

## INTRODUCE

So, if you have your Bibles, and I hope you do,

- please grab them and turn to 1 Peter chapter 2.
- You can open a phone or a tablet to 1 Peter 2,
- or you can use one of the hard-backed black bibles
  - under every single chair.
  - You'll find 1 Peter 2 on page **1014**.

## INTRODUCTION

So, today, we get to talk about one of my favorite topics: the church!

And you're like,

- *“well, you're obviously passionate about this topic,*
  - *because you're a pastor.*
    - *A pastor talking about the church is like...*
      - *a Chic-Fil-A employee saying 'my pleasure'*
- *It's expected...*
  - *in fact...I'm incited when they don't!*

But, I think this is an extremely relevant topic for us.

- Because the statistics of U.S. adults
  - who say they *“generally attend religious services*
  - *once a month or more”*
- continues to drop year after year.

I mean, we hear this all the time, *“I like Jesus...just not the church.”*

## ILLUSTRATION: FIXER UPPER

And I think some of that is because...

- we look at what the church is...
- rather than what it could and should be.

So, it's like those house-flipping shows on HGTV.

- My wife loves 'em.
- And if I'm honest, I think they're kinda cool, too.

Though they certainly foster delusions of grandeur,

- cause it's like,
  - "Man, if I just blow this wall out
  - I can make my bathroom into a master suite!"
- And then a dozen trips to Home Depot later,
  - all you have is a ruined bathroom...
    - and you're calling a contractor!

But in these shows: it's like Chip and Jo walk into a legit dump!

- I mean, barely standing up,
- boards on the windows,
- blood-stains on the carpet.

And they're like, "Look...it's Shiplap! This is great!"

But unless you've got the eye for that kind of thing,

- you're watching going...
  - "I don't know what they could possibly do...
  - with this heap of junk!"

**But you know what the problem with that is?**

**It isn't finished yet!**

- You can't judge it on first appearance,
  - or when they're midway through,
    - but when it's all finished...
      - it's like, "Oh...that's amazing!"

Because the designer had a better plan that we could have imagined.

## TRANSITION

And I think we often do this with the church.

We look around and say, "*What the heck is going on here?*"

And sometimes...rightly so...it might be a mess...but...

- the promise of scripture isn't...
  - that we'll understand all of what God is up to,
- the promise of scripture is...
  - that we'll love it when he's finished.

And that's where we're moving in Peter's letter.

You'll see this today.

- Peter moves from individual born-again Christians...
- to address the corporate body of Christ...the church.

And he doesn't call the church a FIXER UPPER...

No! He calls the church a **SLIDE SPIRITUAL HOUSE**

But I'm getting ahead of myself...

Let's get going. 1 Peter 2 starting in verse 1.

## 1 PETER 2:1-3

[1] So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. [2] Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—[3] if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

### EXPLAIN: BABIES

Now, these verses really bridge the end of chapter 1 to chapter 2.

- They overlap...so, remember:
  - When you are BORN AGAIN...
    - you are a baby...
    - a child...
  - and you are to long for
  - and feast on pure spiritual milk...
    - the gospel...
    - the Word of God...
  - that you may GROW UP.

This was essentially last week's message.

But now, Peter turns the corner.

Look at verse 4.

## 1 PETER 2:4-5

[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.

## EXPLAIN: LIVING STONE

So, there's the metaphor. God is building a SPIRITUAL HOUSE.

And in this metaphor...

- every person who comes to Jesus...
  - **THE LIVING STONE** who was rejected...
- become LIVING STONES themselves...
  - that are being built up as a SPIRITUAL HOUSE.

So, Peter is talking about the church!

- You're a living stone...
- I'm a living stone...
- Every Christian is a part...
  - of the SPIRITUAL HOUSE he's building!

And in verse 6, the metaphor continues...

### 1 PETER 2:6-8

[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.

## **EXPLAIN: CORNERSTONE**

Now, Peter quotes the prophet Isaiah, to bring this metaphor into focus.

In this metaphor, the church as a SPIRITUAL HOUSE,

- we are all living stones being built up...
- and Jesus Christ is the CORNERSTONE.

So, in ancient times,

- a CORNERSTONE was the first stone placed...
- in the foundation of a new building.

It was like the foundation of the foundation.

And two things to note about the CORNERSTONE.

- First, it needed to be TRUE...that is, perfectly chiseled.
  - All the angles had to be perfect
    - and square.
  - Because all the other stones of the foundation
  - would be laid according to the CORNERSTONE.
    - So, you want a jacked up foundation?
    - Get you a messed up CORNERSTONE.
  - It needed to be TRUE.
- Second, the cornerstone needed to be STRONG.
  - It was the only way you knew if the building was ok.
  - Without the CORNERSTONE,
    - there was no frame of reference
    - for everything else in the house.
  - See, you didn't want this thing to crack or crumble.
  - It needed to last if any meaningful repairs or corrections
    - were ever to be made to the building.

The CORNERSTONE needed to be TRUE and it needed to be STRONG.

## **APPLICATION: OTHER FOUNDATIONS**

And Christ is supposed to be the CORNERSTONE of the church.

- But there is a temptation
- to build the church on something
- other than the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

There are many other cornerstones...

- and this is where things can get screwy.

And might I posit to you that if the church looks like a FIXER UPPER...  
it might be because they've built on the wrong CORNERSTONE?

## **WORSHIP-CENTERED**

You can build a church:

- on highly experiential and passionate...
- WORSHIP experiences.

These churches tend to live or die...

based upon the Sunday morning gathering and its effects.

- And worship services aren't a bad thing...
- in fact, they are a very big deal.

They just aren't the CORNERSTONE.

## **MISSIONS-CENTERED**

You can build a church on a MISSIONS cause.

- These are missions focused churches
- where the MAIN THING for the church
  - is to care for the least...
  - and share with the lost.

And, again, so good!

- No one is arguing that missions are bad!

But they aren't the CORNERSTONE for the church.

## **COMMUNITY-CENTERED**

You can even build the church on COMMUNITY.

- Where your main focus
- is connecting people
- in tight groups...
  - where they can love and be loved.
  - Where they can "do life together".
  - Where belonging is the highest value.

And I love that you love one-another! I want you to have community!

But it's not the CORNERSTONE of the church!

## **APPLICATION**

Cause here's what can happen...

If you build a church on worship experiences as the CORNERSTONE...

- it can quickly become a production...
  - or a concert...
  - or an emotional experience...
- rather than a church.

If you build a church on missions causes as the CORNERSTONE...

- it can quickly become a non-profit...
  - or NGO...
  - or social justice cause...
- rather than a church.



And if you build a church on community as the CORNERSTONE...

- it can quickly become a social club...
  - or friend group...
  - or therapeutic support...
- rather than a church.

And the church

- isn't less than those things...
- no, it's far more!

Those CORNERSTONES aren't STRONG enough to hold up a church.

- So, if you are looking for a church right now,
  - or when you leave Fathom at some point,
- always try to figure out what the foundation is.

The CORNERSTONE of the church is Christ.

## TRANSITION

Now, that wasn't even the meat of our sermon.

What is the SPIRITUAL HOUSE actually supposed to look like?

Well, verse 9 lays it out.

## 1 PETER 2:9

[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.

So, there we get 4 descriptions of the church that I want us to drill into.

## EXPLAIN: CHOSEN RACE

First, you are a **SLIDE CHOSEN RACE**

Now, we've talked about identity a bunch in 1 Peter already, but just as way of reminder:

- if you are a Christian...your primary identity is Christian.
- You are a part of THAT race!
  - I'm not primarily an AMERICAN...I'm a Christian first.
  - I'm not primarily a MAN...male...I'm a Christian first.
  - I'm not primarily WHITE...
    - though I'm pretty white...
      - but first, I'm a Christian.

That's what Peter means by RACE...

- you are PRIMARILY a citizen of another place...
- you are a citizen of heaven.

## EXPLAIN: CHOSEN

But then he adds the adjective CHOSEN.

**You are a CHOSEN RACE.**

Now, an unbelievably important doctrine...

- is commonly known as the doctrine of election.

The Bible says that we are CHOSEN.

- God CHOSE us.

So, this is such unbelievably important theology:

- GOD CHOSE US FIRST.
  - Now, we each had to respond to the call...ok?

- In your conversion, you chose him, ok?
  - We do have a choice...
- but GOD CHOSE FIRST.

And this idea of CHOOSING doesn't just show up in the New Testament.

God's people, the Israelites, were elected as well...

And the question is always WHY?

- WHY did God choose us?
- WHY did God choose them?

And the Old Testament is filled with mysterious explanations...

- as to why God chose Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob...
- but one of my favorites is in Deuteronomy 7.

### **SLIDE DEUTERONOMY 7:6b–8a**

The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. [7] It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, [8] but it is because the LORD loves you...

It's like,

- *"Hey God, what was it about me that made us chosen?"*
- *Is it cause we're so good...or strong...*
  - *or incredibly good looking?"*

And God's like,

- *"Umm...there really wasn't anything about you."*
- *You didn't actually have that much going for you!"*

## ILLUSTRATION: MARRIAGE

Now, listen, that would NEVER work in...say...a marriage.

Can you imagine?

- Maryse and I go out on date night...
- and Maryse asks me:
  - *“What was it that caused you to fall in love with me?”*
    - You know, playing innocent,
    - but fishing for a compliment.

And I say,

- “Oh, well it wasn’t because you were beautiful...”
  - cause you weren’t.”
- “And it wasn’t because you were smart...”
  - cause you’re kinda dumb...
  - And gosh, our conversations were mind numbing!”

You see how this would go for me?

THAT WOULD NEVER WORK!

Now, Maryse and I have known each other for 20 years...

- and over that time...
- I do think I have come to love her in a way...
  - that is deeper than her beauty
  - and her intelligence.
- Like, if those things were taken away from her,
- my love wouldn’t change for her.

But that’s just not how things work in the beginning for humans.

There are things that ATTRACT us to CHOOSE one another.

## APPLICATION

BUT NOT WITH GOD!

- *“I didn’t choose Israel because they were great,*
- *or had such potential!*
- *No! I chose to love you...*
  - Did you see those last words in Deuteronomy?
- *because I love you.”*

That is a beautiful redundancy.

- It’s more akin to a fatherly love.
  - It doesn’t need...
  - nor can it give an explanation.
- It just is.
  - *I love you...because I love you.*

God chose us...because he loves us.

The church is a CHOSEN RACE.

## EXPLAIN: PRIESTHOOD

Next, you are a **SLIDE ROYAL PRIESTHOOD**

Now that is a loaded metaphor!

- In the church...we are all priests!
  - Call your Catholic Grandma today...
    - Tell her, “Pastor Chris told me I’m a priest!”
  - She’ll be thoroughly confused!

But the church is a PRIESTHOOD!

Now, in Israel’s Temple, there were priests.

And the job of the priests was to represent the people...to God.

- Priests came to the temple...
- and they made sacrifices to God...
- on behalf of the people.

They were representatives OF THE PEOPLE to God.

But you didn't just get to pick if you are a priest.

This isn't like a "what do you want to be when you grow up"

- where you can be an athlete,
- a cowboy,
- or a priest. Ok?

Priests HAD TO come from the tribe of Levi.

- From the descendants of Aaron.
  - You were born in the line of priests.

But now, in the church, we're all priests!

- This doctrine is known as the Priesthood of All Believers.
- That means YOU get to go to God ON BEHALF OF others.
  - You get to intercede for them...
    - we call that intercessory prayer...
      - praying for someone.
- You get to REPRESENT PEOPLE to God.

## **EXPLAIN: ROYAL**

So, we're a priesthood...but we're a ROYAL PRIESTHOOD.

Now, that's interesting!

- So, the priests came from the tribe of Levi...ok?
- But what tribe did the king come from?
  - Yeah...Judah.

And the kings weren't allowed to do the things that priests did.

- Kings didn't make sacrifices...
  - They didn't intercede...

Only twice in the Bible do we have records of kings making sacrifices.

- In 2 Chronicles 26 King Uzziah did,
  - and God struck him with leprosy until the day he died.
- The other we studied last year in 1 Samuel...remember?
  - Yeah, King Saul tried making a sacrifice...
  - and the kingdom was stripped from him.

So nobody in the Old Testament was ever both king and priest.

## **MELCHIZEDEK**

Well, that's not entirely true.

- There's this one bizarre guy named Melchizedek
  - in Genesis 14
- who obscurely shows up,
- and who I do not have time to go into this morning.

But besides that...

- king and priest were two offices you never combined,
- and wouldn't want to combine.

## **ILLUSTRATION: COMBINE**

It'd be like policeman and pastor.

You don't want to combine those offices.

- You confess to me...I pray for you.
- You confess to a cop...your in trouble.

And that's why you never want to combine king and priest.

- Because the king was the law upholder.
  - He was the judge.
  - He was about justice and truth.
- The priest, though, was a friend.
  - He was a counselor.
  - He was the one you'd come to when you messed up.

Whereas the priest represented the people to God.

The king represented God to the people.

- The king was the person of justice.
- The priest was the person of mercy.

And they never combined those offices...until Jesus!

Jesus is called, both:

- King of Kings...
- AND our Great High Priest!

And now, we are living stones,

- with Jesus as our cornerstone...
  - and therefore, we get to be ROYAL PRIESTS.

So we get to go to God on behalf of people...

- sharing grace...

AND we get to go to people on behalf of God...

- sharing truth.

The church is a place

- where the truth of the king
- and the grace of the priest
  - are merged into one.



## EXPLAIN: HOLY NATION

Third description of the church: we are a **SLIDE** HOLY NATION  
I won't spend much time here, cause we covered holiness two weeks ago.

But, what was the Hebrew word for holy?

- *kodesh*.
  - It means *cut away*.
- The church is a holy nation...
  - a different nation...
  - a set apart nation.

We're like a different nation...inside of this nation.

When people come into a church they should enter a new nation.

## ILLUSTRATION: EMBASSY

Think of the church like an embassy.

If you've been abroad you can find an American Embassy.

- An embassy represents one country in another country.
- It's actually considered a sovereign part of the home country.
  - They speak English there.
  - There are American citizens there.
  - The other nation has no say there.
- The embassy should be a representation of the country.

And the church is like an embassy of heaven.

- When you gather with the church,
- and it's like you are in another place.

It's A HOLY NATION.

## EXPLAIN: HIS POSSESSION

And finally, the forth description:

we are a people for **SLIDE HIS OWN POSSESSION**

Now, this is a strange, but beautiful phrase.

- We are God's possession.
- He is possessive of us.

The Bible often says that our God is a jealous God!

- He wants his church.
- We are his possession.
- He is a jealous God.

Now, he's not jealous OF us...ok?

- That'd be weird and different.
- We're not saying...
  - God is jealous OF us...
  - NO...God is jealous FOR us.

## ILLUSTRATION: MARRIAGE

And here's how I've always illustrated this:

- before I met my wife...I had been in other relationships...
- and she had dated other guys before she met me.

But at our wedding we made vows,

- declaring that for the rest of our lives
- we would "forsake all others."

Now, imagine what would happen if...

- Maryse just kept getting hit up by old crushes and boyfriends...
  - on Facebook and Instagram...
  - Just sliding into her DMs or whatever...

I would not like that. Why?

**Because all lovers are jealous.**

- Not jealous OF her...
  - Like, "I wish my ex's would DM me!"
  - No! That's dumb!

I'm jealous FOR her!

There is a healthy kind of jealousy that is birthed in love.

- I am jealous FOR her.
  - Because I love her.
- I am jealous FOR my daughter.
  - Because I love my daughter.

And if anyone or anything tries to turn them from my love...

- you would see an aggressive side of me...
- the Bible calls that...wrath...

## TRANSITION

Church, this is what we are supposed to see...

- when we look at the church.

We are...

- a CHOSEN RACE,
- a ROYAL PRIESTHOOD,
- a HOLY NATION,
- a PEOPLE FOR HIS OWN POSSESSION!

The church...the **SLIDE SPIRITUAL HOUSE**...is all these things!

Now, let's finish up with verse 10:

## 1 PETER 2:10

[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.

### EXPLAIN: HOSEA

In that last verse for this morning,

- Peter does something very interesting.

He alludes to a verse

- from the Old Testament prophet Hosea.

Now, Hosea is a fascinating book.

I'll just read for you Hosea 1, verse 2, and you'll see what I mean.

### SLIDE HOSEA 1:2

[2] When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, "Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the LORD."

### EXPLAIN: HOSEA

Now if you had told me 20 years ago when I became a Christian...

- that I was going to stand in front of a bunch of people
  - and use the word *whoredom* repeatedly.
- I would have said, "No way."
  - but here we are!

So just to paint the picture of what is going on, here's what just happened.

God says,

- *“Hosea, I want you to marry a prostitute*
- *and I want you to have children with this prostitute*
  - *her name is Gomer.”*
    - Beautiful name!
    - If you’re pregnant with a girl...
    - consider Gomer.

And Hosea and Gomer have kids.

- Their first daughter is named *“No Mercy”*...
  - and their son born after *No Mercy*
- is named *“Not My People.”*

You see our text?

- Once you were NOT A PEOPLE.
- Once you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY.

That’s what Peter is alluding to.

But God puts in Hosea’s heart...you have to hear this...

**a love for Gomer that mirrors God’s love for us.**

- This is not just a,
  - *“I hate this woman,*
  - *but I’ll marry her*
  - *because you’ve commanded me to, God...”*

No! God put it into Hosea’s heart...

- to love,
- to pursue,
- and to be ferociously committed to Gomer, the prostitute.

And despite his love,

- despite his romance,
- despite his care,
- despite him trying to help her flourish...

Gomer repeatedly cheated on him,

- she whored herself out to other men,
- and at one point in the book
  - actually becomes the property of another man.

Hosea then sells some of his possessions,

- and...seriously, y'all...
- he buys his wife and the mother of his children
  - back from another man.

That's gut wrenching!

And Peter's pointing back to Hosea.

And he's saying,

- *"That's you and that's me.*
  - *Once we weren't his people...*
  - *once we didn't have his mercy.*
- *Once we played the role of the whore...*
  - *BUT NOW you are God's people!*
  - *NOW you have received mercy!"*

He's building us into a **SLIDE W/PADS** SPIRITUAL HOUSE

And that should change everything!

## ENDING

So, how have you engaged with the church?

Do you see it more like a jacked up FIXER UPPER?

OR have you understood what Peter is saying:

- Listen, we've got a chance...
  - to be living stones...
  - to be a part of a spiritual, life-giving house...
- that will last forever.

This is Christ's Church!

This is what we've been called to!

- We've been chosen...
- to be royal priests...
  - who connect people to God...
- holy and set apart...
- ambassadors in his embassy...

To proclaim the excellencies of him who called us...

out of darkness and into his marvelous light.

- Where have you missed this?
- Where do you need to become this?

Oh, what a beautiful reality that is the Church!

Let's pray.

## RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – [fathomchurch.org/give](http://fathomchurch.org/give)
- PRAYER - [fathomchurch.org/prayer](http://fathomchurch.org/prayer)
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

### 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.



## RESOURCES CONSULTED:

- <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2023/03/28/how-the-pandemic-has-affected-attendance-at-u-s-religious-services/>
- Greear, J.D. *Who We Are, Where We Come from, and What We Do*.
- Jobes, Karen H.. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. 1 Peter.
- Keller, Tim. *Our Vocation*.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. The New American Commentary. 1, 2 Peter, Jude.