

# 1 PETER 2:4-10

## The Only Life Worth Living

**(2:4-10)** *As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in Scripture: ‘Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.’ So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,’ and ‘A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.’ They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*  
(ESV)

Have you ever asked the question or thought to yourself, “Why am I here?” Why is it that we get together every Sunday? What are we doing when we get together on Sunday mornings? How important is it to meet together this week and next week and the week after that? What should we be about when we get together on Sunday mornings? Why is this any better than sleeping in on what for many of us is our only day off of the entire week? How should we be able to describe our time together? When someone asks us, “What is it that you people do on Sunday mornings?” What is it that we should be able to say? What exactly are we here to do?

I believe the answers to these questions run much deeper than the questions lead on. One pastor put it this way:

*The modern evangelical thinks about salvation and about becoming a Christian in almost entirely individualistic terms. The convert doesn’t hear about the church, about the community of faith, until after he has gone forward at an evangelistic meeting or confessed faith at a retreat or in someone’s living room. He may never be told that his Christian life, to be authentic at all, must be the life of someone who lives in the most intimate and structural fellowship with a community of believers like himself and that his great calling as a Christian is to serve the Lord in and through that community. To the extent that the typical evangelical thinks about the church, he thinks of it as an institution that exists to help him in his own, individual walk with God. He does not see the church as his home, his mother, his people, his place of life and work, his family, his calling, his very body, which is the way the church is viewed in the Bible over and over again!*  
( Robert Brayburn – Sermon on 1 Peter 2)

So, in reality, the answer to the question, “Why is it that we get together every Sunday morning?” ought to be the same as the answer to the question, “What has God saved us to do?” And what is it that He has saved us to do?

I think Peter has an answer for us. “As you come to him...”

**WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “COME TO HIM”?**

## **As you come to him... (2:4a – ESV)**

The phrase Peter uses here (πρὸς ὃν προσερχόμενοι) literally reads “towards him approaching him”. This is a really strong and emphatic phrase, meaning to constantly and continually and frequently come into the presence of Christ for intimate and satisfying fellowship; which is our spiritual sustenance (see v. 2).

Let me just ask you at the outset, before we go any further; have you come here tonight with a dry mouth, spiritually speaking? Who among us is feeling weary or dry or spiritually thirsty? Have you been seeking Christ constantly and continually and frequently for fellowship with Him; for spiritual nourishment; for intimacy and satisfaction? Whether you’ve come tonight in the midst of a valley or on the heights of a mountaintop of joy and satisfaction; let’s do everything in our power to ensure that our night together on this night, is defined by our pursuit come into the presence of Christ to enjoy fellowship with Him; to meet with Him in this place on this night.

**Let’s spend a few moments asking the Lord to meet with us and to pour out His Spirit on us this evening.**

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### **HOW SHOULD WE COME TO HIM?**

#### ***...a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious... (2:4b – ESV)***

- As one who gives spiritual sustenance (“As a living stone...”). – As one who is alive and well, giving life to all who come to Him.
  - John 5:21 – *For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will.*
  - John 6:35 – *I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.*
  - 1 Corinthians 15:45 – *Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.*
  - 1 John 5:11-13 – *And this is the testimony that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.*
- As one who has been determined by the world to be unfit to lead them. (“...rejected by men...”)
  - Psalm 118:22 (cf. 1 Peter 2:7) – originally referred to Israel, now applied to Jesus by Peter. (Acts 4:11). They examined Jesus and found Him to be unfit to rule over them as their King.
  - Acknowledging that He has been rejected by the world, makes our coming to Him more meaningful. We do not come for His earthly benefits; we come for His spiritual sustenance.
  - Let’s not be quick to forget that the reality that God used the world’s rejection of Christ to provide redemption for we who would believe.
- As one who is considered by the Father to be “chosen” and “precious”. (“...but in the sight of God chosen and precious...”)
  - The Father values Him above all things.
    - Philippians 2:5-11 – *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* NOTE THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE HONOR OF CHRIST

AND THE GLORY OF THE FATHER. The Father is most pleased when Christ is most treasured!

Think about this one. Christ is “precious” in the sight of the Father. Christ is the “firstborn of all creation” (Colossians 1:15b); in other words, He enjoys a special relationship with the Father that no one else has. He is like the Divine Wisdom of God in Proverbs 8:30-31.

*Then I was beside him, like a master workman, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing before Him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of man. (Proverbs 8:30-31 – ESV)*

Please consider the weight of this. The Father, who is capable of experiencing infinite satisfaction; who never settles for pleasures less than what are fitting for the God of this universe; of all the things in existence, His delight is solely in Christ! I believe C.S. Lewis was right. We are “far too easily pleased”.

We’re going to spend some time in worship through song before we go any further in our text. As we do, let’s think about the manner in which we are worshipping. Will we sing as though the One we are singing to is the source of all spiritual sustenance (“the living stone”)? Will we sing as though we are seeking Christ not for his earthly benefits, but for that spiritual sustenance; accepting Him with full knowledge that the world in large part has rejected Him? Will we sing as though we appreciate the fact that God has used the world’s rejection of Christ to provide our own redemption? Will we sing to Him, as though He is the most precious and most satisfying and most intense source of pleasure in the entire universe, such that the Father would find His own delight in Christ?

**Let’s ask Him to help us worship Him like this before we sing!**

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### WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DO “COME TO HIM”?

***You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (2:5 – ESV)***

- We are being made the place where the Spirit of God is most active. (“...you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house...”)
  - We are being made the place where God chooses to pour out His Spirit in power.
    - John Piper – “There is a presence and power and manifestation of the Spirit of God meant to be known in this gathering of worship that we do not know at any other time in isolation.”
  - What happens in the temple (“the spiritual house”)?
    - The praise of God.
    - Instruction from the Word of God.
    - Service to God.
    - Proclamation of God’s greatness to the world. A place for all people to worship. (Isaiah 56:6-8; Matthew 21:12-13)
  - Ephesians 2:19-22 – *So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.*
  - Some observations on being a spiritual house.

- We belong to one another
  - Everything we do affects the building.
  - The house is only as healthy as its individual bricks. As Christ gives life to us, so we pass on that life to others.
- We are being made not only the place, but the participants of worship. (...”to be a holy priesthood...”)
- Very corporate in focus – focusing on our status and responsibility as a community (more on that in verse 9), which is NOT a new thing in the mind or plan of God.
  - Exodus 19:5-6: *Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*
  - In other words: Robert Brayburn – “The Lord is not as interested in you as a priest, as he is in you being part of a priesthood. And, as a priesthood, he looks upon the church as the great agent of his work, his cause, his kingdom in the world. He sees what the church may do together, how in her unity, how in her common effort, she may do so much that Christians could never do in and of themselves.”
  - Nevertheless, what is the role of the priest? What are we to be about as a community?
    - Walter Bruggemann – “The purpose of the priesthood was to oversee, protect, and assure the effectiveness of the cultic apparatus (organized system of religion) as a way of guaranteeing YHWH’s presence in the midst of Israel.
    - Priests had various functions:
      1. Encourage the body to remain committed to holiness. (Leviticus 10:10; Ezekiel 22:26)
      2. Deliver oracles from YHWH to make His will known to the people.
      3. Offer sacrifices to YHWH on behalf of the community to either maintain, celebrate, or restore fellowship between Him and Israel.
      4. Seek YHWH’s blessing on Israel (Numbers 6:22-26).
      5. Instructed the people in the Torah (OT – Deuteronomy 10:8).
  - Notice that all of these functions are directed toward the community of saints. To be a priest, means to be a minister to God’s people. What we have turned into a very individualistic doctrine (“the priesthood of all believers”), though there are certainly individualistic implications in this doctrine, was originally intended to build up and to minister to the body of Christ. Peter is teaching us this precious doctrine, telling us that God is making all of us priests, so that we will all see that each one of us has a very real and very powerful responsibility to be ministering to the body of Christ (to encourage the body to remain committed to holiness; to help the body know the will of God; to offer spiritual sacrifices [more on that soon] to the Father; to seek God’s blessing on His people; and to instruct one another in the Word). Each of us is called as Christians to the ministry of the priesthood. As we come to Christ for intimate fellowship, the Father is binding us together to make us the place where His Spirit is most active, and through that is making us a community of priests that together with a single unified voice we might “proclaim the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.” Our testimony to the world as a unified community is incalculably stronger than our testimony as individuals.
  - All of this is rooted in our own commitment to holiness (...to be a holy priesthood...)
- We are being called and enabled to offer “spiritual sacrifices” that please the heart of God and work for the benefit of His people. (...to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God...)
- What are these “sacrifices”?

- The offering/sacrifice of our bodies. (Romans 12:1) Whatever we do in our body has potential to be an offering of worship to God.
- The offering/sacrifice of our praise and thanksgiving. (Hebrews 13:15)
- The offering/sacrifice of our acts of love. (Philippians 4:18, Hebrews 13:16)
- The offering/sacrifice of our converts. (Romans 15:15-16)
- The offering/sacrifice of our prayers. (Revelation 8:3-4)
- When are these sacrifices “acceptable to God”?
  - When they are “spiritual sacrifices.” (i.e. Sacrifices that are offered out of a pure heart. Cf. Psalm 51:16-17; Isaiah 1:10-20)
  - When they are offered “through Jesus Christ”.
    1. Empowered by Christ.
    2. Offered in obedience to Christ
    3. Offered for the glory of Christ.

These are the things that are occurring on these otherwise ordinary Tuesday nights. As we constantly and frequently and continually come to the presence of Christ to enjoy intimate fellowship with Him, we are being made into a spiritual house where as we continue to do life together the Lord will choose to manifest His power increasingly. As He does this, He is also making us a community of priests who have been called to give their life to build up the community of believers in Christ; for the purpose of offering sacrifices from pure hearts; sacrifices that are empowered by Christ, out of obedience to Christ, and to the glory of Christ. Who would have thought that so much could take place in a living room on a Tuesday night!

**SO WHAT? WHAT IS THE POINT?**  
**What should we walk away from tonight with?**

- The Christian life, according to Scripture, is defined by believers doing life together.
  - a. Robert Brayburn – “The modern evangelical thinks about salvation and about becoming a Christian in almost entirely individualistic terms. The convert doesn’t hear about the church, about the community of faith, until after he has gone forward at an evangelistic meeting or confessed faith at a retreat or in someone’s living room. He may never be told that his Christian life, to be authentic at all, must be the life of someone who lives in the most intimate and structural fellowship with a community of believers like himself and that his great calling as a Christian is to serve the Lord in and through that community. To the extent that the typical evangelical thinks about the church, he thinks of it as an institution that exists to help him in his own, individual walk with God. He does not see the church as his home, his mother, his people, his place of life and work, his family, his calling, his very body, which is the way the church is viewed in the Bible over and over again! He does not think of himself as a stone in the wall of a spiritual house.”
  - b. Where do we see this kind of “individualistic Christianity” around us today?
  - c. Where does this perspective come from?
  - d. What does it look like in our culture, to do life together like we have been called to?