

A LIVING STONE - 1 PETER 2

Vs. 1-3:

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

- Malice - a mean-spirited or vicious attitude or disposition, malice, ill-will, malignity.
- Why such attitudes? Could the root problem be pride? How can we justify pride? If you think about it - this is what causes most division. Such spirits can find a way to justify "legitimate" problems. How easy the Lord could expose us - revealing the true meaning behind so many conflicts.
- It's so refreshing when we see others sincerely seek for truth. Sincerely. Not looking to prove their own thoughts or feelings, but to understand what God wants. Such people truly care about God's law and therefore sincerely care about others - counting them more significant. There is a maturity about them. God's way is good. Have you tasted it? Man's way leaves a bad taste in the mouth.
- We tend to be consumed with our own desires rather than the word of God! Taken from **Psalm 34:8**. Context of Psalm is when David fled from Saul and made his way into Philistine territory, but was found out. He then had to flee and hid in the cave of Adullam. In this Psalm he praises God for deliverance and protection while also warning against evil speech and deeds.

Vs. 4-8:

As you come to Him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, 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. 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." 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," and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

- Our living stone is the reason, the cornerstone, or our living hope.
- He's invited us to be a part of this spiritual house as spiritual priests.
- Jesus doesn't play the same role in everyone's life, does He? To us He's the standard - our authority figure who gives us hope and stability. To others He's someone who gets in the way. He disrupts their own plans and desires. His message is offensive and silly. They, ultimately, do not want to listen to Him. We can sometimes complicate this message. It's not always that difficult.
- Taken from **Isaiah 28:16**. God has rebuked His people and prophets who mock His word - they find it to be simplistic, redundant and mind-numbing. So, God promises to bring about a stone who would be used as their measure. A blessing to those who believe, but terror for those who do not.
- Taken from **Psalm 118:22** and **Isaiah 8:14**, but read vs. **11-20**. They stumble because they don't listen to God's word. Some people are just destined for this end.
- I can't help but wonder if Peter had in mind, at any point writing this letter, Christ's name for him: rock.

Vs. 9-12:

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. 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. Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

- **Israel was a prized possession, holy nation and royal priesthood** - **Exodus 19:3-6**, The Lord called to him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel."
- **Israel lost that identity at one point, but it would be restored** - **Hosea 1:6-11** She conceived again and bore a daughter. And the Lord said to him, "Call her name No Mercy, for I will no more have mercy on the house of Israel, to forgive them at all. But I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the Lord their God. I will not save them by bow or by sword or by war or by horses or by horsemen." When she had weaned No Mercy, she conceived and bore a son. And the Lord said, "Call his name Not My People, for you are not My people, and I am not your God. Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' it shall be said to them, 'Children of the living God.' And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head. And they shall go up from the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel. Say to your brothers, 'You are My people,' and to your sisters, 'You have received mercy.'" *Paul also makes this connection in Romans 9:25-26.*
- It's beautiful to have a connection to Israel in that way. So beautiful, it almost makes you want to tell others about the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into the light. I was once separated from the Father without hope. Then Jesus reconciled me to Him. Now I'm "His people." Now I "Have Mercy."
- Now I live like it. Hard to bring people to Christ when you're acting like the world. As one man put it, "It's a 350 pound man trying to persuade you to lose weight." People will watch you like a hawk - waiting to find something to accuse you of in order to justify their own wrongdoing. Live holy so that God may be glorified. This "day of visitation" my reference God's final judgment. Or, it may reference the day of mercy that comes to people when they meet you and hear of God's goodness.

Vs. 13-17:

Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

- I won't spend as much time on this because we considered this topic not long ago.
- This is about submission. It's about honoring God. It's about learning to trust in Him. Think Peter ever looked back to cutting on the servant's ear? Peter felt very free when with Christ, but it wasn't God's will.

Vs. 18-20:

Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.

- We so appreciate those who suffer for wrongdoing, learn from their mistakes, and repent. However, there's no credit for being punished when you do wrong. But, when you do what is right, yet you're punished, and you still endure - that's a gracious thing to God.
- We can't truly appreciate this in our country today, but this is what Christianity is made up of and what Christians need to remember when they think things are getting hard.

Vs. 21-25:

For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in His steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth. When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly. He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

- Jesus. All eyes are on Him. Ultimately, this is the point, the goal and our anchor. Why is it fair for Christ to be called to such a life, but not us? He did it with grace, did He not?
- How personal would a passage like this be to Peter. Seeing first hand what happened to Jesus as he followed at a distance. Understanding that suffering must come to him as well: [John 21:17-19](#), He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" and he said to Him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep. Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go." (This He said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this He said to him, "**Follow Me.**"