

I have just finish doing Christianity explored with a lovely young lady, with a Roman catholic background. She was a delight to read the bible with because she came with the question "How can I connect with God?"

She was looking for God but didn't know how to have a relationship with him. Her Roman Catholic background taught her that we was a sinner, did that really well, but didn't really give her any satisfying answers on how to deal with her sin. Which she knew prevent her from having a relationship with God, so what the Roman catholic church offered was confession, penance and having to do good works to undo the bad works.

Like all other religions it is about how you have to get yourself to a point that God will accept you.

The verse that this young lady highlight which was a moment of clarity for her was Mark 2:17

Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

To hear that Jesus came for sinners, not the good people was a revelation and a liberation for her and when we talked about Grace, that we are not good enough and we can never be good enough, and it is only through Jesus death and resurrection that we can be right with God and have a connection, she found the answer to her question.

As Christians we should never forget that, the fact that we are saved by grace, not by works.

And we do good works because we are saved not to be saved.

All pretty basic isn't it, it is a foundational teaching of our faith.

We do things not to be saved, we do things because God has saved us.

We obey because we have been set free from the bondage of sin.

Last week

**22** Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. **23** For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

Do see the pattern?

This is what has been done for you in Jesus, and now this is who you are,  
Because this is who you are "do this"

We do what we do because of who we are in Jesus.

Today's passage is the same.

Peter tells us who we are in Jesus and then tells us what we are to do in light of who we are.

We start of quite appropriately with Jesus. Peter uses the metaphor of a building stone and living stone.

**4** As you come to him,  
                   the living Stone—  
                   rejected by men  
                   but chosen by God  
                   and precious to him—

Jesus who was rejected by man, we know that from the Gospels, Jesus came to earth and man abused him and nailed him on a cross but in God eyes he is the chosen one, the anointed and precious.

And Quoting from Isaiah and Psalms v6-8

He adds to this that Jesus is the Cornerstone in 6 and the capstone in v7.

Talk about mixed metaphors.

The cornerstone is that stone when you are building a stone building, which you set first and every other stone, which is then laid, is referenced to that stone in the corner.

So the cornerstone is the most important stone, if it is not right the whole building is not right.

So in v6, Jesus is the Cornerstone that God has laid again chosen and precious. And whoever trust in him will never put to shame, your trust will him will be validated, he will not let you down.

And with The Capstone imagery there is a couple of options.

1. Capstone, is the top stone of a wall or other structure, because it at the top it is usually the best stone, because of it's place of prominence.

Which makes sense in the context the stone that the builders didn't think was good enough and was rejected but is now highest and most prominent stone.

2. The capstone, when talking about an Arch is that stone which is more commonly called the key stone, is the stone right at the top of the arch which if it wasn't there or it is a bad stone, the whole arch would fall.

Either one works you can choose:

But the message is clear, Jesus is this precious chosen living stone from God, which has been rejected by man and will continue to be rejected by men.

So who are we? We are believers

V7 Now to you who believe this stone is precious.

We believe Jesus is precious, he is worthy of us building our lives around him, he is valuable to us. He is our cornerstone, He is our capstone even though people around us will reject him, we believe he is precious, we believe he is valuable.

But those who do not believe

They don't value him, they don't accept him, they reject him and on that day when God judges us all, they will face that Judgement without Jesus. They will fall, they will face the full force of God's anger, because they have rejected the only person who could protect them from that.

We also must remember the context, the readers of this letter are under persecution because of their faith, and here Peter is reminding people that this persecution, this rejection by men will happen, it happen to Jesus, it will happen to us. It is to be expected.

Peter will go into more details later chapters 3 and 4. So I won't say much more but if you are keen read it yourself when you get home.

So who are we? We are believers and Jesus is precious to us.

Do you notice all this building language Peter is using?  
What is being built?

V4 As you come to him, the Living Stone (Jesus)

**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.

We are being built into a spiritual house, so not a literal house, but a spiritual house. With the choice of words Peter uses Priesthood, offering, sacrifices what is on show here is the OT temple.

Where the Old testament temple was made out of stone, this temple is made of living stones, us.

The Old testament temple represented where God dwelt, so if you had meet God you would go to the temple, and in the temple you couldn't meet God you needed someone to

intercede for you, not anyone, but someone who was special and in the OT it was someone from the tribe of Levi, a priest.

But now this temple is not made of stone, the OT is gone, but it made of living stone, made up of believers and in Christianity there is no priesthood unless that priesthood is all of us.

What is this spiritual house? It is the Church, the gathered people of God. That is why we can meet here in a school hall, and legitimately say we are a church, because the church are built from living stones, it is people that are the church and never the building.

We are now the temple of God. Where does God's spirit dwell? In our hearts, in his people.

Friends as a Christian, we cannot be lone Christian, you will here people say, I don't need to go to church to be a Christian.

But again what does God call us, what is he making us to be?

Spiritual house

**V9** But you are a chosen people,  
                   a royal priesthood,  
                   a holy nation,  
                   a people belonging to God,

Friends to be Christian is to belong to God's family, is to belong to God's people.

People, Priesthood, nation these are words that describes collectives not individuals.

Friends I think sometimes, I know I do, I see Church like how the world sees it, the world that rejects the living stone.

Church isn't that attractive, it's boring, it's stayed on and on...

But I think I lose sight of what we are? What we really are now and not just in the future.

Does anyone here belong to an exclusive club?

See I can't speak much because I don't. But I know people who are members of at SCG, as members they can sit in the members stand, no one else can but only members, I'm not sure about tickets but I think they will get tickets to the big games.

To be a member gives you exclusive privileges others people don't have.

The Qantas Club

faster check-in

Dedicated check in

Extra baggage allowance

You get to use the Qantas lounge

Free food and drinks

Internet

Shower facilities

No-one else is allowed in but members only.

What is attractive is the member's only status, it is exclusive, not everyone get the benefits only the members.

It is hard thinking about our church as exclusive because we have an open door for all who do want to join.

But look at the benefits,

You are a chosen people:

You have been truly chosen, God has chosen you, no not because we are good or better, due to no merit of our own God has chosen us. We are special to God, God knows us individually, it not like "The some money making promotions, you have been chosen for our chance to win a million dollar in our raffle"

No God chose you, to be a part of his people. The bible tells us that not all people are chosen. But you are.

You are a Royal priesthood:

Like the OT priest we have access to God, we have been made right with him so we can enter the Holy of Holies, into God's presence.

So we can intercede for other people, we can pray for people, we can bring everything to God and God has said he will hear and answer our prayers.

Because we have this privileged access to God, people will meet God through us.

The priesthood is there to serve God and others, and that is our role now, it is a role of honour.

Because we are a royal priesthood, we serve Royalty, we serve the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, we serve Jesus.

People brag about who they work for don't they, in Accounting I work for Ernest and Young, KPMG, Deloitte

If you are lawyer, Freehills, Claton Utz, Allens, Slater and Gordon

I work for Google.

Hey Guys I work for King of Kings and the Lord of Lords and so do all of us who believe.

You are a Holy Nation.

As a people group we are Holy, we have been chosen set apart for God's purposes.

And we are God's nation.

Have you ever ask yourselves why about 150,000 people from overseas move to Australia to stay? Why people around the world value Australian citizenship?

Why people will desperately jump on leaky boats just for a chance of living in Australia?

Because we live in a very bless country. Our nation is a good place to live.

According to the Human Development Index which uses life expectancy, education and income. Australia ranks no.2 second only to Norway.

This index says that we have a great living standard.

In Engadine our local convenience store was sold and was taken over by a Chinese family. Got to know the owner because it was where I bought my milk and bread almost every second day. I found out that back in China he was a Doctor, but for him and his family he decided it was better to be a small store owner in Australia than a Doctor working in a big hospital in China.

Says a lot about our nations doesn't it?

People are desperate to come to Australia with the hope of becoming a citizen, because I Australia we got it pretty good.

But friends yes we live in Australia and we do have the benefits of citizenship being Australian.

We have even greater benefits, because we have citizenship in God's kingdom, we have every spiritual blessing in Jesus, we have the promise that God is looking after us. We have the promise of life eternal, even though life might be hard, we have the assurance that God is in control and God is good and he has our Good in mind.

We have this privileged of being a citizen of God's Holy Nation.

We belong to God.

Friends, be encouraged, see the riches and the privileges you have because you believe in Jesus.

Friends these privileges are given to you for a reason

V9 that you may declare the praises of him

who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

As we draw near to Jesus he is building us to be church, chosen people, royal priesthood, holy nation, a people belonging to God so we can declare his praises.

We sometimes narrow our thinking of praising God to just singing songs, I love singing, I love music but it is only a small part of praising God.

Friends we praise other people and things all the time.

Go the Swanies

Go the Tah's

Go and see Jersey Boys great musical.

The Honey Bee great restaurant

We declare that these things are good and others should take notice.

Friends we have been given great blessing, we are privileged by God do will give him the credit.

Had a funny experience this week from a non-Christian friend, he own the Melthouse down at Kingsgrove, So Erin and I played some Jazz standards a brought in about 16 people into his shop plus his other customer it was a full house. For him it was a great night, he made money, he had a full house and during the week one of the people who was eating there that night was telling what a great night they had to another friend, that friend booked out the place last night with 40 people. He was overjoyed, he knows I'm a pastor, I have used God language with him before, but as he was telling me this he said " I Thank God for you, and the people that you bring here, I thank God for our friendship"

I'm there gobsmack, his not a Christian but he there declaring that all these good things that happen to him is from God.

My friend is praising God

It is easy to praise God when things that you want to happen happens, like my friend.

But friends we who truly believes know that our God is a good God even when things don't go the way we want.

Yesterday we had a funeral at Bevo, Charlie Smith died, it was very sad, but God name was praised because Charlie is a believer, and we know that he is with God and we will meet again.

God is good because even death cannot stop his blessings.

Another friend of mind is going through a marriage break up, he is heart broken, he is angry, he is very sad but he praising God because he hasn't doubted God's goodness, he praises God for the strength that he has given his children who haven't turned bitter to him or God, He praises God that when his anger becomes bitter he is able to pray and repent and a real change in his emotion is felt.

Friends we are

9 But you are a chosen people,  
a royal priesthood,  
a holy nation,  
a people belonging to God,

We are so blessed in Jesus,

Let's go and tell others how Good our God is.