

1 Peter 2:4-12

Week 3 - Built On A Firm Foundation

1 Peter 2:4-12 (NIV)

⁴ As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans 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.”

This passage quotes Isaiah 28:16, Psalm 118:22, and Isaiah 8:14 while talking about the cornerstone.

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 cornerstone,”

⁸ and,

“A stone that causes people to stumble
and a rock that makes them fall.”

What is a cornerstone? A cornerstone is often the first stone set in a structure. It is important because it acts as the foundation and determines the stability and orientation of the whole structure. All other stones are set in reference to that stone. Sources: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cornerstone> and <http://www.marybakerreddylibrary.org/research/laying-the-cornerstone-let-t-his-ceremony-be-simple-prayerful-devout/>

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, God’s special possession, 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 foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage 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.

? Why is it significant that Jesus is the cornerstone Peter is talking about in this passage? Why would Peter take time in the beginning of this chapter to talk about cornerstones and highlight Old Testament passages?

In Matthew 7:24-27, Jesus tells a parable about having a solid foundation, and wise and foolish builders. It’s a nice parallel to the analogy Peter is using here.

? How does having Jesus as the cornerstone of your life impact your decisions, habits, lifestyle, language, etc.?

? What does it mean to be built in unity together with Christ? How can we foster unity with other believers?

? How does the way we, as Christians, interact with Christ differ from how nonbelievers interact with Christ? Why does Peter say they “stumble” and “fall” (vs. 8)?

? What is our “before” and “after” as followers of Christ (vs. 10)? How do we show this as we daily live out our faith?

? What encouragement would the recipients of this letter hear? What encouragement do you hear? (vv. 5, 9, 10)

? Peter gives a surprisingly gently worded command in verse 11, urging believers to abstain from sinful desires. Why?

? How can you constructively abstain from sinful desires? How can we support one another in keeping from sinning?

? What light has entered your life since coming to belief in Christ? Are there specifics in your daily life that reflect this light (vs. 9)?

? In verse 11, Peter references “pagans,” but another translation (NLT) says, “unbelieving neighbors.” Who are the unbelieving neighbors in your life? Does the way you live serve as a stumbling block for them to experience Christ, or does it point to Him?

In the NLT translation, “good deeds” (v. 12) is translated “honorable behavior.” Peter isn’t calling us to perform good deeds to prove our faith, but to live honorably, that it may speak to unbelievers of how Christ has changed our lives.

Optional Section: Daniel's Example

Daniel 6:1-5 (NIV)

¹It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, ² with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss. ³ Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. ⁴ At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. ⁵ Finally these men said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God."

Background

Daniel was honorable and good in all his behavior and did what he did to serve a foreign king, who stole him from his homeland. This was so apparent that those who looked to undermine him or find something against him gave up and declared that the only "fault" that could be found in him was his obedience and following of God. God used Daniel powerfully and protected him supernaturally, and several pagan kings gave glory to God through how God used Daniel's obedience and purity.

? How does Daniel's life mirror what we saw in 1 Peter 2:11-12?

? In what ways can you be a "Daniel" in your own life—at home, at work, in your daily interactions?

For Discussion And Accountability

? Is Jesus the cornerstone in your life, or is He just another brick in your house? What would it look like for Jesus to be the cornerstone of your life this week?

? In what ways does verse 12 ring true in your own life? How are you doing this well? How could you be doing it better?