

## 1 Peter 2:1-10

### On Christ The Solid Rock We Stand

#### Introduction

Well Peter in tonight's passage takes us on the building site of the gospel **doesn't he...** He distributes hardhats and high visibility shirts and he takes us on this guided tour, of the construction of the greatest temple ever built!

God Himself like the great Master Builder is fashioning stones, and building walls, and shaping priests that will fit together as this temple rises on the earth for His sovereign glory!

And so Peter weaves together everything he learned from Christ who promised **to build and to bless** His church in Matthew 16 – who promised to **keep and preserve** His Saints in John 10 – and who promised that although Christians **will suffer** in this life that the gates of hell **CANNOT PREVAIL** against this **living and breathing** organism of grace – call the church!

#### Recap

Now we've been going through the letter of 1<sup>st</sup> Peter for several weeks, and **almost every week** Han has rightly sought to remind us of:

*The living and abiding hope we have in a **hostile and perilous** world!*

This letter was written **just a short time** before the first great persecution **of Nero in 64 A.D.**

And we've seen that Peter (all throughout the letter) is preparing these Christians to suffer!

He is preparing them to suffer **by telling them to remember!!!**

This is what Peter says **all throughout** the first chapter:

Remember your **calling** in verses 1 & 2 – how you are elect exiles called to **this great obedience of faith** through the precious blood of Jesus Christ!

Remember your **salvation** in verses 3 to 12 – how you have been **born again** to a new and living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!

And remember your **duty** in verses 13 to 25 – how you are to conduct yourselves during your time of exile in holiness...

## Chapter 2

And so now **as we come** to our passage in chapter 2 verse 1 Peter is continuing this theme – by telling us to remember:

**Our living hope through a living identity built upon the living stone! X2**

So this section of 1<sup>st</sup> Peter is all about **knowing** and **living**:

Knowing **who we are** and living **in light** of that knowledge!

## Main point

And so the main point that we're going to see as we come to our passage in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2 is that:

*Clinging to Christ when life gets hard will never lead to shame!*

## Outline

The passage roughly breaks up into 3 main sections:

Christ our food (1-3)

Christ our Rock (4-8)

Christ our Message (9-10)

## 1 Peter 2

So 1<sup>st</sup> Peter chapter 2 beginning at verse 1 – Peter writes:

*Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all slander. <sup>2</sup> Like newborn infants, desire the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow up into your salvation, <sup>3</sup> if **you have tasted that the Lord is good...***

### **Opening Gambit**

One of the things that makes Peter's letters so **uniquely distinct** is his **ability** to rapidly swing from **indicatives to imperatives** – from **reality to commandments** – from **knowing to doing** — and then (almost without any warning) back again!

One minute we're **soaring on the clouds of justification & redemption**, celebrating the glorious triumphs of Jesus and the cross – **and then all of a sudden** we're hurdling-down toward some of **the most demanding** New Testament instructions found throughout all of Scripture!

It's one of **Peter's unique ways** of keeping us on our toes – and this passage is **a really good example** of Peter doing just that!

Having just celebrated their conversion to Christ, having just celebrated the fact of being born again to a new and living hope (chapter 1:23):

It is necessary (says Peter) to live out the ramifications of that new birth!

That in light of the fact that you have *tasted* that the Lord is good... in light of the fact that you have come to the living and abiding stone (verse 4); you must put to **death every earthly sin** that is **prone to destroying** the community of believers!

These sins that destroy the Christian community – sins that oppose the Christian Gospel:

You must be killing them before they start killing you –& killing everyone around you **in the church!**

See Peter knows that these believers, are going through some of the most difficult trials they're ever going to face...and Peter is urging them to make the Church of God the one place where weary and worn pilgrims **can come to find rest!**

And so he lists these community sins that are prone to destroying the community of faith:

Because Peter wants us to live in light of the gospel...

And notice! You **don't** set those things aside **in order to become** a Christian – you set those things aside **because you are a Christian: that as newborn believers put these things to death...**

### **Infants**

*And (Peter says) that as newborn infants, we must also desire the pure spiritual milk...*

### **Scarlet**

Now...I've recently become a father of 2 precious children (Isaiah & Scarlet)...**2 kids under 3...highly recommend – great for sanctification!**

But one of the things you notice when a newborn is in the home is that:

You **don't need** to teach a newborn to desire milk!

You don't teach a newborn to desire sustenance and vitality:

**The Newborn already knows what it needs!**

Infants already have this innate desire (**because of their nature**) to crave the milk **they know they need!**

And have you ever **tried to calm a newborn** when it desires its mother's milk – because **there is nothing** you can do to quench that desire than to give it what it wants!

In fact, the Greek word **being used** is even more emphatic: as Peter uses the word *Epi-thu-may* which literally means **to lust – lust after the pure spiritual milk of the word!**

So Peter uses this violent (almost offensive) language to get across his point!

As **new-born infants** lust and suck after their mother's milk (as if their lives depended on it; which it does) – so too Christians have a strict diet that they must crave as new born believers in Christ!

Every Christian must have a strict and rigorous diet of:

### Christ and the Word! X2

Because Peter says that's how you grow up in holiness – that's how you grow up in salvation!

#### **Petrine Holiness**

And so it's here that we begin to see the *Petrine economy* (Peter's structure) for real Christian Holiness – Peter's structure **for Christians** wanting to **grow in holiness** is found in the fact that **the more we:**

Seek the word – read the word – eat the word – and crave the word – the more we live the word!

Once **we taste** that the Lord is good – once we taste the spiritual nourishment of the Gospel – then **we will want** to come to Jesus **for more spiritual milk!**

That's the economy Peter establishes:

The more we drink; the more we crave – the more we crave; the more we put to death!  
Psalm 119:11:

*I have stored up your word in my heart so that I may not sin against you...*

The Psalmist is clear that the way we keep our lives from sin:

Is by guarding it **through** to the Word!

**So that** when temptation comes – & when the devil strikes – you are able **by the Spirit** to **fight your sin** through the power of the word and the Spirit of holiness!

In fact, I don't think there can be **any more of a reliable guide** to knowing where we are spiritually, than to measure our desire for the Word!

That **if you are NOT** seeking the Word – and craving the Word – and drinking the word (as a newborn infant) then **you are in grave spiritual danger** in your Christian walk!

Because according to Peter the **very first indication** of true Christian vitality is to be hooked on the Word!

### **Application #1**

And **this is why it matters** friends, whether or not you and I show up to Church on a Sunday morning to fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ!

**This is why it matters** whether or not you are coming to this church yet withholding **membership** and submission to the elders and members of this church – getting the benefits without actually putting in the effort!

**This is why it matters** whether or not you are paying attention to the word that is preached, prayed, read, and sung on a Sunday morning and mid-week groups!

Because all of it is a guide to knowing whether or not you have been **truly born again** with new desires in Christ!

So application point number #1:

Desire the Word – Crave the Word – eat the Word – and be who you are called to be!

### **Rest in the Rock**

Secondly – Peter turns from Christ our food to:

*Christ our Rock X2*

And this is **verses 4 to 8** – Peter says:

*As you come to Him, a living stone—rejected by people but chosen and honoured by God—<sup>5</sup> you yourselves, as living stones, a spiritual house, are being built to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup> For it stands in Scripture: **See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and honoured cornerstone, and the one who believes in Him will never be put to shame.** <sup>7</sup> So honour will come to you who believe; but for the unbelieving, **The stone that the builders rejected— this one has become the cornerstone,**<sup>8</sup> and **A stone to stumble over, and a rock to trip over.** They stumble because they disobey the word; they were destined for this...*

### **Coming to Him**

And so after using this metaphor of tasting and experiencing the beginning of the Christian life – **Peter then moves to this image** of a Stone...

And it's that Greek word *Lithos* in:

In verse 4 & verse 5!

And again *stone* in verse 6 & 7!

And again in verse 8 – *a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence!*

This word repeatedly *used* by Peter to describe Christ as a solid rock – a fountain and stone upon which **our security & our hope** in the midst of suffering is built!

Christ Jesus the trustworthy Captain of our affections!

He is the one that we are being built upon!

### **Living Stone**

Christ is that great pillar from which the Christian church was **birthed and established** – the place upon which our security and safety **must rest!**

But it's interesting that Peter uses this idea of:

A Living Stone! – A living hope – A living Saviour!

And in that word living we start to understand the preeminence of **Christ being alive!!!**

That this is **NOT** some marble-hewn god of the nations, that is dead and uninviting in nature – but this is Christ Jesus the **living** stone – Christ Jesus the **living** hope!

See it was NOT enough for Peter to simply call Christ a rock – which so much of the Old Testament would do in many places – but Peter needed to emphasize that **this rock was alive!**

See Peter was affected by what we call **the doctrine of the resurrection** – that without the fact that Jesus is alive you and I are still dead in our sins!

Without the doctrine of the resurrection Peter understands that the New Testament Church **cannot exist – with a dead Saviour!**

### **We Ourselves**

And because of that says Peter *we too **as living stones** are being built up **into Him** as a holy temple!*

And it's here that we start to see Peter's affection **for NOT just** the doctrine of the resurrection but the doctrine of **our union with Christ!**

That we are becoming like the one we behold – we are becoming like the Stone we are being built upon...

And if Jesus is chosen and precious (in the sight of God) then we too are chosen and precious **in Him!**

And so the basis of our relationship with God is based upon Jesus and NOT our good works – based upon Jesus and NOT our ability to make ourselves precious in His sight...

But we are chosen and precious in Him – and we are being built up **NOT JUST** as living stones – but into a holy **temple** of Priests!

### 3 Great Pillars

Now perhaps you're still waking up on a Sunday night here at Church **and you don't realize** just how offensive **Peter is being here...**

But see in the **rich and extensive** history of the Jewish nation – there were really **3 main icons** that distinguished Israel from **all the other nations** here on the earth!

**3 main things** that identified the people of God and gave them their status in the Scriptures:

#### 1. LAND

Firstly the people of God had the **land**; in the Jewish Old Testament, Israel was promised that they would inherit a land given by God which they could cultivate and establish on the earth in order to serve, love, obey, and praise God!

#### 2. LAW

Secondly the Jewish people had The **Law**: The Israelites we're given the Law of God in order for them to be salt and light **to all the other surrounding** nations living in darkness...

And this law would establish the unique way of life that would cultivate human flourishing and human dignity here on the earth...

#### 3. TEMPLE

And then third – (and perhaps **most importantly**) they had The **Temple**... The Jewish temple was seen to be the very dwelling place of almighty God!!!

It was there in the Temple where Yahweh; the God Abraham, Isaac & Jacob would come down to earth and dwell in the very midst of His people in order to display His Holy presence to the earth!

The Temple defined the Jewish people! The Temple of God binds the Jewish people to God! The Temple identified Israel as the chosen people of God!

And now here comes Peter?!?! This ethnic Jew; this common fisherman; telling these Christians in Asia Minor (a majoratively Gentile-Pagan community) – that they are:

**Not just** able to see the Temple!!! **Not just** able to enter the temple!!!

But. That. They. **Are!!!!** The temple of God themselves!!!

**You go to Christ**

Peter says: You **don't go** to a physical temple in order to meet and commune with God!

You **don't go** to a priest or Levite in order for him to mediate the relationship between God and man!

You **don't offer sacrifices**, or goats, and pigeons in the temple!

You go to Jesus!

You go to Christ, and to Christ's people; the living Church!

**That's where you go to meet with God!**

That's where you go to commune with God!

That where you go to see the **full weight and glory** of God!

The church is the chosen dwelling of almighty God!

This is a stunning reality that Peter puts forth here...

**Chief Cornerstone**

And of course if we could go back to that metaphor of Christ Jesus our rock – we begin to see that **there are all kinds of relationships** we can have to Jesus as the living Stone:

Christ is the rock that accompanied Israel in the wilderness (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10) – the rock from which the water in the desert came (Exodus 17) – the rock that sustained Israel in their weakness (Psalm chapter 18) – the rock whose works are perfect & just Deuteronomy 32 – He is the Cornerstone – He is the Rock – He is the stone of stumbling!

And so **there are all kinds of relationships** we can have to Jesus – but **at the end of the day** **all of them** come down to only 2:

1. Either there will be **you on Christ:**

Building your life on the solid rock and foundation of His Word!

Or

2. It will be **Christ on you** – crushing you to dust because you have made yourself an enemy of the cross!

Those are the only 2 options Peter gives us here:

Christ on you – or you on Christ!

### **Chosen and Precious**

And so notice firstly this principle of **you on Christ X2** – Verse 6:

*For it stands in Scripture: **See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and honoured cornerstone, and the one who believes in Him will never be put to shame.***

*<sup>7</sup> So honour will come to you who believe...*

This is similar (is it not) to what Jesus said in Matthew chapter 7:

*Everyone who hears my words and does them will be like **a wise man** who built his house upon the rock. <sup>25</sup> And when the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, it did not fall, because it had been founded upon the rock. <sup>26</sup> but everyone who hears these words **and does not do them** will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. <sup>27</sup> And when the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, that house fell, and **great was the fall of that home!***

### **A Few Questions**

Now **consider the audience** that Peter is writing these words to – here you have a group of believers undergoing the **greatest** persecution they’ll ever experience; **great** hostility; **great** adversity!

They are being:

1. Ostracized & maimed!
2. Harassed & ridiculed!
3. Persecuted & beaten!

### **Those who believe**

And so Peter **knowing their frustration – knowing their fears – knowing their situation –** urges them to remember **who Jesus is...** remember that:

If the world hated you, know that it hated Him first!

That if the world dishonors you **know that there is honour** and love in **the one who came** as a man... who was rejected by men **but in the sight of God** chosen and precious...

And Peter says that if you trust in this Cornerstone – if you trust in this Rock **the one that God honours and the one that God chose;** that you too will be chosen and precious in the

sight of God— and the way that you get there (the way that you come to this Stone) is by **faith and faith alone!**

And then you will **NEVER** be put to shame!

In other words – stated positively:

Believe in this choice and precious Cornerstone and you too will be vindicated by God  
Himself!

Everything that the Father loves about Jesus Christ – He loves about you **because you are in Him!**

Your life is built upon Christ the solid Rock!

So that when the winds come; and the rain falls; and **you go through** the hardest persecution and brokenness in your life:

Your heart, and your home, and your house will NEVER BE PUT TO SHAME!

### Verse 7

And then Peter draws this contrast in verse 7 – if that's the reality **for those who believe** what will the outcome be **for those who don't?!?!**

What will be the end for those who reject Jesus?!?!

And Peter tells us right there in verse 8:

*But for the unbelieving [for those who reject the Word, those who cast-off the Church, and who refuse to repent and come to Him] **the stone that the builders rejected—this one has become the cornerstone,<sup>8</sup> and a stone to stumble over, and a rock to trip over...***

Peter says there are people in this world friends (Brothers, Sisters, Mothers, Fathers, colleagues and friends) – **those in this world** who hear the message of the cross, they see the glory of God, they experience the community of believers, and **yet still choose** to reject and deny **the only message** that gives life and light to the soul of man!

### **Election & Reprobation**

**And this is because** of a few big reasons – but really **the main one Peter focuses** on is God's reprobation in verse 8!

That they are rejecting God **because He is rejected them:**

*They stumble over the Rock because they disobey the word; as they were destined for this...*

This is the message of God's sovereign election – the mystery of reprobation!

That God sovereignly chooses who will believe – and who will NOT!

Who will repent – and who will reject!

That ultimately salvation is NOT up to you and your freewill but God's sovereign election in Christ!

And **This is NOT something** Peter is ashamed to admit – this is NOT something he claims to understand – but this is **something Peter sees** as plainly taught on the pages of Scripture – and Peter urges his listeners **NOT to reject it** – but to submit to it; to believe it; and to rest in it!

See Peter believes that the key to surviving the sufferings in this world – the key to persevering in holiness – and resting in Christ is resting in the sovereignty of God!

It is found in the fact that *the judge of all the earth will do what is right* – Genesis 18:25!

The judge of the earth will punish all evil doers **on the last day...**

And Peter is urging his listeners **to find comfort and grace** in that fact!

He will not allow evil doers to go unpunished because the stone that the builders rejected; He has become the chief Cornerstone!

### Verses 9 & 10

And **if** that isn't enough – **if that does not** encourage these believers to persevere through hardship and trial – Peter then draws their attention to **a second list of attributes located in verse 9!**

And that leads us into the third and final point:

*Christ our message X2*

### Verse 9

1 Peter 2 starting at verse 9 – Peter says this:

*But you (in contrast to those who reject this stone)... **you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His possession so that you may proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy...***

And I'm **not gonna add** to Scripture but I will say that:

*Once you did not have a home, but now you have a home...*

It really is an amazing list of attributes isn't it – all of these titles were given to Old Testament Israel – but are now being given to God's people, the Church!

In the Old Testament economy the Israelite nation were to be the privileged, chosen, royal, holy, precious people of God – entrusted with the oath, entrusted with the covenant, given the Torah, called to be light, called to be life – but **the one thing** the people of God **did NOT do** is obey the Word of God!

They *failed* in their office as Priests and Kings in the Old Testament economy of Israel!

And so Peter is applying these Old Testament titles to New Testament believers – **NOT to say** that the Church of God **replaces Israel** but to say that **what God was doing** in the **Old Testament** was **the blueprint** for the **ultimate expression** in the **New!**

That the Church of God is the eschatological fulfillment of Old Testament Israel – and that Old Testament Israel is now welcomed to be apart of the New Testament Israel; the Church!

And so he wanted them to know that as Gentile believers **you may NOT have** a place and position **in the things** of this world – but **you will always** have a place among the people of God...

You will always be welcomed in to the New Testament people if you have tasted that the Lord is good – if you are living to put to death all of the sins listed in verse 1!

And all of it is by grace!

All of it for a purpose – all of it is so *that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness and into His marvelous light...*

See the reason why God has chosen to save us – the reason why we are part of God's family – is **so that we may proclaim** the excellencies of God's goodness and grace to those who are still residing in darkness!

Though the world may mock and shame you for Christ – you must proclaim the excellencies of Him because the world doesn't give you your status – Jesus does!

Your status in Christ is chosen, precious, royal, & holy!

Your status is given to you by the sovereign grace of God – and now you must proclaim His goodness by invited others into this fold...

And Peter's gonna get in to what that looks like in the following chapters of this book...

## Conclusion

But for now let me finish here with one of Spurgeon's favourite preachers – he was a man by the name of Thomas Brooks (1608 to 1680) – and he talks about this idea of allowing faith the appropriate time to flourish and mature **when times get tough...**

And here's what he says:

*Then, again, If you would do gloriously, look to faith; give faith scope, give it **elbow-room** to work. Faith is a noble grace, and will enable the soul to do gloriously for God. Faith is that which will carry a man over all difficulties; faith will untie all knots. Faith will carry a man through the valley of darkness, though it be ever so long. Faith will carry a man over mountains of difficulties, though they be ever so high. Faith will not plead "there is a lion in the way," and that such and such men will frown if I do this or that for God and the general good. Faith will carry a man bravely over all. In Hebrews 11, you have several instances of the saints doing gloriously. But what enabled them? Faith! By the power of faith they did gloriously: they stopped the mouths of lions; they turned to flight the armies of the aliens; they waxed valiant in fight; they refused to be delivered,—and all by the power of faith. Oh! faith will enable men to do gloriously...Did men believe more gloriously, things would work more gloriously. Therefore, when things work crossly, blame not so much this or that instrument—but blame your own unbelieving heart; for **glorious faith will see a smiling Father beyond a dark cloud**. "Though men are at a loss—yet God is not at a loss," says faith. "And though the arm of man be weak, His arm is strong," says faith. "And though the work be too hard for the arm of flesh, too hard for an army or parliament, it is not too hard for God," says faith. Faith carries a man gloriously through all. If you would do gloriously, abound in faith, let faith have elbow-room!*

See the preeminence of faith is put on display in these verses because Peter wanted us to see that **the key** to joining your life to Jesus Christ and all of His benefits is by faith!

Faith is **that key component** to tasting and seeing Christ as precious!

Faith is the key to joining your life into this building of stones **and the Stone upon which the world has chosen to reject!**

And though the world may reject Christ and reject you because of Him – the promise of faith stands true:

*You will never be put to shame...*

So friends taste and see – believe and rest – know and proclaim... and be sure to always allow faith a little bit of elbow room...

Let's pray.