

August 31, 2025

1 Peter 2:4-10 NIV 1984

⁴ As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him— ⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For in Scripture it says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” ⁷ Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone,” ⁸ and “A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they disobey the message— which is also what they were destined for. ⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.



Grace and Declaring the Praises of God

1 Peter 2:4-10

BIG IDEA: Knowing who we are (identity) in Christ propels us to fulfill our purpose of declaring the praises of God.

OUTLINE

I. Identity in Christ (who we are)

1. God-possessed
2. God-separated
3. God-accepted

II. Purpose (what we do)

1. Declaring His praises in worship and service
2. Declaring His praises in sharing the gospel

III. Application

1. Steps to repentance and renewal
2. Motivation for recommitment

DISCIPLESHIP DURING THE WEEK

These “Sermon Discussion Questions” are designed for study during the week for believers in a wide variety of ages & stages in their walk with Christ.

1. What actions and activities would you expect to see from someone who says they are a policeman, a nurse, a mom, or a college student? What do your actions and choices reveal about your identity?
2. Read 1 Peter 2:3-10. Verse 3 can prompt a question like, “How have I tasted and seen that the Lord is good?” In verses 4-8, Peter points out aspects of the Lord’s goodness. For example, I have experienced the goodness of the Lord because I can come to him (4 “As you come to him...”). From the remaining passage, what are some more aspects of the goodness of the Lord?
3. What does Peter want us to understand about our identity in Christ when he says, “you are a living stone, part of a spiritual house?”
4. Peter is writing to exiled Christians scattered across Asia Minor. How might Peter’s words, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own possession,” encourage his audience then? How can you connect your life today with Christians back then? What does it mean to be “a royal priest” of God’s? How is your church “a holy nation?”
5. In the second part of verse 2:9, what is God’s purpose in choosing us to be His people?
6. What areas of your life can reflect the life of a holy priest better? What are the ways that you can proclaim God’s excellencies and His mercy to yourself and to those in your home, neighborhood, and workplaces?

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

“Peter’s readers were rejected by their world; they were exiles scattered throughout Asia Minor. They were a people without status, without honor, and without a home in this world. No one would have made much of them, and many would have made much fun of them. In verses 4-10, Peter encourages them by explaining that, in Christ, they have a new identity that grants them privileged status in the kingdom of God. The church is the new temple and holy priesthood, created to make much of Jesus. It is his fame they, and we, are to work for—and, if we grasp what Peter is telling us here, we’ll joyfully tear down our own platforms and dedicate ourselves to building Christ’s.”

- Juan Sanchez; *1st Peter for You*

Praise to Jesus – Spend some time today praising God because we have experienced His goodness firsthand. Despite being rejected by humanity, Jesus was chosen and cherished by God. Consequently, we are God’s chosen and precious people, living stones destined for greatness. We will not be rejected by God. We are an integral part of the great wall of God’s house, and our purpose is to proclaim the excellencies of God. We offer our lives as spiritual sacrifices to God, just as Christ did for us.

Repentance through Jesus – Confess and repent for not living like one of God’s royal priests in a holy priesthood. Rather than proclaiming God’s greatness and mercy, we’ve talked about ourselves, not valued our lives or others as God does, or sought glory for ourselves. Confess actions, choices, priorities, or conversations that serve as cultural camouflage rather than being set apart as living stones.

Consecration for Jesus – Because we are a chosen people, precious to God, redeemed not rejected, a people of God’s possession, the benefactors of mercy upon mercy, let us commit to live as royal priests who bask in the marvelous light of Jesus; shine and share his excellencies to the folks around you who live in the dark.

FOR FAMILIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

1. Ask your children to describe their process for building a Lego set or a new toy. Or if your family plays Jenga, ask them what would happen if you took out the very bottom piece. (This week's passage uses stone and rock imagery to describe our union with Christ. He is the cornerstone that sets the direction for the entire building and we are the stones that are used to build the rest of the building. The building is the Church, which is the people that Christ adopts and saves as His people.)

2. Read Exodus 19:4-6 and compare it with 1 Peter 2:5, 9. What are the similarities and differences? (Both passages refer to God's people as a holy nation and a priesthood. Both passages flow from God's work of salvation, leading to our grateful obedience and faithfulness. The difference is that in Exodus it deals with God's work of saving His people out of physical slavery in Egypt, while Peter deals with our spiritual salvation out of slavery to sin and into our freedom in Christ.)

3. From verse 9, what are our sacrifices as Christ's chosen people and royal priests? (This verse is not saying that we need to make a sacrifice in order to save ourselves. Christ's death on the cross was a once-and-for-all sacrifice of His life as "the Lamb of God" (John 1:29) or the "Passover lamb" (1 Corinthians 5:7) to accomplish our salvation by taking the just punishment for our sins. In verse 9, it says that we are to "proclaim" or "declare" what God has done in saving us from darkness and being brought into His light. This means that we are to tell others about the salvation of Christ that saves us from the darkness of our sins and brings us into His light. We also are told in Romans 12:1-2 that living our lives for Christ's glory is our proper response to His grace and is our worship.)

Scriptures for further study:

Ephesians 2:20

Hebrews 7:27, 9:12, 10:10

FOR STUDENTS

Scriptures for further study:

Ephesians 2:19-22

Colossians 3:1-4

Psalm 118:22-23

Matthew 21:42

Exodus 19:4-6

Revelation 1:5-6

1. What does it mean that Jesus is the “cornerstone”? Why is it important that our lives are built on Him? What happens when we build our lives on something else—like popularity, success, or comfort?
2. Verse 5 says that we are “living stones” being built into a spiritual house. How does that image help you think about your role in the Church? Do you feel connected to what God is building?
3. Verses 9–10 describe who we are in Christ: chosen, royal, holy, God’s own. Which of these identity statements stands out most to you and why? How might believing that truth change the way you see yourself this week?
4. Verse 9 also tells us our purpose: “to proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness.” What are some ways you can tell others about what Jesus has done in your life—through your words or actions?
5. Peter contrasts believers and unbelievers by how they respond to Jesus. Why do you think some people “stumble” over Jesus (v.8)? How can we help our friends see Jesus as precious instead of offensive?
6. How does knowing you are part of God’s people give you hope, especially when life is hard or you feel like you don’t belong? How can that hope shape your school year, friendships, or family life?

FOR NON-BELIEVERS OR NEW BELIEVERS

1. Our passage refers to Jesus as the Living Stone or Cornerstone.

Question: In terms of how people respond to Jesus, there are basically only two kinds of responses. According to verses 6-8, what are they?

Question: What are the two different outcomes as a result of those responses?

Question: Where do you personally stand with the Lord at this point?

2. In our culture today, many people are eager to create or establish their own identity. But if you are a believer, verses 9-10 already tell us what our identity is.

Ponder: Take some time to dwell and meditate on what God says about us as His special people.

Question: Do you see yourself in these terms?

Question: Are you building any other identity for yourself? Why?

3. According to verse 9, what is our primary purpose in life?

Question: What are some specific ways you are living this out? What are some specific ways you can better live this out?

Living Hope: How God's Glorious Grace in Jesus Shapes and Empowers Us by the Spirit to Live with Gospel Grit in a Foreign Land.



Daniel in the Lion's Den by Briton Riviere, 1872

About the Artist: Briton Rivière, a British painter known for his animal paintings, particularly those featuring dogs and wild animals with deep emotion and dramatic flair, came from an artistic family. His father, William Rivière, was a drawing master and art teacher. Rivière initially studied at the University of Oxford, drawn to literary and historical themes, but later developed a fascination with animals and became renowned for his ability to imbue them with emotional depth and narrative presence.

About the Artwork

"Daniel in the Lion's Den" (1872) depicts the biblical story with lifelike lions, a popular and symbolic theme in Victorian England. It explores faith under trial, divine protection, and moral strength against tyranny, themes that resonated with Victorian audiences during a time when Christian values and moral courage were emphasized.

In Riviere's painting, Daniel's calm, unarmed demeanor symbolizes absolute trust in God. His gaze suggests prayer, hope, or spiritual communion, not fear. He represents the righteous man steady in the face of evil. The lions, though fierce, are subdued, a miracle of restraint. Riviere doesn't show angels or supernatural intervention; the restraint is invisible, spiritual. Some lions are relaxed, others alert, suggesting the tension between nature and divine command. Each lion has a distinct personality, reflecting the mystery of creation. The focused light on Daniel recalls God's presence in darkness. The murky den symbolizes the unknown, death, or temptation, yet Daniel remains untouched. Unlike dramatic biblical scenes, there's no movement or violence. The silence emphasizes Daniel's victory through trust, countering 19th-century action-heavy storytelling with a meditation on spiritual endurance.

1 Peter and Daniel in the Lion's Den

This painting, based on a biblical scene, helps us understand the overall theme of the New Testament letter. 1 Peter teaches Christians that as God's elect, they are called to live holy lives of faithful witness, enduring suffering with hope rooted in God's grace, while embracing their Gospel identity as a holy, royal priesthood in a hostile world. Like Daniel in the Old Testament, we are strangers in a distant place. Jesus told his disciples and us in the Gospel of John that we are "not of this world." Hebrews reminds the church that "this world is not their permanent home." Even within 1 Peter, God's people are called "sojourners and exiles."

Like Daniel, the darkness of this broken, sinful, and fallen world is always present. While we may never face a physical lion, Peter's first letter tells us that our enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, and the spiritual forces of evil are ever present. Yet, like Daniel, we must face the opposition with a Gospel poise, knowing that which is unseen is more powerful than what is seen and against us. Peter uses the language of "standing firm" in God's grace as we encounter all forms of darkness.

Church, may we see the beauty of 1 Peter in its overall message: God's glorious grace leading us to Gospel grit as sojourners in a dark world. But may we not just perceive its beauty but also embrace God's unique calling in these words: stand firm!