

Series: **Living Under Pressure** – week 8

CDOBC – beginning on 2/7/16

Today's Title: **"Picked for a Purpose"**

*April 10, 2016 ~ 1 Peter 2:4-10*

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OBJECTIVE: To remind believers of the purpose God has given them for life.

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Turn / tap to 1 Peter 2:4

This is week #8 in our series: *"Living Under Pressure"* ...a study of 1 & 2 Peter. Peter wrote these letters to the believers who were being persecuted for their faith in Christ and as a result had been scattered throughout the region of Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey). It is growing more difficult to live out your faith in Christ here in America...and I believe it will only get more difficult over the coming years.

Before we read God's Word...let's ask for His help.

*Prayer*

Salvation is not only for the forgiveness of your sins and your eternity in heaven. God has picked you for a purpose!

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."

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.” 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.”

I see 3 clear purposes in these verses...3 clear purposes for those who have put their faith in Christ.

**Purpose #1:**

**Join with other *believers* in a local church** vs. 4-5, 10

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.”

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.”

**The prominence and priority of Jesus:**

(Vs. 4a) “As you come to Him, the living Stone...” - the living Stone is Jesus - and Peter uses O.T. language and imagery to refer to Jesus.

Right away we see a vital truth for us to understand.

It is by coming to Jesus (“the living Stone”) we are made into a spiritual house.

It is not by coming to the church - we are made into a spiritual house.

Against O.T. imagery and belief - it is not by coming to the city of Jerusalem that you are made into a spiritual

house, and it is not by coming to the Temple and all its glorious stonework one is made into a spiritual house. It is only by coming to Jesus that you are made into a spiritual house.

In ancient times, whether you were a Jew in Israel or a Gentile living somewhere in the Roman Empire, you believed the temple was the place your god resided - or at least where the presence of your god could be experienced.

The temple of Baalbeck in modern day Lebanon...

In Rome, the great pantheon temple built for all the Roman gods...

The temple of Zeus in modern-day Turkey...

The temple of the one, true God in Jerusalem.

All of these special and sacred places were vital for one's religious beliefs and their religious life.

The temple was more important than the person.

The temple was the place where you experienced the presence of your god.

But Jesus changed all that.

When Jesus died, the temple veil which separated the presence of God from the ordinary worshiper was torn in two - destroying the separation between God and man - opening up the way to God.

Now...after Jesus's death and resurrection - you don't need a mediator to stand between you and God - you don't need a priest any longer to act as your mediator.

This is not a common or agreed upon belief in the world of religion even today.

Many faiths still hold up the church and coming to the church - becoming part of the church as the way to becoming part of the spiritual house of God.

Some will tell you their particular church / temple is the only way to find God and become part of God's spiritual house.

But Peter makes it very clear for us - it is only by coming to Jesus that we are built into a spiritual house.

**Hebrews 7:25**

“Therefore He (*Jesus*) is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them.”

The ‘church’ is not “the living Stone” - Jesus is.

**Jesus offers life-giving faith - not cold, dead religion.**

Jesus has been raised from the grave - so He is “living” - giving life to all who come to Him in faith.

**Each person either rejects or received Jesus.**

Jesus was “rejected by humans”, so it's not always popular to elevate Jesus above all other things.

**John 1:11**

“He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him.”

The decision you must make about Jesus must be an issue of truth and faith - not an issue of popularity and whether your family or friends come to Jesus. It's wonderful if they do! But *your* choice should not depend on *their* choice.

The majority of people throughout history have rejected Jesus - but there is a sizable minority who has received Him.

**John 1:12**

“Yet to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God...”

God chose Jesus - and considered Him “precious”, a Greek term which means ‘*costly, highly prized, honorable, rare*’.

**The Christian life is in community - not isolation.**

In the Greek the grammar is plural, which indicates Peter is telling us God is calling people (plural) to Jesus - and together, we join into 1 spiritual house - the Church.

***We must join with other believers in a local church.***

Saying ‘yes’ to Jesus is not meant to be a solitary existence. Coming to Jesus brings us into community and connection with other Christians - and together, we are built into 1 spiritual house.

The N.T. knows nothing of isolated or *Lone Ranger* Christians.

When you come to faith in Jesus, you receive His life - the life of God in you.

You become “a living stone”. Jesus is the cornerstone - and we are stones in the spiritual building which God is creating. When you put your faith in Jesus, you are ‘born again’ - ‘renewed’ - ‘regenerated’ - ‘reconciled’ - ‘justified’ - all of these spiritual realities point to the life of Christ in you!

**John 17:21, 23**

“...that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me.”

“...I in them and You in Me -- so that they may be brought to complete unity.”

Vs. 10 adds to this truth.

Before coming to Jesus you were not included in a group - but now you are - you are now “the people of God”. Before coming to Jesus you “had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

Not only does this give details of great changes for the Christian, but coming to Jesus means you become part of something bigger than yourself - bigger than your own life - you become a key part of God’s “spiritual house”.

**Coming to Jesus also means you are secure in your new life.**

The “spiritual house” God is building with Jesus as the “living” cornerstone will stand forever. It is a safe house - and nothing will ever take you away from Him.

**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.” (quote from Isaiah 28:16)

Your place in God’s family - your place in His “spiritual house” - your salvation - your new life in Christ - your eternity in heaven - is secure.

Jesus will not disappoint you when you come to Him!  
When you stand before God - you will not be put to shame - Jesus has taken all your shame with Him to the cross!

**Purpose #1:** When we come to Jesus, we join with other believers in the local church.

**Purpose #2:**

**Minister with other believers in *spiritual service*** vs. 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.”

This is another radical departure not only from Judaism and Mosaic Law - but from the religions of the world. Even today - in the Roman Catholic church and some other Christian denominations - there are priests who

hold a special place as a mediator between God and believer.

**1 Timothy 2:5**

“For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus...”

Jesus broke down the barriers which separated the holy God from unholy people. The only ‘barrier’ that still exists is faith / belief - which each person must choose. When you put your faith in Jesus, you become a “living stone” - part of the spiritual house of God.

**You become a member of the “holy priesthood”.**

This is why believers don’t need a mediator - they have the mediator in them - they have been eternally united with the mediator - Jesus Christ.

To be a member of the “holy priesthood” carries with it not only the expectation of holiness, but the spiritual service of the priesthood. Like I said in the beginning - your salvation is not only for the forgiveness of your sins - or for your eternity in heaven - God has picked you for a purpose - and part of that purpose is for you to minister to other believers in “spiritual service”.

Like the Levitical priesthood of the O.T., the “holy priesthood” of believers in Jesus have been:

- Sovereignly chosen by God (1 Peter 1:1)
- Cleansed of our sins (John 13:8)



- Clothed in righteousness for our priestly service (1 Cor. 1:30)
- Anointed by the Holy Spirit into the family of God (Acts 1:5)
- Called and prepared for service (Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 2:10)
- Called to daily obedience of His commands (Eph. 5:8-10; 1 Peter 2:1).

It's important to realize the primary purpose for a priest is not their preparation and qualifications - but their ministry - which Peter brings our focus to when he says “offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

This means everything we do each and every day should be acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Meaning - we are never *‘off the clock’* spiritually or in regard to our faith. We don't *‘do church’* - and then *‘do life’* separately.

- We “offer (y)our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God...” (Rom 12:1)
- We offer God our praise and worship - not just on Sundays in a church service - but each day.
- We serve God by doing good works (Eph. 2:10; Heb. 13:16).
- We serve God through our prayers.

- We serve God by reaching people for Christ - by living out and sharing the Gospel message - which brings us to purpose #3:

**Purpose #3:**

**Together we preach ("declare") **Jesus and His salvation** vs. 9**

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."

Here's a question for you to consider...

Are you here today - are you part of this church because you like the services - you like the style and 'feel' of the services - or are you here today because you realize the mission we are called to carry out as a local group of believers?

Are you here because your preferences are satisfied...

Or...

Are you here to be 'on-mission' with other believers?

Look at Peter's words here...

He first hits 4 great points about your new reality in Jesus:

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession..."

What a great identity and transformation which takes place at the moment of your salvation - when you are 'born again' by your faith in Christ.

But notice...your new identity has a purpose!

“...that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.”

When you get saved - when you put your faith in Jesus - your sins are forgiven - your eternal destiny in heaven is secure - but your new life in Christ has a purpose in this life right now!

The mission God calls us to is to preach / declare / tell others about the light of Jesus which has brought us out of the darkness of our sin.

In the bible, darkness is a symbol and representation of evil and sin - of being lost and far away from God.

Light is used as a symbol and representation of good - of holiness - of God - of Jesus as the *‘Light of the world’*. (1 John 1:5-7; 2:9-11)

**Matthew 4:16 - speaking of people who would see Jesus - quotes Isaiah 9:1-2**  
“...the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.”

People who have not “come to the living Stone” - they have not come to Jesus - they are in spiritual darkness. They are lost - without hope - bound by their sins.

But those who have “come to the living Stone” - those of us who have faith in Jesus have been reborn - we have a new identity - and we have a mission - a purpose which God has picked us to fulfill: To “declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.”

God has equipped us to fulfill this purpose:

**Acts 1:8**

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

The most selfish thing we could ever do is keep this light to ourselves - to hide the light of Christ and use it only for our joy.

**Matthew 5:14-16**

“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

So...are you here in this church because it is pleasing to you - or are you willing to be ‘on mission’ and bring the light of Christ to a dark and lost world?

Don’t answer this without counting the cost.

Living on mission is not without it’s difficulties.

Satan loves it when Christians - when churches are concerned and occupied about issues of preference.

He celebrates a church that is inwardly focused on spending all it’s energy on what happens inside it’s four walls.

But when a believer - and when a church begins to look outside itself - and begins to take the light of the Gospel to the world - get ready for battle!

When we penetrate darkness with the light of Christ - we will have 'push-back'.

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," (Psalm 118:22) 8 and, "A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." (Isaiah 8:14)

They stumble because they disobey the message - which is also what they were destined for. (The Message: "they refuse to obey, just as predicted.")

We love Jesus - we look at Jesus and He is "precious" to us - we honor Him and worship Him.

But unbelievers don't think or feel the same way at all. Unbelievers will reject our attempts at sharing the Gospel with them.

But remember - if they reject your preaching / declaring - they are rejecting Jesus - not you.

They are tripping over the truth because they are disobedient and sinful - "They stumble because they disobey the message..."

It will always come down to:

*'What do they think about Jesus?'*

*'What do they do with Jesus?'*

### **Apply it...**

#### **Purpose #1:**

Join with other believers in a local church vs. 4-5, 10

Attend worship on a regular basis

Don't stay at home and watch a service on TV or listen to a podcast and think you have 'done church'.

Join a small group or SS class

Contact the office - fill out a connection card - go to the Connection Table.

Fellowship with other believers

Invite them to lunch after church - arrange to get together during the week - find others with similar hobbies / interests

Become a member of CDOBC

Welcome Class on 4/20 - RSVP with the church office

**Purpose #2:**

Minister with other believers in spiritual service vs. 5

Spiritual gift test - [www.cdobaptist.org](http://www.cdobaptist.org)

Children's Ministry - see card in bulletin

Ushers / Greeters / tech / instrumentalist / singers / small groups / youth ministry

**Purpose #3:**

Together we preach ("declare") Jesus and His salvation vs. 9

Circles focus

Church mission - *Reach people for Christ*

Invite cards