are to offer intercession and offer sacrifices to God.

- Believers become a **“holy nation.”** God is drawing people from all over the world, people from all the nations of the world, and creating a new nation. What is the nation? It is the holy nation of God! Remember the word “holy” means separated, set apart, and different. Any person who is willing to separate from the sin and evil of this world and set his life apart unto God, God will take that person and make him a citizen of His holy nation. What did I say?, God will take and make ...! This is what holy means – to be different from the world, from its sin, evil, and death. Becoming a citizen of God's holy nation:
 - One serves the Sovereign Head, God Himself.
 - One obeys the laws of God's nation.
 - One is dedicated to follow the customs and life-style of God's nation.
 - One speaks up for and defends the nation of God.

Sounds like an army uh? We are technically known as the army of God, body of Christ, and the people of God, set aside for the work of the Lord.

1Ch 12:22 *More men joined David almost every day, until he had a tremendous **army—the army of God** NLB. David's army was called the army of God. They were drawn to David by the reputation of his great warriors. The news of their victories and the desire to see God's will done, people are drawn to a great cause. As believers we have the greatest cause—the salvation of mankind, and others will be drawn to work with us.*

Believers become a **“peculiar people.”** The Greek means a people for God's own unique possession; the people to be His very own; a people saved to be His own. Possession has the idea of value, of worth, and preciousness; of provisions, protection, and security. Therefore, God will provide and protect us and make us secure in every sense of the Word.

“For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth” Deut. 14:2.

Now that we know who we are, it's time to know our purpose: *“That we should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light!”* **“Show forth”**, means to speak forth; to tell out; to publish abroad; to set forth. The word **“praises”**, means virtues, excellences, and the supreme and eminent qualities of God. The very task of the believer is to witness for God, to share the glorious message of God. What is the message?—the glorious message of Salvation. God will deliver man out of darkness into the marvelous light. That's what he's done for us! Therefore we proclaim the glorious truth that God has saved us through the Light of the world, through Jesus Christ Himself. He has saved us out of the darkness of sin and death and delivered us into the light of eternity. We shall live forever. We are to praise God, proclaim the message of His marvelous light of Salvation.

Now considering all of this, what has happened? Peter goes on to say v10:

1. In the past believers were not a people (*once you were less than nothing*), but now you have been made into the people of God (*God's very own*). It means to have purpose, have significance in life, and become a member of the body of Christ, who fulfills, satisfies, and completes life, and all that life is meant to be! Hallelujah!

2. In the past believers had not received mercy (*once you knew very little of God's kindness*), but now you have received mercy (*lives changed by it*). Before you were saved you were like everyone else; you ignored, neglected, cursed, rebelled against and rejected God. You refused to change your lives and cry-out for the mercy of God. Therefore God could not have mercy upon you. But when you repented and turned to God, God had mercy upon you and saved you. He forgave your sins and neglect, and He brought you into His love and grace and gave you the glorious privilege of living with Him forever. Remember your value comes from being one of God's children, not from what you can achieve. You have worth because of what God did, not because of what you do. You become new because of His Son, the Living Stone, the Cornerstone, the Resurrected One, the Eternal One, the Anointed One! This is what we are to Proclaim!

SUMMARY:

Having described how they were born again by the incorruptible Word of God, Peter admonishes his readers to put aside sinful attitudes and to grow spiritually with an infant-like longing for the Word. Get rid of the practices; strip off those things that are contrary to loving one another deeply. He goes on to list some of these negative things which, having put them aside at a point in time in the past, they should continue to do, as a lifestyle. Now crave for, feed on the Word of God that you may grow up in your Salvation. This is essential, and since all of them know that life with Jesus Christ is good, they will mature by hungering for the Word of God that will teach them the difference between truth and error—which teaches the very mind and heart of God.

He then depicts Jesus as The Living Stone, and Christians as living stones. The latter are being built up as a spiritual house and a holy priesthood in order to offer spiritual sacrifices through Christ. The key is Jesus Christ He is the Living Stone which is the foundation of this house and His life is imparted to all the little stones—us believers, who are built into a temple that throbs with life. As foretold in the Scriptures, Jesus is the Chief Cornerstone that is precious to those who believe, while a stone of stumbling to those who are disobedient.

Christians are called on to proclaim the praises of God as they are now a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special (peculiar) people who have now obtained mercy. When we repented and turned to God, God had mercy upon us and saved us. He forgave our sin and neglect, and He brought us into His love and grace and gave us the glorious privilege of living with Him forever. This is what we are to proclaim. You have all of heaven backing you up! Begin to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ!

APPLICATION:

As we walk by the Power of the Holy Spirit; as we make the choice to put off the old and put on the new, we will become spiritually mature, sound, wholesome, and healthy. We must long for the Word of God. And He will put that longing in our hearts.

- Do you have a daily time of Bible study and prayer?
- Do you look forward to being with God as you shake the grogginess off in the morning?
- If you have been a Christian a few years, have you read through the entire Bible yet?
- Are you focused in church when the Word of God is being preached?
- Does your enthusiasm for knowing God rub off on others?
- Do your non-Christian friends take you seriously when they see your passion and determination to know the Scriptures and draw close to God?
- What is your attitude towards reading books outside the Bible when they are suggested? Are you slow or quick to dive in?

Pray for each!