

“We Are God’s House of Living Stones”
(1 Peter 2:4-10 – Easter 5 – May 3, 2026)

1 Peter 2:4-10 – ⁴*Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, ⁵you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, “Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.” ⁷Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, “The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone,” ⁸and “A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.” They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. ⁹But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*

Dear living stones in the spiritual house built on Christ our Cornerstone:

In old times when stonemasons constructed a building, they first laid the cornerstone. It was the largest stone which was measured, shaped, and set in place with great precision. That cornerstone defined all the angles of the building. The stonemasons would lay the rest of the foundation in line with that one cornerstone. Then they would choose stones to shape and fit together in the rising walls.

Our text compares this to how God is building His Church. But it is not talking about a building constructed of stones and mortar. It is talking about all the people God is bringing together in the great rising structure of His Church of believers, from every age and every land. What we all have in common is that we are built on Christ, the Cornerstone and foundation of our salvation. All the angles and walls of God’s house are built in line with Christ and His Word, His saving truth. As we are joined to Him by faith, we receive His spiritual and eternal life. As it says: *“Coming to Him as to a living stone... you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ”* (vs. 4-5). Therefore, let us consider this truth: **“We Are God’s House of Living Stones”: 1) Built on Christ our Cornerstone, 2) Serving as His holy priesthood.**

1) Built on Christ our Cornerstone

Stonemasons would choose the best stones to shape and fit together in the walls, to provide optimum strength and aesthetics for the building. If they came across faulty stones that could not be used, they would toss them aside as worthless. If God were to pick out the people to make up His Church, whom would He choose? Would we expect Him to pick only the best, those who seem to have no faults or imperfections, those who appear

to get everything right in life? Would He take one look at us and say, “Nope! There are too many faults and blemishes in this one – too many sinful thoughts and bad attitudes in this heart; too many misspoken and hurtful words from this mouth; too many shameful and regretful deeds in this life...” Would we expect God to just toss us aside as unusable and worthless?

Yet He has graciously chosen us to be “*living stones... built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood.*” Think of those whom Jesus chose as His disciples. They were full of sin and faults – Matthew, who had worked among the tax collectors, notorious for greed and dishonesty; Peter, who often spoke and acted rashly, boasting in His faithfulness to Jesus yet denying Him; James and John, who coveted a place at Jesus’ right and left hand in Glory; and all the disciples, who jealously argued about who was the greatest, even as Jesus prepared to die for them. These are the kinds of disciples Jesus chose.

To this day, His Church is full of faulty sinners! After all, who else does He have to choose from? “*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:23). No one measures up to His standard of perfection. We all deserve to be tossed out as unusable and worthless. As sinners who by nature were spiritually dead toward God, we all deserved to be cast out of His presence in eternal death.

Yet in His infinite grace and mercy, God has chosen us to be living stones in His spiritual house, those whom He calls His holy priesthood, His saints! How can this be? It is because He has built us on Jesus Christ His Son, the Cornerstone of our salvation. He is the “*living Stone,*” the crucified and risen Savior, who has taken away all our sins and defeated death for us. He is the source of our salvation and eternal life.

Yet though Jesus is the perfect Savior, He was tossed out by human builders. The religious and political leaders of the day had other plans for building God’s house. They had no use for a Savior of sinners; they were building their hopes on their own works and holiness before God. They had no use for the heavenly Kingdom Jesus preached; they were building their hopes on an earthly kingdom of glory. Jesus was like an extra stone lying around on their building site, getting in the way, causing them to stumble. So they tossed Him out like a worthless stone, condemning Him to death on the cross.

The unbelieving world still wants to toss Him out. To the ears of unbelief, the Gospel of Christ crucified sounds weak and foolish for saving anyone from sin and death. It sounds worthless for winning any kind of kingdom in this world let alone in heaven. So Christ remains to them: “*‘A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.’ They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed*” (vs. 8).

Yet by God’s design: “*The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone*” (vs. 7). Through the rejection, suffering, and death of His Son on the cross,

God was laying the Cornerstone of our salvation. In Christ, our crucified and risen Savior, God was taking away all our sins and winning for us a place in His spiritual house and eternal life in His Kingdom.

“Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.’ Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious” (vs. 6-7). In Christ, God has given us His most precious gift. He has forgiven all our sins and faults. He has not rejected us but chosen us. His Spirit has called us to faith by the Gospel. He has justified us in Christ, building us straight and true into His House of believers, His Holy Church. As living stones, built on Christ our Cornerstone, we will by no means be put to shame; our hope in Him will not be disappointed. We will dwell with Him forever in God’s house, in the place Jesus is preparing for us in His Father’s mansions (John 14:2-3).

2) Serving as His holy priesthood

As God’s house of living stones, built on Christ our Cornerstone, God has given us a special place in serving as His holy priesthood. It says: *“You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy”* (vs. 9-10).

Masons may use stones of various shapes and sizes, gathered from different places. But they carefully shape and fit them all together according to the builder’s design. So in Christ, God has chosen us from various backgrounds, as those who once were not His people; He has brought us together as His own special people. We are of all types and personalities, still sinful and full of faults like the first disciples. Yet He is shaping us, fitting us, and building us all together according to His great design and purpose. It is no accident that we are gathered, in this time and place, as congregations, as a joint parish – united by our faith in Christ and His Word of truth, united in our work together.

By God’s design and purpose, we serve as *“a royal priesthood, a holy nation.”* In the Old Testament nation of Israel, God chose some to serve as priests in His temple. Their role was to represent the people before God, bringing sacrifices for their sins and praying in their behalf. Then they represented God to the people, declaring His forgiveness and promises of salvation. Now as believers in Christ, God has made all of us *“a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ”* (vs. 5). This has nothing to do with making atonement for sins by our sacrifices, good works, or anything we do. Since Christ our great High Priest has sacrificed Himself once for all, no more sacrifice for sin is needed. God counts our service in His Church holy and acceptable because He has cleansed us by the blood of Christ.

What are our “*spiritual sacrifices*”? They are simply sacrifices of thanksgiving; all the ways we show our thankful response of faith to God’s gift of salvation in Christ, in our worship and our service. The apostle Paul wrote in Romans 12:1: “*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*” God’s grace in Christ inspires us to live our whole lives as sacrifices of thanksgiving. God’s Spirit leads us joyfully to serve our Savior who loved us and gave Himself for us. We want to use all the gifts He gives us – our strengths and abilities, money and possessions, time and energy – all to His glory. We want all that we do to be in line with the Chief Cornerstone, Christ and His Word. We want to share His truth and His love with others.

As it says, an important reason God has made us His holy priesthood is “*that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light*” (vs. 9). We proclaim His praises as we worship Him, offering “*the sacrifice of praise to God... giving thanks to His name*” (Hebrews 13:15) for all the riches of His grace in Christ. We also proclaim His praises as we go out into our daily callings and share our faith. As God’s priesthood of believers, we can represent Him before people as we shine the light of His Gospel in this sin-darkened world. We can share the Good News that Christ has won full and free forgiveness and salvation for all.

At the same time, we can represent people before God. We can come boldly before His throne of grace in Jesus’ name, with prayers for all people – in the Church, in government, in society, for all who are in need; praying that the Gospel would proceed freely to the ends of the earth, so that many more may come to faith. Such prayer and intercession “*is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth*” (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

We are God’s house of living stones. As sinful and faulty as we are, God has graciously chosen us as part of His great design. He has built us on Christ, the Cornerstone of our salvation. He has cleansed us of all sin by the blood of His Son and covered in His holiness. As His holy priesthood, we get to serve out of thankfulness and joy! We get to proclaim the praises of Him who calls sinners out of the darkness into the marvelous light of His salvation! By His Gospel, He is gathering more and more souls by faith into His Kingdom, building us all together in the great rising structure of His Church. Until at last, we will take our place in the heavenly mansions with eternal foundations, which Jesus is preparing for us in His Father’s house.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. Amen.