

HOPEFULLY

(Standing firm in the hope and encouragement of the Grace of God)

Lesson Four: *A Stone Laid in Zion*

1 Peter 2:4-10

Introduction

Existentialism is a mid-twentieth century philosophy which says that we are free to choose our own identity. It says that because we exist with no predetermined essence or purpose, therefore, we can create our own identity.

Our culture believes that we have the power of self-definition, as should be obvious to all of us.

Peter says that philosophy is dead wrong, that we exist for a purpose and that our actions should follow that identity. So, he is going to talk about who we are and what we are as believers in Christ. In the rest of the Book, he will tell us that our activities should correspond to our identity. "He will tell us to act like we've been born again.

WHO ARE WE?

A. Living Stones in the Temple of God. (v.4)

1. We come to Jesus, who is like a living stone rejected by men but chosen by God and we are living stones being built up into a spiritual house.
2. He is using the Old Testament Temple as an example of a spiritual reality.
3. The temple he refers to was irrevocably torn down. Why?
4. Because we are the living stones built on the Cornerstone of Christ. The original temple was only a shadow, and we are what God always had in mind. A Kingdom of priests.
5. This is our identity. We were made for this. Our fundamental purpose is to dwell with God.

B. A Holy, Royal Priesthood! (v.4)

1. This language takes us back to Exodus 19:6 and forward to Revelation 1:6 and 5:10, where God tells us that we are a kingdom of Priests. That is what He is making us.
2. Peter reminds us of the priestly function which gave them special access to temple where the presence of God was.

3. Now, he tells us that had done what He always said He would do. He has made us all priests which give all of us access to priestly functions.
4. But the world is constantly trying to sell us inside access into some kind of priesthood.
5. Peter says we don't need that.

C. A Chosen Race, and Holy Nation.

1. This one would shock the Jewish people of Peter's time.
2. Peter looks Gentiles in the eye and says, ***"Through Christ, you are a chosen race, a holy nation."***
3. You are the people of God. He rescued you from slavery at the cost of the Lamb's blood.
4. ***"He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his Beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."***
Colossians 1:13
5. We are chosen for His good pleasure, to prove His great redeeming glory.

D. A People for God's Own Possession.

1. That is who we are and what we are for – to be possessed by God. To belong to Him.
2. Humans long to belong.
3. God says, ***"You are mine. You are my possession – a people made for me!"***

AT THE CENTER OF THIS TEXT!

- A. Peter leaves a big gap between faith and unbelief.
 1. The truth is this passage is not so much about who we are, as it is about who Jesus is.
 2. We can't begin to build a Christian identity without first getting straight about who Jesus is.
- B. In Matthew 21, Jesus enters the Temple, where he is confronted by the chief priests and elders of Israel.

1. Part of His response is to tell a series of parables. One of these is the Parable of the Two Son.
 2. In verses 33-46 He talks about how Israel rejected the **chief Cornerstone**.
 3. Peter was standing there, listening, and now after the crucifixion and the resurrection, he grabs onto the same point Jesus was making, to show us that it stills stands today.
 4. He is pointing out this gap between faith and unbelief.
- C. The Cornerstone was the first one laid and everything else is built from it.
1. Jesus is like that cornerstone.
 2. We cannot build on any other cornerstone without it collapsing.
 3. People try to build their identity on all kinds of alternatives.

Conclusion

The reason Peter can look us in the eye and say, "***Chosen Race! Royal Priesthood! House of God! Holy Nation!***", Is because we are identified with, built on, and found in Jesus Christ.

These identities are same as that of Jesus. He is the Cornerstone of the true Temple. He is the irreplaceable High Priest – who is **also our King**. This could not happen in the Old Testament.

The church is God's possessed people.