

- By the Gospel, we've **tasted that the Lord is good** – His faithfulness and mercy and grace ... **WE BELIEVE THE GOSPEL ... WE REST IN THE GOSPEL ... WE APPLY THE GOSPEL ... OUR NEW RHYTHM** ... Part of how we grow up ... To desire the nourishing word of God – the Gospel message in particular, is to desire the fullness of Jesus – all that He is, not just the things He gives us ... **1:21; Calvin quote** ... We can't experience the full blessing of what it means to be saved apart from the One who makes new birth even possible ... Meaning, Jesus is not a vending machine – we can't take what we want, when we want it, and go back only when hungry ... We must understand, it's only in our being joined to Him – united with Him, that we fully experience what it means to be born-again and a child of God
  - Peter doesn't command us to **"come to Jesus;" HE ASSUMES WE ARE COMING TO HIM** ... The word is used in the OT when referring to the priests coming before the Lord when offering sacrifices ... Word that speaks of participation and attachment ... We come to Him because we need Him, and because we're joined to Him ... In being united with Jesus, **HIS STATUS AND MERIT IS OUR OWN** ... Holy Spirit is our guarantee (Rm8:15-17; Ep1:13-14; Ts3:4-7; 2Cr1:22, 5:1-9) ... For our status to change means His status must change ... **WHY OUR IDENTITY AND POSITION IN HIM ARE SECURE** (v6, 9-10) ... Who He is, is who we are ... How He was treated is how we'll be treated ... Thus, how He responded is how we should be responding – no matter the situation we're facing (good/bad, easy/hard)
- **JESUS IS THE LIVING STONE** – He is not lifeless, perishable, meaningless, unnecessary ... He is the very foundation of all that God purposes to be ... An active foundation for all time ... An immovable and perfect and eternal foundation on which all is built upon ... A chosen and honored foundation, set in place according to the purpose and will of God ... **JESUS IS THE CORNERSTONE** – the first stone laid upon the foundation, by which all the other stones are aligned and held together ... **THE VERY CORNER / HEAD STONE** – most important to a building's stability and completeness
  - **IN OUR UNION WITH CHRIST, WE BECOME LIVING STONES THAT ARE MEANT TO REFLECT HIS LIKENESS, NOT OUR OWN** ... We aren't the architect or engineer – we're the building ... He is the Builder of the House – the Church (Mt16:18; Ep2:19-22) ... **THIS PROJECT IS CONTINUOUS, AND INVOLVES OUR PARTICIPATION** – allowing the Spirit and word to work in and thru
  - **SPIRITUAL HOUSE** – The Temple: housed His presence; represented His nearness; functioned in His likeness ... Singular stresses the unity of the Church – in Christ and with one another ... A Lego is one by itself, but it's not created to remain by itself ... A Lego was designed to be used in conjunction with other Legos ... Only when it's a part of something is it really functioning as intended
  - **HOLY PRIESTHOOD** – served God and the people ... *spoke to people about God; spoke to God about people* ... OT – regulated to one tribe ... NT – all people ... One of the clearest passages (v4-10) that identifies who the Church is and what the Church does ... As Paul does elsewhere, so Peter indicates a reality that was not understood previously: within the nation of Israel, there's always been a remnant (spiritual) people of God kept secure as His own ... There is not two people, or two different covenants – one with Israel and one with the Church ... Only one people and one covenant rooted in Jesus Christ (Peter uses language from Ex19:5-6; Is43:20-21, 61:6)
- **ALL AGREE THAT THE CHURCH IS NOT HOW IT SHOULD BE** ... People have been hurt by churches and Christians, and this needs to be worked through as the Spirit leads ... Still, that's not a legitimate excuse to not attend church or to not become a Christian ... Likewise, living in a hostile world doesn't give Christians permission to be hostile to those in the world ... The culture around us is not supposed to be our influencer ... Church, don't allow yourself to be swept up by the chaotic rhetoric of culture and government and media ... **YOU CAN BE INVOLVED WITHOUT IMITATING THEIR LIKENESS**
- **SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES** speak of our words and actions ... Done to **HONOR GOD** and through the **GRACE/POWER OF JESUS** ... As the end nears, the rejection of Christ will only increase, as people continue to stumble over Christ and their need for Him ... Let's do all we can to stop as many as we can ... **LET'S BE A CHURCH WHO REVEALS JESUS EVERYWHERE**