

Being an Authentic Church

Session 1

April 14, 2024

Built on Christ

The Point: Everything in the church centers on Jesus Christ.

Session Question: How do we center the church on Christ?

Session Passage: 1 Peter 2:1-12

The Setting for 1 Peter 2. The apostle Peter wrote this letter from Rome in the early AD 60s to churches in the northern part of Asia Minor (present-day Turkey). Appealing to Christ's sufferings as a model, Peter encouraged these Christians to stand firm despite persecution. First Peter 1 focuses on joy and holiness. Chapter 2 stresses abiding in Christ as the source of holy living for the people of God, the church.

1 Peter 2:1-5

Connection to The Point: The church is comprised of those who trust Christ and live in obedience to Him.

Therefore Wherefore (v. 1). On the basis of his discussion of holiness in 1:13-25, Peter commanded Christians to take certain actions leading to a lifestyle of obedience to Christ.

Rid yourselves Laying aside (v. 1). To live holy lives, those who have trusted in Christ must remove behaviors that cause problems with other members of God's family. The five sins that follow fracture the love Christ commanded His followers to have (John 15:12,17) and can disrupt and tear apart churches.

All malice (v. 1). This term describes attitudes or actions that inflict harm upon others or lead to holding grudges.

All deceit All guile (v. 1). The Greek term for *deceitguile* literally refers to bait or a lure, a snare. In addition to deceit, it encompasses fraud and deceit cunning. Generally, it involves not speaking the truth about and/or to others.

Hypocrisy Hypocrisies (v. 1). This term means pretending to be someone you are not to make yourself look better. The Greek term means play acting, creating an impression in others that is contrary to one's real purposes.

Envy Envies (v. 1). The Greek term for *envy* is also translated as "jealousy" or "spite." It involves attitudes and actions that have their source in a self-interest that seeks to advance one's self at the expense and harm of others.

Slander Evil Speakings (v. 1). *Evil speakings* is slander. *Slander* is speaking evil about a person. It characterizes those who engage in backbiting and defamation.

Newborn infants Newborn babies Newborn babes (v. 2). The Greek refers to nursing infants. In order to grow and develop properly, newborn infants need to take in the nourishment of milk.

Desire Crave (v. 2). The Greek term refers to an intense craving desire to possess something. In this context the term indicates an active rather than passive stance in seeking proper nourishment.

Pure milk of the word Pure spiritual milk Sincere milk of the word (v. 2). The *pure milkpure spiritual milksincere milk* which enables believers to grow in their faith is the Word of God.

Grow up into Grow up in Grow thereby (v. 2). This phrase implies salvation in its fullest sense requires life-long growth in Christ. The moment of conversion leads to the ongoing process of sanctification (growth in spiritual maturity).

Salvation (v. 2). Generally the term *salvation* refers to being rescued or delivered from something, in this context from sin, death, and judgment. It involves both the initial event of permanently restoring the individual in a right relationship with God and the ongoing renewal of the individual so that he or she is evermore capable through the power of the Holy Spirit to live in a way that is pleasing to God.¹ Salvation can be spoken of as an initial, past event (conversion, justification), as a process occurring in the present (sanctification), and in a future, final sense (glorification).

If, if so be (v. 3). Since Peter did not doubt the salvation of his readers, the Greek term should be understood in the sense of “since.”

You have tasted that the Lord is good. Ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious (v. 3). This quotation is taken from Psalm 34:8 in the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament). Believers taste the Lord’s goodness when they put their faith in Christ.

As you come to him To whom coming (v. 4). This phrase refers to those who have come to Jesus by repenting and putting their faith in Christ as both Savior and Lord.

A living stone, The living Stone (v. 4). Christ is a *living stone the living Stone* in the sense that He is “the living, resurrected, and therefore life-giving one.”² This word picture of Christ likely comes from either Psalm 118:22 or Isaiah 28:16. Mark (12:10), Luke (20:17), and Paul (Eph. 2:20) also used this image in referring to Christ as the basis for solid, unmovable, unshakable, foundational faith in God and as the cornerstone of the body of Christ, the church (vv. 19-22).

Rejected by people, Rejected by humans, Disallowed indeed of men (v. 4). Jesus was rejected by most people and especially the Jewish religious leaders who had Him crucified.

Chosen and honored by God Chosen by God and precious to him Chosen of God, and precious (v. 4). The Greek term for *chosen* means to be selected. Jesus is God’s one and only Son and the Messiah (John 3:16-17). *Honored Precious* figuratively means to be valued and precious honored. Although Jesus was rejected by people, He is chosen and honored by God, who vindicated Him through His resurrection and exaltation (Acts 17:30-31; Eph. 1:20; Heb. 10:12; 1 Pet. 1:21).

Living stones, a spiritual house Living stones . . . a spiritual house Lively stones . . . a spiritual house (v. 5). When people put their faith in Christ, they become *living stones lively* [living] *stones* in the *spiritual house* that God is building (the body of Christ, the church) which has as its cornerstone Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:19-22).

Holy priesthood (v. 5). The word *holy* means to be consecrated, set apart for a purpose. Another term for it is “sacred.” Believers in Christ have been set apart to God. In the Old Testament, the priests offered sacrifices to God in the temple. Believers are both the new temple of God (1 Cor 3:16-17; 6:19) and priests of that temple.

To offer spiritual sacrifices . . . through Jesus Christ Offering spiritual sacrifices . . . through Jesus Christ To offer up spiritual sacrifices . . . by Jesus Christ (v. 5). *To offer Offering To offer up* indicates the believers’ purpose as holy priests. This functions as a command; it is not optional. These *sacrifices* refer to everything that is pleasing to God. They grow out of our relationship with Jesus Christ and are offered in response to what God has done through Jesus Christ to bring about our salvation.

Acceptable (v. 5). The Greek term means to be well-received, approved. All the various spiritual sacrifices we offer are done through Christ in the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit (“the Spirit of life in Christ,” Rom. 8:2,9; 1 Pet. 1:11) and therefore are acceptable to God.

1 Peter 2:6-8

Connection to The Point: The church is built on the foundation of Jesus Christ.

It stands (v. 6). God's Word is forever relevant and permanent (Isa. 40:8; Matt. 24:35). The present tense of the Greek verb here indicates a continuing action, most likely meaning a permanent truth.

Scripture (v. 6). The New Testament writers used the term in reference to the Old Testament. First Peter 2:6 quotes Isaiah 28:16, verse 7 quotes Psalm 118:22, and verse 8 quotes Isaiah 8:14. Peter used the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) as did most Christians in the early church.

See Behold (v. 6). The Greek command is also translated as "beholdsee." It points readers and hearers toward an important truth.

I lay (v. 6). God is the initiator and doer of the action described.

Sion (v. 6). This term is used in the Bible to refer to both the literal city of Jerusalem and the heavenly new Jerusalem.

Stone Chief corner stone (v. 6). This word refers to Christ and previously appeared in verses 4-5. Just as a specific *stone* is the foundation for a building, Jesus said that faith in Him as God's Son was foundational for the church (Matt. 16:15-18; see Eph. 2:19-22). The *chief corner stone* functioned as the foundational part of the building; all other stones were positioned in relation to the cornerstone. The Greek word was also used for the capstone, the stone at the top of the arch that completes the structure. Christ is both the cornerstone and capstone, the foundation and completion of the church. Paul used this same word picture in Ephesians 2:20. Just as a specific *stone* is the foundation for a building, Jesus said that faith in Him as God's Son was foundational for the church (Matt. 16:15-18; see Eph. 2:19-22).

Zion (v. 6). This term is used in the Bible to refer to both the literal city of Jerusalem and the heavenly new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2).

Chosen and honored, precious Elect, precious (v. 6). Peter further described the "stone" (Christ) as *chosen* and *honored precious*, terms which he had used previously in verse 4 in reference to Christ's resurrection and glorification. Similarly, here, when God raised Jesus from the dead, He made Christ the chosen and honored precious cornerstone of His building, the church. Peter further described the "corner stone" (Christ) as *elect* and *precious*. To be *elect* is to be chosen. Paul had used the term *precious* previously in verse 4 in reference to Christ's resurrection and glorification. Similarly here, when God raised Jesus from the dead, He made Christ the chosen and precious corner stone of His building, the church.

Cornerstone (v. 6). The *cornerstone* functioned as the foundational part of the building; all other stones were positioned in relation to the cornerstone. The Greek word was also used for the capstone, the stone at the top of the arch that completes the structure. Christ is both the cornerstone and capstone, the foundation and completion of the church. Paul used this same word picture in Ephesians 2:20.

Shame Confounded (v. 6). The Greek term has the basic meaning of shame or dishonor. The first-century world considered those who believed in Jesus to have shame because Jesus was crucified. The Jews in particular considered those who believed in Jesus to have shame because in their view Jesus was crucified as a person cursed by God (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13). However, the reality is that those who believe in Jesus "will never be put to shame shall not be confounded," meaning that at the end of the age they will not face God's judgment. Rather, their faith in Christ will be vindicated, and they will be glorified (the last stage of salvation).

Believe (v. 7). To *believe* is to put one's faith in Christ as Savior and Lord.

Honor Precious (v. 7). God's evaluation of those who believe in Christ directly opposes the unbelieving world's evaluation. *Honor Precious* describes the exaltation and value of a person or object based on his/her/its use or worth. This honor will not fully come in this world (the domain of Satan) but rather in heaven. The full exaltation of Jesus (the precious stone) will not come until the end of this age when He returns at His second coming.

Believe (v. 7). To *believe* is to put one's faith in Christ as Savior and Lord.

The unbelieving, Those who do not believe, Them which be disobedient (v. 7). Those who do not believe *Those who do not believe* The *disobedient* are those who do not believe that Jesus is God's Messiah. They will receive only judgment and condemnation for their sins (John 3:18; Rev. 20:11-15; 21:8).

The stone that the builders rejected, The stone the builders rejected, The stone which the builders disallowed (v. 7). This quotation is from Psalm 118, which describes the psalmist's victory over his foes through the power of the Lord. Here Peter applied Psalm 118:22 to Jesus's victory on the cross over sin and Satan despite the evaluation of the Jews and other unbelievers. This reference may have influenced Peter's sermon at Pentecost (Acts 2:14-36), especially where he contrasted God's true perspective on Jesus's sacrifice with the Jews' false evaluation (v. 36).

A stone to stumble over . . . a rock to trip over, A stone that causes people to stumble . . . a rock that makes them fall A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence (v. 8). These phrases parallel one another. Encounters with Christ (the stone/rock) separate those who believe in Him from those who refuse to believe. Those who refuse to believe stumble and fall because they reject God's fullest revelation of Himself in His Messiah Jesus Christ (John 1:1,18; Heb. 1:1-3) and the salvation He offers (John 3:16-18; 1 Pet. 1:23-25; 4:17).

Disobey the word, Disobey the message, Being disobedient (v. 8). Disobedience is the result of unbelief.

Destined for, They were appointed (v. 8). God's response to rejection of Jesus is judgment: eternal separation from God in hell. Both Peter (2 Pet. 2:9,12) and Paul (Rom. 2:5-11) wrote about God's final, eternal judgment upon those who reject God's offer of salvation through Christ.

1 Peter 2:9-12

Connection to The Point: The church is to proclaim and glorify Christ.

But you, But ye (v. 9). Peter shifted his focus from unbelievers (vv. 7-8) to those who believe in Jesus Christ—the church, the body of Christ (vv. 9-12). Peter listed four descriptive titles for believers.

A chosen race, A chosen people, A chosen generation (v. 9). Whereas in the Old Testament Israel was God's chosen people (Deut. 7:6), now in Christ the *chosen race chosen people* is made up of all believers, both Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:11-22). The Greek term for *generation* can be translated as "family," "kind," and "offspring." Whereas in the Old Testament Israel was God's chosen people (Deut. 7:6), now all believers in Christ, both Jews and Gentiles, have been adopted into God's family (Eph. 2:11-22).

A royal priesthood (v. 9). Peter likely was drawing from Exodus 19:6 here. *Royal* refers to God as King. The priest's job was to be an intermediary between God and the people. Through Christ believers have direct access to God. However, believers are also intermediaries between lost humanity and God as they proclaim the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:18-20).

A holy nation, An holy nation (v. 9). The term *holy nation* (or "holy people") means that believers belong to God who is holy (Lev. 11:44). To be *holy* means to be set apart for a purpose. Believers have been set apart to God in Jesus Christ. Their primary purpose is to proclaim the gospel of salvation (Matt. 28:18-20). They also glorify God through their deeds (5:14-16).

A people for his possession, God's special possession, A peculiar people (v. 9). This title reflects God's designation of both Israel (Ex. 19:5; Isa. 43:1) and the church (Eph. 1:14; Titus 2:14) as belonging to Him.

So that you may proclaim the praises, That you may declare the praises, That ye should shew forth the praises (v. 9). The four titles in verse 9 reveal the purpose of the church. To *proclaim, declare, shew forth* (or "announce") referred to the duty of a herald who announced news of his king or ruler. *Praises* are responses to God's mighty deeds; Peter

referred here specifically to salvation. It is the duty of every Christian to *proclaim, declare, shew forth* (or share) the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Called (v. 9). To be *called* is to be invited or summoned, in this context by God to receive the salvation that is found in Christ alone.

Out of darkness (v. 9). In Scripture, *darkness* is often used as a metaphor for sin and the absence of God. Prior to their salvation, believers lived in the darkness of a world separated from and hostile to God.

Into his marvelous light, Into his wonderful light, Into his marvellous light (v. 9). Believers were called out of darkness to something else, the marvelous, wonderful light of God. The Greek term for *marvelous, wonderful marvellous* can also be translated as “glorious” and “wonderful, marvelous.” Believers are transferred from the realm of darkness into the kingdom of God (Col. 1:13-14). This light is life in Christ (eternal salvation; John 8:12).

Not a people (v. 10). This phrase illustrates every person’s spiritual condition prior to salvation, one of separation from God.

God’s people, The people of God (v. 10). This designation refers to Christians, who through Christ have been reconciled to God (Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18; Col. 1:22) and adopted into His family (Rom. 8:15; Eph. 1:5).

Not received mercy, Not obtained mercy (v. 10). This phrase parallels the previous designation for people prior to salvation: “not a people.” *Mercy* here refers to God’s action of extending undeserved grace in salvation.

Received mercy Obtained mercy (v. 10). This phrase parallels the previous designation for those who put their faith in Christ: “God’s people the people of God.” It refers to God’s irrevocable gift of salvation (Rom. 11:29; see also Rom. 8:29-30; Eph. 1:13-14).

Dear friends Dearly beloved (v. 11). The Greek for this phrase is more literally translated as “beloved” and marks a new section of Peter’s letter. The Greek for this phrase is can also be translated as “friends” and marks a new section of Peter’s letter.

I urge you I beseech you (v. 11). The following verses contain ethical instructions growing out of Peter’s previous titles for Christians. With these words, Peter encouraged and commanded these believers to glorify God by living a Christ-like lifestyle.

Strangers . . . exiles Foreigners . . . exiles Strangers . . . pilgrims (v. 11). Following their conversion, these believers had become *strangers foreigners* (“foreigners strangers”) and *exiles pilgrims* (“aliens,” “pilgrims exiles”) in this world, having changed their allegiance to God and thereby become “citizens of heaven” (Phil. 1:27).

Abstain from sinful desires Abstain from fleshly lusts (v. 11). The Greek term translated *abstain* means to keep oneself away from or be distant from something, in this case *from sinful desires from fleshly lusts*. The Greek for *fleshly lusts* means sinful desires which stand in opposition to God and His will. Not all desires are sinful, only those that stand in opposition to God and His will.

Wage war against War against (v. 11). Using a Greek term that refers to serving as a soldier, Peter further described the battle against sinful desires that Christians must fight continually (Rom. 7:18-23).

The soul Your soul (v. 11). The Greek term represents the self, the innermost part of a person (Luke 12:19).

conduct Live such good lives Have your conversation (v. 12). This refers to a person’s way of life, one’s lifestyle. Elsewhere in his letter, Peter used the term similar language in reference to the holiness in which believers are to live their lives (1:15) as well as describing the “empty way of life vain conversations” [the empty way of life] from which believers have been redeemed (v. 18).

Honorably Good Honest (v. 12). The Greek term for *honorably* describes how a person’s actions should appear to others, as being morally good and virtuous.

Gentiles The pagans, The Gentiles (v. 12). The Greek term, which can also be translated as “nations,” “pagans Gentiles,” or “peoples,” is used here to refer broadly to all unbelievers.

Slander Accuse Speak against (v. 12). The Greek term means to speak against or speak evil of (slander) another. Because of their change in lifestyles following salvation, Christians were often misunderstood and viewed negatively. Jesus said that believers are blessed when people slander them, and they should rejoice because their reward is great in heaven (Matt. 5:11-12; see 1 Pet. 4:12-16).

Evildoers Doing wrong (v. 12). The Greek term refers to those who act badly and commit crimes.

Observe your good works See your good deeds May by your good works (v. 12). Unbelievers will *observe see* observe (“inspect”) the good deeds of believers. Jesus commanded His followers to be “salt” and “light” in the world (Matt. 5:13-17). Paul explained that believers were created in Christ to do good works (Eph. 2:10).

Glorify God (v. 12). One of the purposes of being a Christian is to glorify God (Matt. 5:16; 1 Cor. 6:20). The term *glorify* includes the aspects of honor, praise, adoration, reverence, and worship.

The day he visits, The day of visitation (v. 12). This language appears elsewhere in the New Testament only in Luke 19:44. It also appears in Isaiah 10:3 in the Septuagint (the Greek version of the Old Testament). It can refer to the moment of an individual’s salvation. People give glory to God by believing in Christ (Acts 13:48; Rom. 15:7-9; Eph. 1:5-6,14). The phrase can also refer to the day of God’s judgment, when both believers and unbelievers will glorify God by kneeling before Jesus and acknowledging Him as Lord (Phil. 2:10-11).

1. Douglas C. Walker, “Salvation,” in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary, gen. ed. Chad Brand, rev. (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2015), 1403.*

2. Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 85.*