

Subject: *Our Spiritual Blessings in Christ – Part 1*

Scripture: *1 Peter 2:1-10*

This message is about the special blessings we have as Christians. You are probably familiar with the song, “Count Your Blessings.” It goes like this: “Count your blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise what the Lord has done.” Many of the letters in the NT remind us of who Christ is and who His people are, or in other words, there is a Redeemer and this is what it means to be His redeemed people.

Believers have blessings that unbelievers do not have. We could call them privilege. By definition, a privilege is a benefit, advantage, or favor that may be attached to a position or an office.” A privilege is a blessing enjoyed by some people, but not by all. Christians are a group of people who enjoy unique, spiritual blessings, given by God because of their position in Christ. In our text Peter mentions several spiritual blessings that believers have because of our salvation in Christ. We will look at four of them today.

1. We taste the Lord’s goodness (vs. 3)

To taste the Lord’s goodness (KJV, grace; NASB, kindness; ESV, goodness) means we experience it for ourselves.

Psalms 34:8 O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

2. We draw near to Christ (vs. 4)

Peter describes believers as those who are “coming to” Him. This includes our conversion when we came to Christ in faith and repentance, but it means more than that. It describes believers as drawing near to Christ in fellowship and communion, having the privilege to stay close to Him.

Peter reminds us that Christ is a living stone. This refers to Him as the foundation stone of a building. He is the living stone because He rose from the dead and is alive forevermore. Christ is the living foundation stone who is “disallowed” (rejected after close inspection) of men, but chosen of God and precious. Isaiah prophesied that Christ would be despised and rejected by men.

Isaiah 53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Christ was regarded as having no value and being unworthy of honor.

John described how Christ was rejected by men, but received by those who believed on Him.

John 1:10-13 ¹⁰ *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.* ¹¹ *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.* ¹² *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:* ¹³ *Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

Believers understand that Christ is “chosen by God and precious” (costly, highly prized, rare).

3. We are the Lord's temple (vs. 5)

Believers are living stones because of our union with Christ (the living stone, vs. 5), and we are built up a spiritual house (temple).

In the OT God had a temple for His people, but in the NT God has a people for His temple.

4. We are a holy priesthood (vs. 5)

Verse 9 says we are a "royal priesthood." When we think of priests we may think of priest in the Catholic Church or the OT Jewish priests that God ordained to offer sacrifices on behalf of the people. But the text says that believers make up a holy priesthood. In other words, all believers are priests. What does that mean? We find several characteristics of God's priests.

- A. Priests are chosen by God – In the OT God chose the tribe of Levi to be priests. In the NT all believers are chosen by God to be priests. This is a high privilege

The vast world of unbelievers has no access to God. By nature they are far off from God. But Christians have access into His presence.

Hebrews 10:19-22 ¹⁹ Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; ²¹ And having an high priest over the house of God; ²² Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

- B. Priests are cleansed from sin – Before the OT priests began their duties in the Tabernacle and the Temple God cleansed them.
- C. Priests are clothed for service – The OT priests wore special garments. In the NT believers are clothed with the righteousness of Christ and sanctified for service.
- D. Priests are anointed for service – The OT priests were anointed with oil that symbolized God's presence and power for service. In the NT believers are anointed by the Holy Spirit to serve as priests.
- E. Priests are prepared for service – In the OT we read in Leviticus 8 that the priests were ordained and remained in the tabernacle for seven days before their ordination was fulfilled. These were days of preparation. Believers must be spiritually prepared to serve the Lord.
- F. Priests are called to obedience – The OT priests were to obey God's commands and serve Him in the prescribed manner. Believers must serve God in His way, not our own.
- G. Priests offer sacrifices to God – The OT priests offered animal sacrifices and that had to be done according to God's plan. We understand how serious this was when we read about Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, when they offered strange fire to the Lord. This was unauthorized sacrifice, and God sent fire that killed them.

Believers now offer “spiritual sacrifices” that are acceptable to God. Animal sacrifices are no longer needed since Christ came and died for our sins on the cross. His sacrifice was sufficient to redeem us, but there are sacrifices that we must offer.

We offer ourselves to God as “living sacrifices.” This includes our bodies, minds, and hearts. **Romans 12:1** *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

We offer praise and thanksgiving. **Hebrews 13:15** *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.*

We offer good works and sharing with others. **Hebrews 13:16** *But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

We offer unselfish love toward others. **Ephesians 5:1-2** ¹ *Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;* ² *And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor.*

Applying the Truth

- All believers enjoy all these blessings.

These blessings are not just for a special group; they are for all believers in Christ.

- Believers enjoy blessings the world does not have.

Christians are a privileged people and we should live like it.

- Believers enjoy these blessings in all circumstances.

Peter is going to say a lot in this letter about Christians suffering for their faith, but even when we suffer we are still richly blessed. No suffering can ever take away our blessings.