

Lesson 4

1 Peter 2:1-8

I. Crave Spiritual Growth (vv. 1-3)

Peter begins this section by telling believers to put away attitudes and behaviors that destroy Christian community. He specifically mentions malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander. These are not merely outward actions. They are sins that grow out of a heart that is focused on itself rather than on Christ. Instead of feeding those sinful attitudes, Peter tells believers to long for the pure spiritual milk of God's Word. Just as a newborn baby naturally desires milk because it needs nourishment and growth, believers should desire the truth of God's Word because it is through God's Word that we grow spiritually.

Peter is not describing a duty that Christians reluctantly perform. He is describing a hunger. When someone has truly tasted the goodness of the Lord, they begin wanting more of Him. The goal is not merely learning facts about God. The goal is growing in our relationship with God and becoming more like Christ. Many of us spend hours feeding ourselves with entertainment, social media, sports, or the opinions of the world while spending very little time feeding on God's Word. Peter reminds believers that spiritual growth does not happen by accident. It requires a continual desire for the things of God.

II. Come to Christ Even When the World Rejects Him (v. 4)

Peter then shifts his attention directly to Christ. He describes Jesus as: "a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious." This is one of the most important descriptions of Christ in the chapter. Peter wants believers to recognize that Jesus was completely rejected by the world around Him. He was misunderstood, mocked, opposed, and ultimately crucified. Yet at the very same time, Jesus was chosen and precious in the sight of God. This reminds believers that rejection by people is not always evidence that something is wrong. Jesus lived a perfect life and was still rejected. Because of that, Christians should not be surprised when faithfully following Christ sometimes creates tension with the world around them.

This rejection may take many forms.

- Friends may lose interest in us because our priorities have changed.
- Family members may disagree with our convictions.
- Others may assume we are judgmental or hateful because we believe what Scripture teaches.
- Sometimes we simply feel out of place in a culture that is moving away from God.

For most Christians, rejection will not be dramatic. More often it looks like exclusion, misunderstanding, criticism, or feeling different from those around us. Peter's point is not to make believers fearful. His point is to remind them that if the world rejected Christ, it should not surprise us when the world rejects those who belong to Christ.

III. Remember That You Belong to God's House (vv. 5-6)

After describing Christ as a living stone, Peter makes a remarkable statement: "You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house." Peter wants believers to see that they are not simply individuals following Jesus. They are part of something much larger. God is building His people together into a spiritual house. Throughout the Old Testament, the temple was associated with God's presence among His people. Now Peter says that God's people themselves are becoming His dwelling place.

This also means two things as well. First is that God is always with us, then that we are never alone. Even when we are isolated by the world we are still not alone. We are together with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ held together to form the temple of God by God himself.

IV. What You Do With Jesus Matters (vv. 7-8)

Peter concludes by focusing on how people respond to Christ. For those who believe, Jesus is precious. For those who reject Him, He becomes a stone of stumbling. The difference is not found in Christ, Christ remains the same, the difference is found in how people respond to Him. Peter quotes several Old Testament passages that describe Jesus as the cornerstone. The cornerstone was the stone that determined the direction and stability of the entire building. Everything else was built around it. Peter is saying that Jesus occupies that place in God's plan. Every person must decide what they will do with Christ. Some will trust Him and build their lives upon Him. Others will reject Him and stumble over Him. There is ultimately no neutral response to Jesus.

Following Christ often means choosing His approval over the approval of the world. Peter reminds believers that this choice is worth making because the Christ who is rejected by men is chosen and precious in the sight of God.

Big Idea

Because Christ was rejected by the world but chosen and precious to God, believers should pursue spiritual growth, come confidently to Christ, find their identity among God's people, and build their lives upon Him.

Application Questions

1. How can you develop a greater hunger for God's Word?
2. Have you ever felt rejected or left out because of your faith?
3. How does knowing that Christ was rejected help believers deal with rejection?
4. What are some practical ways we can support fellow believers who feel isolated?
5. What does it look like to build your life on Christ rather than on success, popularity, or comfort?
6. In what ways does being part of God's family change how you view yourself?
7. Why does rejection by other people often hurt so deeply?
8. What do your daily habits reveal about what you truly hunger for?
9. What are you most tempted to build your identity upon besides Christ?
10. Does your life communicate that Christ is precious to you?
11. If someone observed your life for a month, what would they conclude is your cornerstone?
12. If following Christ cost you a friendship, would Christ still be enough?
13. What does your response to criticism reveal about your heart?
14. Do you treasure Christ because of who He is, or mainly because of what He gives?
15. If everything else in your life were stripped away except Christ, would you still believe you possessed something precious?