

Morning Service 3rd June 2007

1 Peter 2v1-10 – The Living Cornerstone/Signs of Life

Intro

This week we come to chapter 2 of first Peter and find ourselves discovering more about the holy life that God has saved us to live out.

Remember that Peter wrote this letter to a young Church of mainly Gentiles, amidst a time of increasing persecution, in the area of northern Turkey as we know it today.

They have been reminded -
of the wonderful living hope possible in Christ,
of the purpose of times of difficulty
and of their need to live obedient holy lives
because of the powerful work of Jesus in their lives.

This is where Peter continues and explains how believers are not just holy individuals but in fact a holy people.

Illustration – sport teams v individuals?

Read 1 Peter 2v1-10

1. Hunger and Growth v1-3

People have different cravings during life.

It starts with the babies craving for sleep, then the toddlers craving for attention, then the child's craving for play time, this moves on to the craving for food for lads and weight loss for girls.

Then there is a craving for success, a family, money, a holiday and before long retirement.

Or maybe the simple craving to just eat chocolate, or mini cheddars in my case.

We have cravings for different things don't we not just food and they can be more or less healthy for ourselves.

v2 tells us something especially important to crave – pure spiritual milk.

This is the key to understanding these linking verses at the start of chapter 2.

Peter uses the example of a newborn baby craving milk, which is the essential diet, vital for a babies growth.

He relates this directly to how we should crave the essential nutrient for our spiritual diet – God's Word.

The word that stands for ever, the word that is truth, the word that reveals God himself through the eternal Word, Jesus Christ.

Now let us go back to verse 1 and we can see how this simile helps us understand Peter's abrupt exhortation to the believers to rid themselves of malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander. If we crave pure spiritual milk we will be far from the intoxicating worldly diet of malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander.

Previously, Peter has been encouraging the believers to be holy by demonstrating their love for each other, from the heart.

Because of the love shown to them by Jesus in dying on the cross. He reaffirms this by specifically listing these sins of the flesh, which would easily divide a young church.

They have been born again and so must now walk in the spirit, craving pure spiritual milk, as Peter says

“so that by it you may grow up in your salvation”

The purpose of this craving is not to simply fulfil our desires, it is more than enjoying the taste of the last rolo, it is to build us up, to grow us, to lead us on in our salvation, which has started and is being worked out, as we progress down the road of holiness until Christ returns.

Thankfully, for the believer, this is a natural craving, one that once you have tasted you hunger for.

If we have tasted any of the riches of God's word, if we have come to know God's love in Jesus, then we should crave more of him, because **“we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good”**, as Psalm 34 tells us.

Peter challenges his readers to be hungry for the Word, he also challenges us, as Jesus did on the sermon on the Mount: **“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled.”**

I want to be filled, I want to taste the wonderful word of God, day after day. We need to have this desire, craving for God's word as Job did:

“I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread.” Job 23v12

2. The Living Cornerstone v4-8

This next section of the letter starts **“as you come to him”**, which shows us that Peter expects us to crave this spiritual milk and be in his word, coming to him, into his presence, so that we can grow into the mature holy Church he intends.

I think it is interesting that Peter, who was named Cephas by Jesus, which means Rock, now chooses to refer to Jesus as the living Stone, or the Cornerstone as v6 uses.

For Peter was the rock that Jesus built his Church, but yet he points us to Jesus as the chosen, precious, living stone.

Now this cornerstone, wasn't a little corner piece, like we have in our lounges, being purely decorative.

When constructing a building the cornerstone was the first stone to be put in place.

It needed to be square and true as all other stones depended upon its orientation

The stone is described as precious, as were the large, precious gemstones Solomon used in building the Temple.

As well as actually understanding the purpose of a cornerstone it is important for us to be aware of why Peter is quoting Isaiah and the Psalms in these verses.

The first quotation in v6 comes from **Isaiah 28v16**.

Let's turn their briefly (read v16).

Isaiah is speaking against the princes of Jerusalem who suppose their city is secure from threat of invasion.

But God declares through Isaiah that their pride shouldn't be in their refuge.

Only one thing can stand against the storm of destruction:

God's building, the Temple, the house of God, established on one sure foundation, the cornerstone.

Peter here links the stone as being Christ.

For God laid down his one and only Son, in Zion.

Christ the chosen, precious, living stone,

rejected by the builders,

mocked, beaten, crucified,

yet the builders by their rejection placed the cornerstone in position – upon a tree.

Christ the chosen, precious, living Stone,

alive from the dead, as the risen Lord.

So the rejection of the stone was not some defeat of Christ on the cross, but a great positioning of the stone to achieve what God's

“power and will had decided beforehand should happen”

The cornerstone was not some monument or dead principle, but a living, resurrected, life-giving one.

These next two quotations in v7-8 come from Psalm 118v22 and Isaiah 8v14 respectfully.

They are used by Peter to point directly to those that deny Jesus Christ as Lord, refusing to believe the truth.

As a result the living Stone is both precious and offensive. Precious to those that believe in Jesus' victory over death. Offensive to those that reject the living Stone, ignoring or ridiculing the gospel. Therefore making them stumble spiritually and fall away from the hope of life because of the judgement which is destined for them.

How this should push us on to explain the gospel to people and do all we can to turn the living stone from being a stumbling block to a stone of salvation!!

So in this image Christ is the Cornerstone of God's house and we verse 5 tells us have become like living stones that are being built into a spiritual house.

That we can also be described as this is mind blowing, to be apart of this image of God's house, a significant stone, serving a purpose.

Of course we must understand this spiritual house to be the Church, the true house of God.

And with Christ as the cornerstone, all believers are joined together by him.

Read Ephesians 2v19-22

With this we see how the Church in Christ is the fulfilment of the Temple.

Previously God dwelt with his people by his presence in the Temple. Now we are God's temple, as his spirit dwells in us and together we are his holy temple, each a different necessary chosen and precious stone ready to do his work.

Application?

Belief or Disbelief

Encouragement from the fulfilment we see.

Thankfulness for being apart of his house

Peter cares for the holiness of this house and now continues to describe the nature of his chosen people.

3. Living Stones v9-10

Peter, identifies two aspects of God's chosen stones, the people of God.

First their status and secondly their service