



## Building a Spiritual House

MATT BLACK, Sun, July 30, 2017

1 Peter 2:5-8, "Joy in Suffering" series

**Introduction:** Open your Bible to 1 Peter 2:5-8. We are continuing in a series in 1 Peter called "Joy in Suffering." This morning's study is entitled: "Connected to the Living Stone."

"Without the cornerstone which is Christ, I do not see how men can be built into a house of God, to contain God dwelling in them, without being born again, which cannot happen before they are born the first time."<sup>1</sup>

~ St. Aurelius Augustine

### You Are What I Say You Are

My four year old daughter Ava and I love to play games. Her favorite is called, "you are what I say you are." You can imagine that's most children's favorite. She says, "You're a cow." I say, "Moooooooooo!"

"You're a duck!"

"Quack. Quack," but I love to throw her off.

She says: "You're a sheep!"

"Ok, "Cock-a-doodle-doo!"

"No Daddy, you're a sheep," she insists.

"Ok, baaaaaa!"

That's a sweet and childlike way of illustrating a more majestic and powerful reality. We are whatever God says we are. And here in 1 Peter 2 he says we are his house, Jesus is our Cornerstone, and he is the Architect. Let's read this very encouraging passage.

### Scripture

1 Peter 2:4-10, "As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, 5 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.

6 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."

7 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,"

8 and

"A stone of stumbling,

and a rock of offense."

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

<sup>1</sup> Bray, G. (2000). *James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude* (pp. 85-86). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

9 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. 10 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."

So how do we build our lives on Christ our cornerstone? *Christians must grow together not just as individuals, but as living stones, which, when joined together with others, become integral parts in God's building of a spiritual house.*<sup>2</sup>

## I. You are God's **House**, vs. 5

"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" (2:5). Be built up in your **union with Christ**, "living stones" (1 Pet 2:5a).

What are we housing? We are housing God's presence, the Holy Spirit. We have an obligation to manifest him with our lives.

### Living Stones

We are not just any house – we are God's house. Jesus said, "In my Father's house there are many places." There is a right spot in God's house for child of God.

God has made us "living stones." We are alive in Christ, founded on Christ our Cornerstone.

### We are being built up

"You yourselves like living stones are **being built up as a spiritual house**" (2:5a). You are not a finished temple. You are growing in holiness and love and faith. The more you grow, the more you are unified – the more you have one heart and one mind.

Speaking of a Body, Paul says something similar in **Ephesians 4:15-16**, "we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love."

We are coming to Christ, **the living Stone**. Christ is the living, resurrected, and life-giving God. Each person accepts or rejects this "living Stone." When anyone comes to Christ, as the Living Stone, a new stone is added to God's spiritual building—Christ's church. As a **spiritual** building, the church is to be influenced or dominated by the Holy Spirit in a local assembly.

### Sanctification is a Process

A child does not reach their full-grown height overnight. Neither does a child of God achieve spiritual maturity overnight. Sanctification is a process. Yet there is marked progress, measured and steady.

### Jesus Will Grow You

Jesus said, "I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Jesus is not only the architect of the church, but because we are stones that are alive, he is like a gardener cultivating us. He is watering us with the Word and pruning us by the Spirit's conviction.

<sup>2</sup> Walls, D., & Anders, M. (1999). [I & II Peter, I, II & III John, Jude](#) (Vol. 11, p. 29). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Because of our union with Christ, believers have spiritual resources to meet their every need. That is why Paul could pray on behalf of the Ephesians, “Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us” (Eph. 3:20).

You lack nothing because of your union with Christ! You are “citizens of heaven,” “heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.” You are blessed with “every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

Jesus said, “I came to give you life and life more abundantly” (Jn 10:10).

**Jeremiah 29:11**, “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.”

What does that abundant life of union with Christ look like? What does that future hope look like? I’ll tell you what it doesn’t look like – abandonment. Christ will never leave you or forsake you.

### **The World Can Only Disappoint**

But if you are in the world, you have no real way forward. You can gain all the money and stuff and property and even relationships, and you lose it all in the end.

“For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? 37 For what can a man give in return for his soul?” (Mk 8:36-37).

But if you gain Christ, you gain everything!

### **We are God’s Priests Working in the Temple**

Now Peter shifts the metaphor and says we are not only God’s Temple, but we work in God’s Temple as priests offering sacrifices. As God’s priests, what are we doing? We are to be helping others in evangelism and edification. That’s the job of priests – to bring people to a meaningful relationship with God.

The whole imagery of the Temple is access to God. As NT believers, we have unlimited and unfettered access to God as priests – we “are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a **holy priesthood**” (1 Pet 2:5b). We used to be his enemies, but now we are his priests.

What does it mean to be a priest? As priests, we have **access to the Holy of Holies**... In the Old Testament only the high priest could actually go into the Holy of Holies once a year (Lev. 16:2, 29–34; Heb. 9:1–10, 25). Anyone who presumptuously crossed over into the priestly function without fully meeting the requirements and qualifications of the priesthood suffered severe judgment. The high priest once a year would have to go into the holy of holies with bells and a rope. If he did anything improperly the Lord could kill him.

We don’t have to approach God with bells and a rope. “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Heb 4:16).

### **Practice of Priests**

The practice of praise, “to offer **spiritual sacrifices** acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 2:5c).

Christ being our Cornerstone means we do what pleases the Father. We are the manifestation of God on earth. We have a calling as living stones to offer up spiritual sacrifices to the Lord.

**2 Cor 2:15-17**, “For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, 16 to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? 17 For we are not, like so many,

peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ.”

The primary function of the Old Testament priests, as they ministered in the tabernacle and then the temple, was to offer animal sacrifices to God (Ex. 29:10–19; 2 Chron. 35:11). But when Christ inaugurated the new covenant, animal sacrifices were no longer necessary (Heb. 8:13; 9:11–15; 10:1–18). Now the only sacrifices remaining for the priesthood of believers **to offer up**, according to Peter, are **spiritual sacrifices**.<sup>3</sup>

## **Five Offerings in Leviticus**

**1. Burnt Offering – lambs or goats (Lev 1)** – Justification by Christ’s Work  
**Leviticus 1:9**, “the priest shall burn all of it on the altar, as a burnt offering, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the Lord.” If you were poor you could bring turtledoves or pigeons.

**2. Bread Offering (Lev 2)** – Growing by feeding on Christ’s Word / prayer  
**Leviticus 2:13**, “You shall season all your grain offerings with salt. You shall not let the salt of the covenant with your God be missing from your grain offering; with all your offerings you shall offer salt.”

**3. Peace Offering – oxen/cattle (Lev 3,7)** – Fellowship & Praise by feasting with Christ’s People – waved the breast in the form of a Cross.

**Leviticus 7:15-16**, “And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings a for thanksgiving shall be eaten on the day of his offering. He shall not leave any of it until the morning. 16 But if the sacrifice of his offering is a vow offering or a freewill offering, it shall be eaten on the day that he offers his sacrifice, and on the next day what remains of it shall be eaten.”

Fellowship with the church and lift up His name together! **PRAISE**: We offer the spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God – praise and worship. “Let the redeemed of the Lord say so!” or Psalm 34:8, “Taste and see the Lord is good!” We should be offering the sacrifice of praise continually! “Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name” (Heb. 13:15). Offering praise to God involves much more than merely mouthing the words “Praise the Lord.” It more completely entails gratefully declaring God’s attributes and works.<sup>4</sup>

**4. Sin Offering (Lev 4)** – a young bull or a goat (pigeons if you are poor), outside camp– Repentance/Death to Self by Christ’s Spirit – Restoration of Relationship with God  
**Leviticus 1:9**, “

**5. Trespass Offering (Lev 5)** – a Ram plus 20% to make restitution/ Renewal/Cleansing by Christ’s Blood – for the consequences of sin...Restoration of your relationship with others. If you were poor you could bring two turtledoves or two pigeons.

---

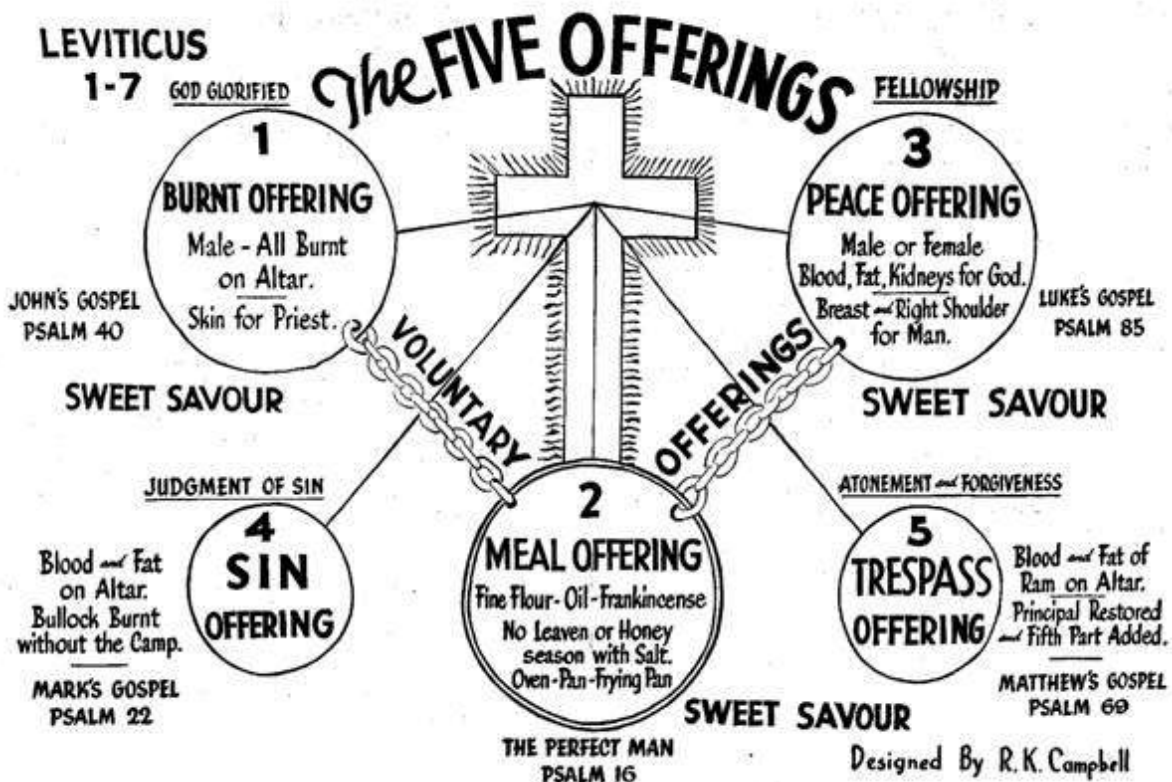
<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 113-114.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 115.

You would bring an offering for several things:

- You **offended your brother by not defending him** when you could testify on his behalf
- You touched an unclean thing, like a dead body (now **you have to miss worship**)
- You've made a **rash promise** to your brother that you cannot keep
- You've **sinned unintentionally against the Lordy**

Leviticus 5:15-16, “If anyone commits a breach of faith and sins unintentionally in any of the holy things of the Lord, he shall bring to the Lord as his compensation, a ram without blemish out of the flock, valued in silver shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, for a guilt offering. 16 He shall also make restitution for what he has done amiss in the holy thing and shall add a fifth to it and give it to the priest. And the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering, and he shall be forgiven.”



### Story of Brother Ed Fisher in Philadelphia

Brother Ed Fisher was a fisher of men! What was his secret? Praise. “There are many gods. But there’s no other name under heaven whereby we can be saved. Don’t just preach God. Preach Jesus.” “Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel.”

And Brother Ed Fisher would get so excited when he would talk about Jesus! He would literally jump, “Preach Jesus!” “Praise Jesus!”

Put on your praise saints! Be living stones! Live out the culture of Jesus in your lives.

## II. Jesus is the **Cornerstone**, vs. 6.

. Peter adds to the list of spiritual privileges by introducing **Isaiah 28:16** with the phrase **this is contained in Scripture**, testifying to the inspiration and authority of the prophetic book.

**1 Peter 1:6**, “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.” [Isaiah 28:16]

Isaiah said that Jesus Christ would be the cornerstone of God’s new spiritual house, which is made up of believers (cf. Matt. 21:42; Acts 4:11; Eph. 2:19–22).<sup>5</sup>

Everything God has promised is true. Who put you in the Temple of God, in the Body of Christ? Who placed you there? Jesus did.

Be in the place Jesus wants you to be. Be built up into Christ the Cornerstone!

In Christ we have many privileges:

- Jesus brings us into union with Himself.
- He gains us access to God, his Father.
- He makes us priests who offer spiritual sacrifices.
- He gives us a position and security that will not disappoint us!
- He gives us a place of honor with him as God’s children.
- He grants us a place as a chosen race.

Have you founded your life upon Him?

## III. God is the **Architect**, vs. 7-8.

You don’t do the building, you submit to the Builder. God is the architect of this building.

**1 Peter 1:6**, “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.” [Isaiah 28:16]

Whoever believes in Christ becomes a living stone! You become built up in Christ.

### **What an Honor!**

What an honor to be displayed as God’s Temple! **1 Peter 1:7**, “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,” [Psalm 118:22]

It’s such an honor to follow Christ, isn’t it? We know who he is. The world doesn’t recognize him, so they use his name as a curse word. But we know who he is.

Jesus is the Messiah. He’s our deliverer. He delivers from sin and death. He destroys the work of the devil. We understand the honor of being called a Christian. For the world he is a rejected stone, but for us, he is our Cornerstone.

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 120.

## What a Mercy!

**1 Peter 1:8**, “and  
“A stone of stumbling,  
and a rock of offense.” [Isaiah 8:14]  
They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.”

God doesn't open the eyes of all in the human race. When Isaiah said in Isa 6:8, “Here I am! Send me.” God said (**Isa 6:9-10**), “Go, and say to this people:

“Keep on hearing, but do not understand;  
keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’  
10 Make the heart of this people dull,  
and their ears heavy,  
and blind their eyes;  
lest they see with their eyes,  
and hear with their ears,  
and understand with their hearts,  
and turn and be healed.”

Jesus said something similar in **Matthew 11:25-29**, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; 26 yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. 27 All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. 28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

### A Chosen Race

So we as believers are not destined to disobey the Gospel. God has graciously opened our eyes and given us a new nature like little children. So Peter can say: **1 Peter 2:9**, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession...”

God passed over some in the human race. They disobeyed the Word, and that's all any of us would ever do had not God made us living stones!

Live in the reality of these privileges. You are living stones. The Bible is your culture. The Bible is the air you breathe and the life you live!

## Conclusion

We are founded on Christ the cornerstone. What else do we need? If you are founded on Christ, you will not be disappointed (**1 Pet 2:6**). You are God's spiritual house.

### Leaky Roofs / Foundations

As a spiritual house, the command is to “be built up” into Christ. Have you ever had a leaky roof? With all this rain, we've all found out where the leaks are in our foundation and our roofs.

Walk close to Christ! Don't let the world leak into you. Found your life on Christ the cornerstone and be built up in Him!