

Sermon 9: “Now the People of God” Part 1

Text: 1 Peter 2:5-10 “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.”

Purpose: The purpose of this section was to remind these Christian’s that their new position in Christ was full of rich blessings and humbling purposes for God’s glory.

Proposition: God wants us to reflect on these rich blessings we have as a body of Christians.

Interrogative: How can we do this?

Truth 1: The church forms two distinct and glorious functions: “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ...”

- **One preliminary thought: The temple of the Holy Spirit is described in two ways in the New Testament:**
 - **Individuality: Paul refers to each individual Christian as the temple of the Holy Spirit: 1 Corinthians 3:16-17** “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are...”
 - **Interdependence: 1 Corinthians 6:19** What? know ye not [plural] that your body [singular] is the temple [singular] of the Holy Ghost which is in you [plural], which ye have of God [plural], and ye are not your own [plural]?
 - **Peter’s point Interdependence: 2:10** “Ye also, as lively stones [plural], are built up a spiritual house [singular]...”
- **Function 1: We Function as God’s Temple: “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house...”**
 - **We like the temple of old have a special sense of God’s presence: Revelation 2:1** “Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks...”
 - **We like the temple of the old find a special place of repentance, sacrifice, and reconciliation: 1 Corinthians 11:26-29** “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body...”

- **We like the temple of old are a place for communion with God: Ephesians 3:14-19** “I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, **That he would grant you**, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; **That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ**, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be **filled with all the fullness of God...**”
- **We like the temple of old are a place for personal and corporate worship to God: Hebrews 12:28** “We receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear...”
- **Final practical thought:** We with all our diverse backgrounds, gifts, and personalities all are fitted together by God in His wisdom into a building that He chooses to inhabit.

- **Function 2: We function as God’s Priesthood: “An holy priesthood...**

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 “All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.”

- We were created in His image and for His glory
- We revel His glory to the nations
- We represent His presence in a fallen, crooked world

Truth 2: The church’s worship is accepted because of its union with Christ:

“To offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ...”

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...”

- **Our acceptability to God both personally and corporately is not rooted in ourselves, but in the perfection of Christ and our union with Him: Matthew 5:3** Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 - **Positional Acceptance: Romans 3:21-22** “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe...”
 - **Practical Acceptability: Ephesians 5:25-29** Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, **That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.** So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church... **Philippians 1:11** Being **filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ**, unto the glory and praise of God...

Six Practical Implications:

- The Christian life was never designed to be lived in isolation. We need each other, and have been providential placed into this congregation by God, for His glory, and for our mutual growth into Christ-likeness.
- When we meet as a body, God is present with us in a very special way, and we are strengthened by His willingness to meet with us in this special way.
- Since He is present with us in this way, we rob ourselves and one another of opportunities to be strengthened by God when we neglect to assemble with His people.
- We have a sacred calling both as individuals and as a local church to represent God's presence and character to the nations no matter their disposition toward God and us.
- Our acceptability to God and our worship toward Him is entirely rooted in His righteousness imputed to us and the work of His Spirit in us, filling our lives with the fruits of righteousness.
- We should be humbled and mobilized to purposeful God centered living in the light of these wonderful truths!