

Bible Studies for Life: April 14

Built on Christ • 1 Peter 2:1-12

By Carl White



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In between are a series of metaphors: descriptions of our identity as Christ followers. Each image shows how everything in the Christian church centers on Jesus Christ.

The first image is that of a newborn baby. The instinct of the baby is to devour food because its body is made to grow. The vice list Peter gives in verses 1 and 2 indicate that the churches of Asia Minor needed to grow. They did not need a seminar on behavior, but rather the milk of the Gospel from the Word of God. They needed to long for it, like a baby. The church must have Jesus to grow.

The second image is an extended ancient architectural metaphor. We are living stones, but the first stone to be laid for a new building would be the corner stone. It determines the size and shape of the structure. Thus, great care was given to finding the perfect stone, cutting it as near to perfection as possible, and the accuracy of its placement. Spiritually, Jesus is that cornerstone.

Every other stone is placed according to the placement of the cornerstone. You can trust the cornerstone to be fixed and sure, unwavering. You can be certain that when the storms of life come, being anchored to the cornerstone means you are safe.

We believers are the living stones of the holy structure God is building, a structure where spiritual sacrifices are made and accepted. The entire holy structure is built on and based on what Christ did on our behalf. For those who believe, it is precious. But unbelievers will trip over Jesus if they do not have spiritual eyes to see.

Third is the metaphor of a Royal Priesthood. Royal speaks of being in service of the King. Priesthood is an office of service in a spiritual house. A priest has access to God. The central wonder of the Gospel of Christ is that we, as ordinary men and women, have access to God. Every believer has direct access to God. We call this the Priesthood of the Believer.

Fourth is the metaphor of a new nation, one God is creating. Its citizens are a chosen people, a holy nation. This holiness is not based on our ability to do good. Rather, it is based on what Christ did for us.

Many believe that good religion is to do as many good things as you can, develop the best character traits that you can, and then at death present them to God as your righteousness, hoping it is enough. This is not Christianity.

Rather, Jesus lived a pure and sinless life. He was righteous. After his death and resurrection, God takes the righteousness of his Son and presents it to us! In him we have eternal life. In him we are made right. Our Holiness as a people is Christ's righteousness, not our own. That righteousness gives us access to the presence of God.

Peter presents four images of who we are in Christ: newborn babies longing for spiritual milk; a living stone aligned with the cornerstone; a royal priesthood; and a chosen, holy nation. All of these describe who we are, and they all revolve around the person of Jesus Christ. Because of this reality we are foreigners, strangers in this world.

In the final verses (11-12) Peter returns to where he started

in our passage – to our behavior. Our behavior is very important because as resident aliens, we are subject to being misunderstood and slandered as evildoers. God wants those who are not citizens in his new kingdom to look at us and be drawn to God.

Sadly, the church today is far from achieving this attraction. We are being slandered as evildoers, some of it deserved. May God forgive us for our failures and help us to long for the pure milk of the Gospel so that we might grow into the image of our Lord Jesus Christ.

White is a member of Pineview Church, Clinton.