

1 Peter 2:2-10

Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation— if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture:

‘See, I am laying in Zion a stone,

a cornerstone chosen and precious;

and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.’

To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe,

‘The stone that the builders rejected

has become the very head of the corner’,

and

‘A stone that makes them stumble,

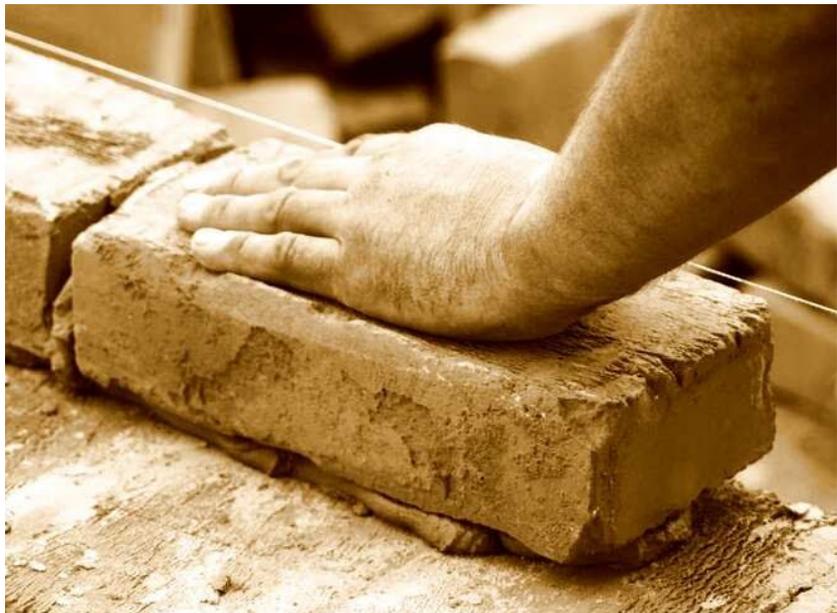
and a rock that makes them fall.’

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

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.

Sermon

There's a Master Stone Mason who has plans to build up a house. It's a spiritual house, meant to be a home for the people of God. It's a sanctuary, a place to belong, and a shelter from the storm. The Mason has drawn out the plans, picked the site, and laid out the lines that will guide the construction. The Mason has chosen the stones and gathered them together. And each stone is precious and useful to the Mason. Each one is chosen by hand with purpose and value for what the Mason plans to build. Without any one of those stones, the house wouldn't turn out the same. It would be changed and different from the house the Mason desires.

The Master Mason has called some builders to help carry out the plans and build up the house. Yet, as they pick up the stones, they begin to think their judgment is better than the Master Mason's. They start to pick and choose which ones they think are worthy of being included in the house, and which ones are not. As they carry those stones to where the plans call for them to be placed, they begin to think that they should make their own decisions about where each stone belongs. And they start a pile of stones that don't have the right shape, or the right weight, or the right color. And into the pile they throw all those stones that they think don't fit in to the house that they've been called to build.

And the Mason watches all of this in silence.

But before those builders are finished with their pile, before they've actually begun to build, he walks over to the pile of the stones that have



been judged not good enough. He digs into the pile of outcasts to find the one that got the most criticism, the most humiliation, the one the builders least wanted in their house. And he picks it up. And before they can say a word, that master stone mason takes that most rejected stone over to the corner of where the house has been laid out to stand. And he places that outcast stone down, as the first stone in the house. This rejected stone will be the cornerstone. Every other stone must now be judged only by how well it can align with this cornerstone, by how well it can connect with this stone that the builders rejected.

Still we think that we can pick and choose who belongs in our church or our community. Still we think that we get to decide who has value and who is expendable. Still we think that decision is in our hands.

But it's not. It never was and it never will be.

The Bible and our faith insist that it is not those who have been called to do the building who get to judge the stones. Only God can do that. And God has purposely chosen a poor outsider, from a place where nothing good was thought to come, someone the builders saw as a rule-breaker who was lawfully executed by the government and the church working together. God has chosen the one that everyone else condemned and rejected, abandoned and let die. And God called Him Chosen and Precious. In Christ, God showed us what God values. And God assures us that anyone who aligns their lives with his will never be put to shame.

So, if the people of this world tell you that you don't belong, that you're not wanted, that you don't fit. If they say that your life doesn't matter, that they don't want you in their house:

You just remember, who the Master Mason is.

You just remember, who God chose to be the cornerstone of this great house.

And know that YOU are chosen and precious in God's sight as well, just like every other stone that God has chosen. Because it is only when we allow ourselves to be built together into the Spiritual house that God has planned, making sacrifices for each other alongside every other living stone that God loves, only then will we become that royal priesthood that God has dreamed of, that holy nation that God desires.

Let it be so, O Lord. Amen.

This sermon was first shared with Aurora First Presbyterian Church, by Rev. Doug Friesema. To receive future communications from the church, please contact:

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