

February 26, 2023

“Results of the Call”
Lesson 4

I Peter 2:1-10

Intro

Every person identifies themselves based on certain criteria. Among these are their political views, their leisure time activities, and their relationships.

New Testament writers note often that Jews from all classes founded their identity in God, and specifically in the religious practices found in the Law of Moses. Becoming a Christian for them was a huge step culturally and religiously. The Christian leaders in the 1st Century had to help these new believers to see themselves in a new light—they had a new identity in Christ.

The idea of our identity in Christ is the focus of today's study passage.

Read 1 Peter 2:1-10

1. vs. 1: Peter starts with the word “therefore”

He's referring to the things noted about them toward the end of chapter 1

They had obeyed the truth of the gospel, turning to Christ (1:22)

They had purified their souls (1:22)

They had been born again (1:23)

Therefore, they are called to live in a way consistent with these truths

He follows up with a list of several “vices” to avoid

malice: this is a desire to cause another person trouble or even harm

deceit, hypocrisy, envy: these are all attitudes that can be seen in a person's actions

deceit can be thought of as a general dishonesty

hypocrisy for a believer is playing a role that benefits that person over another,
instead of action Christ-like at all times

envy is a bitter spirit that resents another's success or possessions

It's also the opposite of gratitude and contentment

Slander of every kind: slander is saying something untrue which damages another's
reputation or character

this behavior results from doing/being the previous ones

A deceitful person pretending innocence and friendship, but who is really deeply
resentful and envious, saying something hoping to hurt another

All of these things in a church congregation are damaging

They will prevent people from joining together in a unity in the faith

They will cause fightings and divisions

2. vs. 2: Peter offers here the antidote or counter-action to the behaviors listed in verse 1

“crave pure spiritual milk, so that you may grow up in your salvation”

Pure spiritual milk is appropriate for those who are young in the faith
This appears to be the status of those Peter is writing to
The word “deceit” in vs. 1 and “pure” here in vs. 2 are the same with one alteration
The word for “pure” has an “a” in front of it
The “a” here means “the opposite of” as in “historical” vs “ahistorical”
So here, the pure milk is the complete opposite of deceit

The result of craving (and ingesting) pure spiritual milk is spiritual growth
“so that by it you may grow up in your salvation”
There are two things we should avoid with spiritual “milk”
To like it so much that we never move on to spiritual “meat”
To avoid it completely
Human babies grow by initially drinking milk, then moving on to other foods
Spiritual babies start with milk, but need to take in “meat” later on
Spiritual growth is the key idea of Peter’s comments here

3. vs. 3: Peter’s words are “now that you have tasted that the Lord is good”
Ps. 34:8 is being quoted: “Taste and see that the Lord is good”
The phrase “now that you have” indicates his readers have taken this action
Since they have experienced God’s goodness, they are to continue their journey
They are to continue to grow spiritually, as instructed in vs. 2
4. vs. 4: Peter describes Jesus the Lord as “the living Stone”
Peter references this same idea from Ps. 118:22 in his sermon in Acts 4
Jesus is both a Stone (solid and unmovable) and living (not just then, but forever)
He was “rejected by humans, but chosen by God”
His value was known to God, but human wisdom didn’t see it
Peter says “as you come to Him”
This indicates that it is expected for His followers to approach Him
5. vs. 5: Christ is the living Stone (vs. 4), and He is making a spiritual house
We Christians are the living stones of this spiritual house
The spiritual house in the OT was the temple, which had priests
Peter says here that Christians are to be a “holy priesthood”
The OT priests offered physical sacrifices in a physical temple
We are now priests offering spiritual sacrifices in a spiritual temple
The spiritual sacrifice we offer is ourselves in service to God
Christians no longer need a priest to mediate between them and God
We are priests to God ourselves
6. vs. 6: Peter quotes Is. 28:16 here
Zion here is the same as saying Jerusalem
The stone that is being laid down is “chosen” and “precious”
Ps. 118:22 says the stone is “the chief corner stone”
This is obviously a reference to Jesus
Jesus referenced Ps. 118:22 about Himself in Matt. 21:42

Peter finishes the Is. 28:16 quote with the promise it contains

“He who trusts in him will never be put to shame”

Note that Isaiah’s verse says “trust in him”—it must be a person

Trusting in Jesus allows us to never be put to shame; we have chosen Him

7. vs. 7: Peter reminds his readers of a difference in perspectives

Believers see this Stone (Jesus) as precious

His sacrifice at Calvary gives us life

But non-believers have rejected Him, rejected the idea of Him as Savior

Peter again references Ps. 118:22 which calls Him “the cornerstone”

Jesus is the most important aspect of our lives

8. vs. 8: The first two phrases in this verse are saying the same thing

This is a typical style in Jewish poetry—two phrases with synonyms

Jesus is a stone that causes stumbling or a rock that makes people fall

This view of Jesus is not how we usually present Jesus to others

We talk of His love, mercy, forgiveness, and other appealing qualities

These things about Jesus are all true

But these phrases also tell of another truth about Jesus

He will be rejected by those who can’t accept certain truths

They are sinners in need of a Savior

Jesus died on a cross to pay the cost of that sin

Jesus is the Savior that they need to obtain eternal life

These truths about Jesus cause people to stumble/fall

They are unacceptable ideas that people can’t take in

The last phrase is also a bit off-putting initially

Those who stumble with this message are doing “what they were destined for”

This makes it sound like they had no choice but to be rejected

As Paul says in some of his letters, “May it never be!”

God created humanity with free will; He never takes that away

God also is omniscient, meaning He knows everything

He knew who would accept this truth and come to Him by their own choice

Peter uses the term “elect” in 1 Pet. 1:1-2

This means we “elected” ourselves by choosing to follow Jesus

In the same way, those who reject Jesus as Savior as “destined” for it

They chose this stance, and God, who knows all, knew they would

They destined themselves by this choice

Yet God, knowing who would reject Him, still reaches out to them in love

Everyone will hear that Jesus died to save them from their sins

Even those God knows won’t accept it still get to hear it

“God is unwilling that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

2 Peter 3:9

9. vs. 9: Now that we have been made stones in this spiritual temple, we have a new identity

“You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood”

We weren't chosen because of any worthiness on our part

God chose us to be a “royal priesthood” to Him

Royalty usually refers to those in the king's lineage somehow

The priesthood was separate from the royal line

Jesus is prophet and priest and king

We His followers are also now in the line of King Jesus, and are priests to Him

We minister to each other, and to those who don't yet know Him

Peter finishes this description with two other aspects of our identity in Christ

We are “a holy nation, God's special possession”

These two phrases that God said to Israel in Ex. 19:5-6

They were to be unique, unlike any other nation

Their service to God and devotion to Him were contrasts to what other nations did

These terms Peter now uses to describe the church (universal) that follows Jesus

We are a collection of believers—a “holy nation”

We are not merely individuals who share the same beliefs

Peter concludes this verse with the reason we have been chosen and are special

To “declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.”

The contrast between spiritual darkness and light is a key NT teaching

Paul says in Eph. 5:8 that we “are light in the Lord”

Our light sets us apart, makes us different, from unbelievers

Our study text sums this up well:

“To the degree that we fail to use that light to *declare the praises of Him*, we lose the counter cultural power of the Christian faith.”

10. vs. 10: Peter says to the believers, “Once you were not a people”

The Gentile believers now had never been God's people before coming to Christ

The Jewish believers come from a history of faithlessness leading to exile

God had at times in the past rejected both of these groups

“But now you are the people of God”

Now all who come to Jesus receive His mercy, the right to be called God's children

Application: Peter is writing to believers being persecuted for their faith in Jesus; they had doubts. We too might feel doubtful or persecuted by our world for our faith in Jesus. Peter reminds his readers and us today of who we really are: a royal priesthood, a chosen people. Let us treat each believer as a prince or princess of King Jesus, and act as members of the royal family in all our encounters with anyone.

Prayer: Father God, help us to remember our identity is found in Your Son, who has made us a royal priesthood. Help us daily live out this identity with every person we meet. In Jesus' name, Amen.