

Our class met in the auditorium to observe the Lord's Supper during Sunday School and I did not teach this lesson. However I wanted to prepare the lesson for myself and will share. Because I did not teach there are more comments than I normally have in lessons. Henry Luke

Believers mature both personally and as a community through God's grace.

Building a house parallels some of the struggles of spiritual growth. The foundation of both a house and a spiritual life are crucial. Problems in the foundation will result in a poor structure above it. Spiritual growth may seem so much slower than the new Christian would like it to be. It is easy to get frustrated with one's own growth. We expect too much too soon in our lives and forget our lives are a product of our day-to-day decisions. Sometimes we forget that, like a house, it takes a group effort to raise up the finished product. One person does not do all the electrical, plumbing, painting, and other crafts it takes to finish the building. As Christians, we too grow in the context of a Christian community.

The first readers of 1 Peter had come to Jesus as Gentiles. The gospel had rescued them from paganism. As they had read the Scriptures about God's work among the Israelites during the era of the Old Covenant, surely they asked themselves questions such as, how do we Gentiles fit into God's family? Can we really call ourselves God's chosen people? They also may have been asking whether they were truly an integral part of what God had done with the coming of the Jewish Messiah. 1 Peter 2:1-10 develops the illustration of a building and then shows that believers and Christ are all part of the same building.

I. Believers are children in the same family who enjoy the same nourishment

¹ Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, ² like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, ³ if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

If we have been saved through the kindness, mercy and grace of Jesus "put off": malice-wickedness; deceit- guile, craftiness, using devious words & actions to get what you want; hypocrisy-trying to hide our malice, guile & the real self; envy-wanting what someone else has; slander-evil speaking against someone, gossip

"Put on" hunger and thirst after God's word just like a newborn baby thirsts after milk. I thought this was speaking only to new believers for a long time, but am now convinced this applies to all believers. Our hunger and thirst for God's word ought to grow every year after salvation so that we may continue to grow in our salvation. The holy Spirit helps us understand and energizes scripture in the life of the believer. This is called the progressive sanctification for the believer. Jesus said; "*Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.* [John 17:17] Our faith grows from hearing the word; "*So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.*" [Romans 10:17] Jesus said *"If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;"* [John 8:31] The Holy Spirit teaches "*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things,*" [John 14:26]

The amount of time each believer spends each day reading, studying and applying the word is essential to spiritual growth and obedience to His commands by His grace.

II. Believers are stones in the same building ⁴ And coming to Him as to a **PAGE 2** living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house... ⁶ For this is contained in Scripture: "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER stone, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."⁷ This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone," ⁸ and, "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.

Jesus is described as a living stone rejected by men but precious in the sight of God. He is the chief corner stone and foundation* in the spiritual house of God and all believers are living stones in this spiritual house. Believers will not be disappointed on earth or in heaven. On the other hand those that reject Jesus are doomed as described** in Revelation:

* "For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." [1 Corinthians 3:11]

** ¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, ...the dead were judged...¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. [Revelation 20:11-15]

III. Believers are priests in the same temple ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁹ ...A royal PRIESTHOOD...

Believers are living stones in the spiritual house of God and priests who are commanded to offer up acceptable sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ. Nine or ten spiritual sacrifices are described: ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. ¹⁷ Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

¹⁸ Pray... [Hebrew 13:15-18a] and ¹ Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God " [Romans 12:1-2 HCSB]

We are priests together, v. 9 "a royal priesthood" serving the same High Priest, ministering in the same spiritual temple. The fact that there is but one eternal High Priest and heavenly Mediator indicates unity among the people of God.

IV. Believers are citizens in the same nation ⁹ *But you are A CHOSEN RACE,* PAGE 3

A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.

We are a **chosen race**, which immediately speaks of the grace of God. God did not choose Israel because they were a great people, but because He loved them (Deut. 7:7-8). God has chosen His church purely because of His love and grace.

We are a **holy nation**. We have been set apart to belong exclusively to God. Our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20), so we obey heaven's laws and seek to please heaven's Lord. Be Holy!

We are the **people of God**. In our unsaved condition, we were not God's people, because we belonged to Satan and the world (Eph. 2:1-3, 11-19). Now that we have trusted Christ, we are a part of God's people. We are a "people for His own possession," because He purchased us with the blood of His own Son (Acts 20:28).

All of these privileges carry with them one big responsibility: revealing the praises of God to a lost world. The verb translated "proclaim" means "to tell out, to advertise." Because the world is "in the dark," people do not know the "excellencies" of God; but they should see them in our lives. Each citizen of heaven is a living "advertisement" for the virtues of God and the blessings of the Christian life. Our lives should radiate the "marvelous light" into which God has graciously called us. After all, we have obtained mercy from God!

Summary/application:

1. Put off the things of this world and be Holy
2. Hunger and thirst for the word of God and grow spiritually
3. Recognize that we are part of the spiritual house of God and dwell in unity
4. We are priests serving our High Priest Jesus Christ, Who provides the believer direct access to God the Father
5. I am a member of the family of God
6. I have a special responsibility to proclaim Jesus Christ to a lost world with my life and words
7. Memorize **1 Peter 2:** ⁵ *you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*
8. What acceptable spiritual sacrifices am I consistently offering to God through Jesus Christ?