

Living Stones

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Date: 05 December 2021

[0:00] Talking about living stones. 1 Peter 2, if you've got the Bible, so we're going to read from verse 1. It says this, 1 Peter 2, verse 1, Wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes desire the sincere meal of the word, that ye may grow thereby, if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

2 Peter 3, verse 1.

3 And he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 4 Unto you, therefore, which believe he is precious, but unto them which be disobedient the stone, which the builders disallow, the same is made the head of the corner, and the stone of stumbling, and the rock of a fence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed.

5 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 hath not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

5 Let's pray. 5 Lord, we thank you for your precious word, that you are precious, so we that believe, and Lord, we can come to these precious promises in your word, and take them to heart, and make them alive in our lives today.

[1:56] 6 Lord, for this church, Pastor Athol and Sharon, Lord, we pray for them, for the continued growth of this church, and your ministry here. 6 Lord, we thank you for the privilege we have just to be together as your people, in this time and place, for your glory.

Lord, we pray. In Jesus' name, Amen. Living stones, living stones. Looking here at God's great building plan, the church. The church, what it is.

What it's meant to be. How God wants it to be. And of course, the church is not about the physical meeting place. It's about the living stones. The building blocks, the human beings that we are.

That God's brought us together as a spiritual building. A spiritual building. Verse 5 talks about the spiritual house. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up.

A spiritual house. A holy priesthood. To offer up spiritual sacrifices. Acceptable to God. By Jesus Christ. So, there's a wonderful picture here.

[2:56] If you can imagine, that picture we started with. Different building stones. Different shapes and sizes. That's the picture, isn't it? Not like a modern house with all the bricks the same size.

But we're all different, aren't we? And what a picture that is of the church of God. As living stones. Lively stones. You and me. Alive. Vibrant. Living. Truly living.

And we're truly alive because we've been born again. We've got new life. And as I referred to Noota. You can go up to Noota today. They call it Australia's Little Cornwall. Australia's Little Cornwall.

That copper triangle, can't you? And you can see those houses built out of stones. Rough stones. Plain. Basic rough stones. Many different shapes and sizes.

And made together. Cemented together. To make a house. And what a picture that is of the church. As those old miners' cottages of long ago, they're still standing rock solid.

[3:53] Built strong. Still standing after 150 odd years. They didn't have some council assessment report to comply with. I don't imagine. Yet they've passed the test of time, haven't they?

Those buildings. Miners' cottages. And miners' buildings. They're still strong today. And likewise we. We are brought together as lively living stones.

Different shapes and sizes. Brought together. Cemented together by love. By the Spirit of God. We're made stronger together. Knit together in love. There's the picture there, isn't it? Made into a house. A strong house. So how do you build a church? Like some have said, that church is a verb. Church is a verb.

Church is not a place. It's something we do. We do together. It's a togetherness. There's something about when we gather, when we assemble. Which is what the church is.

[4:51] It's an assembly, isn't it? It's an assembly. And he's put us together like you would assemble a construction kit. That's what we are, isn't it? We're constructed together by his Spirit.

We're called together. There's a getting together of God's people. There's something special. It's precious there. And we are the church. We are called to be the church. It's not so much the place we meet.

It's the meeting together. That's what matters. And we're called to be that. To be the church. To do church together. And really there's a call that goes out for worshippers to come.

To come together. The call goes out. The rallying cry. The solemn assembly. Join the solemn assembly. Come and join. Come and gather. Gather as a body. And there's that picture there of that gathering.

Those different building blocks that make us one people together. As this local church body. And together we're motivated, aren't we? We're called together. We're motivated to mission.

[5:51] To reaching out. Beyond this group. To invite others. To welcome others. To gather others. To be together in mission. And to do holy exploits together.

And Peter in his second chapter here. He talks about his building program. God's building. The church. Peter talks about. If you like. You can see some stages of building here.

As we see. He first tells us how to get rid of some things. And then to get more of some things. So. Firstly when we know. When we're here and we have to build a building.

I know there's some in the building going here. There's that empty block. That lot of land. And then. You've got to get those construction materials together. But there's firstly something you've got to do.

You've got to clear the block. You've got to get a sort out. And identify. Get rid of some materials. And the waste. And things that might hinder. It might have to cut down a few trees.

[6:47] Firstly there's some things to lay aside. When we're building a church. There's things to lay aside. Things to put away. Things that might hinder the construction. Of a spiritual house.

And there's things you could say. To repent of. To drop off. Things that will hinder. The building work. We see that there in 1 Peter 2. Verse 1. Where it says. Wherefore laying aside.

All malice. And all guile. And hypocrisies. And envies. And all evil speaking. So there's some things there. In that list there. We can think of some things to get rid of.

Things that would hinder a church. And stop it thriving. Toxic things you could say. God's wanting the building materials. The living stones. To get right. To get ready.

To get right with him. And right with one another. That's God's ideal isn't it? That we're a people made right with God. We're saved. And we're right with each other. As we're getting on with each other.

[7:41] When we think about what Peter tells to get rid of. It brings to mind what rather we ought to have. To replace those things. On that list there. Malice. Guile.

Hypocrisies. Envy. Evil speakings. To find the opposite of all of those things. They'd be the good things. Wouldn't they? That God wants his church to be. In that right place with one another.

To have that heart for one another. To encourage one another. I know in that earlier reading. At 1 Thessalonians 5 verse 11. It talked about edify one another.

That's the picture isn't it? Edify. Of course edify needs to. Build up. Build up. Build up. That's right. We want to have a building program. Right here. Don't we? In this local outreach.

This local. God's community. Right here. In this place. To have a building program. To edify one another. It's about one another. And about getting right with one another.

[8:37] Being peacemakers. That kindness. That caring. That forgiveness. The Bible tells us much about one another. One another. There's some 59 times it says.

One another. In the word of God. Some examples. For example. Pray for one another. That's a good one isn't it? Pray for one another. Pray for the pastor. Pray for the needs.

Pray for your brothers and sisters. Pray for one another. Love one another. Many times it says.

Love one another. Encourage one another. Serve one another.

Forgive one another. Be patient with one another. That's needed isn't it? Be patient. Bear one another's burdens. Do we do that? Let's have a heart to do that.

Care for one another. Be kind one to another. And build up one another. Edify one another. So there's many more. And you can look at it. You can look at lists of them on the internet.

[9:31] 59 of them. 59 times. The Lord wants us to be knit together.

There's a togetherness. Those building blocks. Those living stones. Knit together. Joined together.

Cemented together. He wants us to have that kind of heart. That we knit together in love. It reads.

Let brotherly love continue. And so. A real short verse to learn.

Four words. Let brotherly love continue. So he wants us to be a people filled with himself. Filled with grace. Filled with gracious words. To love one another. To care for one another.

To be kind to one another. And have that Christful heart. Christ filled heart. That extends grace.

That rents us out. Edifying one another. It's very important.

Because we need one another. To edify one another. Don't we? That you come to church. And you edify one another. You exalt one another. I know. Even the pastor likes to be exalted.

[10:26] And edify. It's not all one way. It's two ways. Isn't it brother?

The pastor needs to be a bit of a lift sometimes. Amen. We all need to edify one another. Care for one another.

Have that heart for each other. To encourage one another. Especially when you get rock strung at your car. There's need for encouragement. You know. I thought Elizabeth was bad.

Why are we a different? God has made us to fit together. It's strange isn't it? The world doesn't get that. They'll be different. But we're brought together. Just like those different blocks.

Those stones. Build a minus cottage. And it still stands strong today. Just like those stones. We're different. But we fit it together. It's amazing isn't it?

To think. The different countries and cultures and backgrounds we've all had. We're all different. But we're one. We're one body. And Peter goes on to tell about some things to cultivate in this building program that is the church.

[11:25] We read of the kind of people who are those living stones. The living stones. Lively stones. In this living assembly of God. Firstly, these living stones are to be, I put to you, hungry people.

Hungry people. Now it's not lunch time yet. But we can start to get hungry, can't we? And we need that anticipation. That when God wants us to have that same kind of hungering, that desiring for his work.

That's what we want to get hungry for. Amen? Don't you believe that? Amen. A desire for him, that motivation, that hungering, that delighting after his will.

That we be hungry people. Hungry. A healthy Christian is a hungry Christian. And we should be hungering for every meeting that comes, that we can get to, that we hunger after.

More fellowship. More of the word. More of his truth. More of my growing as a believer. A healthy Christian is a hungry Christian.

[12:25] Get hungry for the meeting tonight. For the meeting through the week. To get that hungry and thirsting for the things of God. That you want more. You want to grow. And there's that cultivating of that wanting to be together.

To want to feast together. Because really every meeting is a feast, isn't it? We're feasting on the word of God. We're feeding our soul. He wants hungry people around his table.

Full spread. And there's a great supper. And he wants you to join in. There's that picture of that supper, isn't there? Of that family time. Because we gather as family around the table.

And verse 2 it reads, As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby. Desire it. Like a baby would desire the milk of its mother. We should desire the milk of the word. The needs of the word. Verse 3. If so be ye, how tasted that the Lord is gracious. To her coming as unto a living stone.

[13:26] Disallowed indeed of man. But chosen of God and precious. To hunger and thirst. After the Savior. After the Savior. To hunger for fellowship.

To hunger for the word. That be that milk. That be that milk. As the baby would yell and scream. Until they get their fill. That we would have such a desire for the word of God.

What does it say here of the Savior? It says he is precious. He is the foundation stone. We build upon him. Our sure foundation. That solid rock. Our Lord Christ.

The one who is not the sinking sand. But he is the word. And we build upon his word. It's his word. His will that draws us. That it becomes our delight.

That we hunger for it. That we thirst for it. And we build on that authority. That is his word. His assured word. For our lives. Really. What is at the start. Of building a church.

[14:22] Is that heart attitude. To have that desiring. That hungering of our heart. After the truth of God. The word of God talks about. How idolatry starts in the heart.

So it can be a bad thing. A heart can be deceitful. Desperately wicked. Who can not? But then it talks on the other side of the coin. That faith comes. To the heart.

As we read Romans 10. Verse 10. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness. And with the mouth. Confession is made unto salvation. Believe in your heart.

Confess with your mouth. So the heart is entangled there. So. Ought in our heart. To hunger and thirst. After him. After his righteousness. Ought it we could be a hungry people.

For the things of God. May we be a hungry people. Such that we get hungry together. Every time we meet. Is a meal together. Isn't it? And we truly want more of God.

[15:16] More of fellowship. More of his truth. More of his word. To feed our soul. More of that milk. More of that meat. Of his word. That we be truly wanting more of God. More of him.

To be desirous of him. More of fellowship. More of that knitting together. In love. Every time we meet. And to know more of Jesus. There were a couple of hungry Greeks.

That John writes of. They had come to worship at the feast. It says. But the hunger of these Greeks. This is John 12. Was more than the salad. And the soup lark. They wanted to save him.

That's what they hungered and thirsted for. Says in John 12 verse 20. And there were certain Greeks among them. That came up to worship at the feast. The same came therefore to Philip. Which is of this cider.

Of Galilee. And desired of him. Saying. Sir. We were. See. Jesus. That's what they wanted. That's what they were there for. And that's what we want.

[16:10] Isn't it? When we fellowship. To see Jesus. To have that desire of him. The hungry ones come and gather. And say. Sir. We were. See Jesus. We want Jesus.

That's what we're here for. We want to see him. We must. Have Jesus. As a desiring. And a hungering. After him. So we ought to be. That kind of hungry people. For God.

And are you hungry for God? Are you hungry for him? How hungry? Fiend on God's word. Come with a hungry heart. As the psalmist cried. In Psalm 34.

Verse 8. Taste and see. That the Lord is good. Blessed is the man. That trusted. In him. Taste and see. We want others to get that taste.

Don't we? That wanting the saviour. To know the gospel. To be saved. To taste and see. The Lord is good. And then we invite them. To come and join. The hungry ones.

[17:06] That will always be hungry. For more of him. For more of fellowship. As we gather. That deepening of our relationship. With our Lord. That will be stronger. There was another time.

When there was four men. Who got desperate. To see Jesus. They were. Likewise. They were hungry for God. And the Lord Jesus. Here was in the town. This is Mark 2. He was in the town.

And they got there. A little late. Like some people. In our church. I don't know about you. But forget those people. They're always late. But at least they're there. But you know. These things were late for church.

You know. They were late for the assembly. But they were so late. That they couldn't get in the place. It was gen-pang. And they had this holy desire. This longing. This hungry. This hungry. To bring their friends.

The Lord Jesus. To the Saviour. They were so hungry. That they disturbed the meeting. Mark 2 verse 4. It reads. And when they could not come nigh unto him. For the press. The crowd.

[18:00] They uncovered the roof. Where he was. And when they had broken it up. They laid down the bed. Where in the sick of the palsy lay. They were so hungry. That this paralyzed friend.

They wanted to. To break through the roof. To get him to Jesus. In desperation. They broke up the very roof. How can we. Show such hungering for God.

That longing. That desiring of him. These were people. They wanted to. To have the word. They wanted to be with Jesus. They wanted. To bring their friends to him. They wanted that.

He would hear. The word. And to. Meet the word. In carnal. Himself. In person. The word. The Lord Jesus. It was a holy.

Desperation. Can we have that. For our loved ones. And friends. We want to have. Them come. Such that. We would. You know. Figuratively. You know. Get so desperate.

[18:55] That we'd break the roof. Might be a bit. We might get in trouble. With the landlord. But. You know. We want to. Get so desperate. That we want people. To be with Jesus. That we'd have that.

Holy desperation. And that was their intent. That the man. That their friend. Would see the Lord. And the Lord met. His need. So. Living stones.

Love. Getting together. And having a gospel meal. Verse 2. Again. It says. As newborn babies. Desire. Desire. As a. As a hankering. A hungering. A desiring.

A longing. A. A. An intense. An earnest. A desire. A desire. An intent. A desire. The sincere milk. Of the word. Then. He may.

Grow. Thereby. We want to grow as believers. Grow as a people of God. We need the word. We need to feed. And feed. And feed. That's church. Everyone who's hungry.

[19:49] Is invited. Amen. Some people aren't hungry. They're missing out. The ones who are not here. Are missing out. On that soul hunger. Getting fed. Psalm 42 verse 1.

It reads. As the heart panteth. After the water broke. So panteth my soul. After thee. O God. My soul thirsteth for God. For the living God.

When shall I come. And appear before God. Listen to the heart's cry of this one. My soul thirsteth for thee. For God. For the living God.

Isn't it such a blessed time. When we can gather together. And break bread together. Have a meal together. Have that fellowship together. That's what it's all about. Isn't it?

Let's be a hungry people. Now our church getting together. Should be like a. At a restaurant. Of hungry people. Get that picture of a restaurant. And God's churches are meant to be places where we get fed.

[20:48] Spiritually fed. God's churches. In a way. You can kind of picture it. Are meant to be like restaurants. That serve up a nourishing spiritual meal. We see hungry jacks everywhere.

Not recommending them necessarily. But what people especially need. Is spiritual food. Isn't it? Maybe we could call our church gathering places. Hungry saints.

And we can start a new franchise. Hungry saints. Instead of hungry jacks. That's what we need to be people. Isn't it? People of God. Saints of God. That's what we need to be. To be hungry saints. Hungry. So get hungry. Keep being hungry. Hungry for the next time. You can get together. And have a feed. From the word of God. So firstly we see. We should be hungry people.

Secondly we see. We should be a spiritual people. A spiritual people. Peter goes on to say. Of these living stones. That they are built up. A spiritual house.

[21:45] A spiritual house. A people in communion. With God. As priests. As holy. Offering up spiritual sacrifices. Verse 5 it says.

Verse 5. He also as lively stones. Have built up. A spiritual house. A holy priesthood. To offer up spiritual sacrifices. Acceptable to God.

By Jesus Christ. So Peter is saying here. That the people of God. The church of God. Should be a spiritual people. A spiritual people. What's the opposite of spiritual?

A spiritual. A spiritual. We don't want that. We want to be spiritual. But it's. God does that work. To take us from. Our. I guess. Our innate carnality.

To make us spiritual people. Doesn't he? Because it's in all of us. What's in me. Does that carnality. The old man. The old Andrew. I've got to keep him. Under control.

[22:41] And Paul. Pictures. Pictures. There in Romans. About. These two extremes. These two contrasts. Of the karma. And of the spiritual. The spiritual. Versus the karma.

There's this battle. Inside all of us. Those that. Do not know the saviour. They are yet karma. But yet. The people of God. Are called. The spiritual people.

So there's this. Contrast. This. Spiritual versus karma. And. The church of God. That God is building. He's building it with people. Who. He makes spiritual.

He makes us spiritual. He takes us out of the miry clay. Out of all that carnality. And the. The dross. And he puts us on the solid rock. And he makes us a spiritual people.

And the world will lose more of its appeal. As we are drawn more to the spirit. To the spiritual life. To be a spiritual people. To be a spiritual house.

[23:35] That God is building. And we lose interest in that. Which was of the carnal way. And we become that new creation. That. That new man. That new.

Life. That new seal. That new love. And our Lord demonstrated this for us. In John 2. Verse 17. We see. Even our Lord. Is that ultimate example for us.

Isn't he? As we should walk in his steps. John 2. 17. It says. And his disciples remembered. That it was written. The zeal of thine house. Of the eternally up. Of course the occasion there was.

Of him ejecting the Pharisees. The money changers. And such. And wanting the church to be holy. A spiritual people.

A spiritual gathering. That's what we're called to be. Now that doesn't mean super spiritual. You know we have. I don't know. Up north we have us. Yeah. I'm sure they're all over the nation.

[24:33] Super spiritual people. Because they're not really real. It's like someone has said. God wants his people to display spiritual fruits. Not be a bunch of religious nuts.

He's had that one before. There's a lot of spiritual. There's a lot of religious nuts. There's only so many who've got spiritual fruit. He wants us to be that. Doesn't he? To be spiritually fruitful.

And not a super spiritual. Where it's all pretend. And showing off. Or such. But that it's real. That it's real. It's down to work. And that's what I like about this fellowship.

We're down to work. Down to our people. Real people. Real spiritual people. Because spirituality. It's God in us. Isn't it? It's Jesus in you.

And he wants us to be spiritual. Not carnal. So if we are carnal. We've got some crucifying to do. And I think that we all have times when we need to crucify the flesh.

[25:29] Galatians 5 verse 24. And they did a Christ that crucified the flesh with the affections and lust. In a sense where that old man has to die. Die daily.

You have to get the hammer and nail out. And crucify the old man. What is it that makes or marks a spiritual person? It's that crucifying the flesh.

The affections and lust. And being Christ. Galatians 6 verse 1 says. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault. Ye which are spiritual.

Restore such a one in the spirit of meekness. Considering thyself. Lest they are also contented. So here we read the spiritual. The spiritual are those who have got a spirit of meekness.

They're not some big show off. Some big mouth. They're meek. There's a meekness. There's a humility. There's a gentleness there. Considering thyself.

[26:24] Lest thou also be tempted. And we can always. I know. I can be guilty. Finding fault with others. Finding fault. But it says here that are spiritual. Consider yourself.

Lest you also be tempted. Friends, we're all human. Notice what marks the spiritual. The spiritual one will have a spirit of meekness. Of forbearing with one another. They will be humble.

The spiritual. That's what God wants us to be. A spiritual people. Think of that term spiritual. And consider. Contemplate that. Am I spiritual? In the Bible definition of that.

The spiritual will be identified with the spirit. That which they do is spirit led. As we read Mark 1 verse 12. Mark 1 verse 12 of our saviour it says.

And immediately the spirit driveth him into the wilderness. Even the holy mighty son of God was driven by the spirit. He was spirit driven.

[27:22] Spirit led. That was what drove him. And so too for we, God's people. God's spirit will lead the ones who are actually spiritual. They don't need to make a song and dance about it.

Or blow some horn. Or to announce their spirituality. Or put on some pretense. It's real. It's who we are. In Christ. We're filled with the spirit. He uses us and our different personalities.

And he fills us as his vessels. God's spirit will empower the spiritual. That's what makes us spiritual. It's him. It's Christ in here. Isn't it? And we all have a spiritual warfare going on.

That we're waiting in. The real life. Where the rubber hits the road. When Monday morning hits us. We've got to go through trials of the week at times.

And the run of the mill that everybody has to cope with. But we've got the spirit of God inside us. His spirit. We all have that spiritual warfare. And he's the one who equips us to fight the battles that lie here.

[28:23] There's many scriptures that talk about the spirit of God. God being alive in his people. Working in and through us. Filling us. Empowering us. Equipping us. Enabling us.

And you individually. Each one here. You individually are a temple of the Holy Spirit. A temple of God. That's astonishing really, isn't it? That we each one.

Our human skin. Our human container that we are. Is filled with God's spirit. And you're sent next to a temple. Right near to him.

And amongst you. And there's temples of God here. And 1 Corinthians 3 verse 16. It reads. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God. And that the spirit of God dwelleth in you.

Now there's. I know there's talk about the. Is the third temple going to be built. And where it will be built. Well you're already. The temple of God's already here. In that sense. That we are each individually. As believers.

[29:18] We are the temple of God. That's astonishing to contemplate. Isn't it? And so. To think that the Holy Spirit of God dwells within. Each one. That knows him. Amen. And he prompts us for that holy living.

And grace. He brings us together. In that unity of the spirit. That's an amazing. Wonder too. Isn't it? Ephesians 4 verse 3. Talks about. Endeavouring to keep. The unity of the spirit.

In the bond of peace. There's a wonderful Holy Spirit. Made unity. Isn't it? There's a Holy Spirit oneness. That he brings us together. In that bond. What a blessed bond.

What a blessed fellowship. What power. What anointing. What glory. When a spiritual people can get together. And be one. In Christ. And we're stronger together.

That's why God's got the idea of the church. We're stronger together. We could be. It seems like the modern trend of work from home. Maybe worship from home.

[30:15] You sit in front of the Zoom. Or the. God forbid. That we have to go back to that. But where we sit in front of a screen. And watch the internet creature. Or we remotely join somehow over the computer.

It's just not the same. Is it? It's just not the same. But we want to be together. That's God's plan.

And we're stronger together. There's a blessed strengthening. And you see Christians slipping and sliding.

When they don't have a connection to the body. You know. Put your ribs down. And commit to the body. You know. Commit to this body. Be a willing volunteer. To be a part of this body. A strong part of this body.

To be connected. Because. You know. You could picture it. As those. Kind of slipping and sliding. Kind of Christians. If you were to hold up a single tweak. And how easily that tweak can be broken.

One little tweak can easily be broken. Right. But you put those. That one little tweak. With a bunch of other little tweaks. Such that you've got. I don't know. Five or ten tweaks.

[31:17] Try to break that. It's not. Go break. Because it's as strong. There's a strengthening where we're together. There's a strengthening. There's a strengthening. And we're not easily broken.

Because we're stronger together. And so. That's why fellowship matters. It's very important. And of course. I'm preaching to the converted. But. Many of those that aren't here today. Can be encouraged to think.

How can I be a stronger Christian? How can I have that stronger fellowship? And God's spirit draws us together. It's a spiritual thing. As a spiritual people. As a spiritual house. This is a spirit of God thing.

We're joined as one throng. As one people. One assembly. And truly a force to be reckoned with. We're stronger together. As we are united. In that bond.

And that's God's plan. For his living stones today. Isn't it? It's you and me. And we're part of that. God's plan. And God grants us a spiritual understanding. He calls those who are spiritual.

[32:13] To judge all things. There's a need to judge things. To exercise discernment. Because we know there's false doctrine. There's all kinds of wacky ideas. It's almost like the multiplying across the internet.

You know there's some wacky preacher can gather quite a following on the internet. Whereas really. And it's just quite an extremist. There's extremists out there.

So we've always got to exercise discernment. And judge all things. There's spiritual. And there's spiritual. You know there's a. I'm sure like up north. There's a psychic fair. Down the road somewhere.

Every so often. You see the signs. Don't you? A psychic fair. It draws all kinds of spiritual people. A lot of spiritual people. Getting together. I know when we do door knocking. You say. You know. They say. Oh I'm spiritual. Yeah. That's spiritual right. It's not the spirit of God. That's the thing. There's people that call themselves spiritual. That are not. Holy spiritual.

[33:11] If you know what I mean. We have to tell the difference. There's a lot of spiritual. Spirituality. Which is not a God. You know. There are other spirits. Demon spirits.

Fallen spirits. Yeah. So Peter's telling us here in our text. The sacrifices of a spiritual house. There was a time when it was especially. Don't you wish to be a Christian. You know. You might be able to tell them to throw rocks at your car.

Or something like that. You could be. You could be. Seenly attacked. And killed. No. Honestly. As Brother Athel said. Like South Africa. Imagine there's certain places.

That is dangerous. The Philippines. I'm sure there's places. In many different countries around the world. Where it's dangerous. So you can walk down the street. Let alone be a Christian. You could be attacked for your faith.

And yet. As a spiritual people. We're stronger together. We're welded. We're joined. We're steadfast. We're walking lockstep. As this band of holy men and women.

[34:09] Marching into the front. The fire front. Marching against this common enemy. That we have. Braving suffering. And opposition.

To be that spiritual army. Mobilised for action. Who knows what's happening. You know. Down the track. You can see some of the signs. There seems to be a heightening.

Of panic. Of fear. Of fear mongering. Of fear mongering. Of fear mongering. Of who knows what's going to happen next. With law making. And governance.

That seems more and more totalitarian. And such things as that. You know. I can see things building up. There's a building up. So it's even more important. That we band together.

And hold together. As a spiritual army. Braving for whatever lies ahead. We know. We're looking for the return of our Lord. We're looking for the blessed hope. And we know that we have.

[35:04] That assurance. That he's going to keep us from wrath. Through him. But we know. That there could be a heightening. Of persecution. There could be a heightening. Of testing times.

Before our saving comes. So we want to be spiritually strong. In the face of that. Against the subtle enemies. We face today. And as they become less and less subtle.

They'll become more and more. Clean. That they're antichrist. And so. There's a creeping carnality. That can subtly spread.

And so we want to be spiritually strong. Counter carnality. With. An endeavor. To yearn for more spirituality. And the spirituality.

That is of God. Not of the world. So maybe these such living stones. A hungry people. Hungry people. Number one. Desiring the spiritual people. As a holy priesthood.

[36:02] And. Also. Thirdly. God's building a church. Out of a praising people. A people who will be praising. Him. The focus of this building. And this building.

Is for his praise. This building is for. His glory. The focus of this building. Is the precious one. The chief cornerstone. The saviour. To him.

Do all praise. We've had some good praise this morning. Hungry people getting together. A spiritual people getting together. A praising people getting together. That's the emphasis. That's the centre. Of his church. We read verse 6. Verse 6. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture. Behold our land of Zion. A chief cornerstone. Elect. Precious.

And he that believeth on him. Shall not be confounded. What does it say of our saviour again? It says he is precious. He is precious. That's what.

[36:56] That is. That which we value. Which we reckon the most important. Is our mighty saviour. Unto you that believe. He is precious. It reads.

And. Verse 7. Unto you therefore which believe. He is precious. But unto them which are disobedient. The stone which the builders disallow. The same as made the head of the corner. Verse 8. And a stone stumbling. And a rock of offense. Even to them which stumble at the word. Being disobedient. Whereunto also they were appointed. The same there are those that would reject.

The chief cornerstone. Of course we know. Speaking of the Jews of the time. But they rejected the Messiah. Even though he was the chief cornerstone. They rejected him. They disallowed him. They would not have him. To run over them. And he was one that they stumbled at. But to us that believe. He is precious. He is precious. Many reject him still.

[37:52] They are still stumbling. At the rock of offense. Aren't they? They are still stumbling at his word. They are still. Unwilling to bow to knee. To obey him.

To be saved. But if us do trust him. We are different. Peculiar. Verse 9. But here are a chosen generation. A royal priesthood.

A holy nation. A peculiar people. That. You should show forth the praises of him. That have called you out of darkness. Into this marvelous light. So not only are we to be hungry people.

A spiritual people. We are meant to be a praising people. But we should show forth his praises. The praises of him. Catch this. The praises of him who has called us out of darkness.

Into his marvelous light. What a contrast. You've got something to praise him for. Amen. If you're saved today. If you're saved today. You're taking it out of darkness. And he's translated you into his marvelous light.

[38:51] Praise him for that. So shine his lights. In these darkening days. As these days might get darker. I believe they certainly seem to be getting darker. Daily. Darkening days.

We need some glowing. Shining believers. To shine the light. The gospel light. As Philippians 2.15 says. That he may be blameless and harmless.

The sons of God without rebuke. In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. Among him he shine. As lights in the world. Friends. We're meant to be shining lights.

We're meant to be priests. They've got direct access to the holy of holies. To the very closeness to God himself. What a privilege we have.

A great privilege. We're called to be such a people. The church of the living God. Living stones. Lively stones. Made the people of God. Adopted as his sons and daughters.

[39:47] Of our heavenly father. Why? That we should show forth the praises of him. Who's called him out of darkness. That you should show forth the praises of him. Why don't we be such a people?

That even in our daily lives. Should show forth his praises. And we should show forth his praises. Seven days a week. By 365. We should show forth his praises. Not just when we gather. But all the time. That we should show forth his praises. Of him. Of him who is precious. He's precious. He's the most valuable relationship. The most valuable certainty that we have. That we know the saviour. And that he is for us precious. That we know his saving. That he is certainly so precious. That he's taken us out of the dread darkness. And into his marvellous light. And surely. He's called you to be. He's called us to be. A praising people. And we have much reason to praise. [40:45] Our dear redeemer. It read to Joshua. And the praising people. Of Joshua 6 verse 5. And it shall come to pass that. When they make a long blast with the ram's horn.

And when you hear the sound of the trumpet. All the people. Shall shout. With a great shout. And the wall of the city shall fall down a flam. And the people shall stand up. Every man straight before him. Of course this is the fall of Jericho. There was a victorious shout. Of praise. Praise him. Praise him together. The young one shouted. The old one shouted. The quiet one shouted. The weak one shouted. The hurting one shouted. The sick one shouted. Even the baptists shouted. Everybody shouted. All the people shouted. Amen. That's what we ought to be. A praising people. Amen. It's okay to have some shouting. Amen. Some loud hallelujah. Some amen. Some glory to God. [41:41] Some praise the Lord. Because we're meant to be a praising people. To show forth the praises of him. His call is out of darkness. And into his marvellous life. We are as living stones.

You're called to praise. To show forth his praises. Psalm 67.5. It says. Let the people praise thee. O God. Let all the people praise thee. Sound forth praise. I know I've heard it. Somehow. Some folk comment about. As you sing the same. Meaningful songs of worship. How precious they are. Because there's strength there. You know. There's doctrine in these hymn books. Amen. There's doctrine here. Sound doctrine. In these songs that we sing. It's not just some feel good. Warm and fuzzy.

Kind of. A mantra. Or some. Repeated. You know. Monotony. There's truth here. There's truth in these songs that we sing.

[42:34] They're meaningful. There's deep. Deep truth in these songs. Deep scriptural truths. And that's what we mean to be. A praising people. Colossians 3. Verse 16. It says.

Let the word of Christ dwell. In you richly. In all wisdom. Teaching and punishing one another. In psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Spiritual songs. We're a spiritual house. We should have a filling of the spiritual house with spiritual songs. And then singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. So give him the sacrifice of your praise. Even when it's hard. It talks in our text about that they offer spiritual sacrifices. You know. Sometimes it's a sacrifice to praise. Isn't it?

When the situations might have been. And exactly how we like them. When life's hard. When we're doing it tough. When really humanly. We don't feel like shouting and smiling even.

[43:32] Or praising. But we should praise him anyway. You know. It says. In everything give thanks. Doesn't it? So we should have that. Whatever the situation of our life.

We're not dependent on our circumstances. But we're wanting to give him the praise that he is due. So don't stop praising the Lord. Don't stop praising the Lord.

Even when you don't feel like it. Praise him anyway. It's all about Jesus. He is precious. He is precious. He is precious. Day by day.

Moment by moment. And he always will be precious. Because to you. Who believe. He is precious. Because he has called you out of darkness. Into his marvellous light. Psalm 147.

It says. Praise ye the Lord. For it is good. To send praises unto our God. For it is pleasant. And praise is comely. Praise is comely. In other words.

[44:25] It's beautiful. Praise is beautiful. It's a beautiful thing to praise God. The most beautiful thing. It's the most wonderful thing. It's

the most glorious thing.

For us to praise him. He wants to hear our praises. And it is good. To send praises unto our God.

So. Again. Don't switch off. When the pastor says the final amen.

Keep on praising. Amen. Keep on praising. Praise. Through the day. Praise when you come again.

To fellowship. Praise. Monday through. Saturday. Keep on praising.

Don't stop praising him. As living stones were called to be a hungry people. Hungry and thirsty.

Desirous of that. Milk of the word. The meat of the word. Hungry.

Desiring. Fellowship. And feeding. A spiritual people. Not carnal. But spiritual. Denying the carnal.

Crucifying the carnal. Refreshing the spiritual.

[45:25] Lean on him for his Holy Spirit strength. And Holy Spirit filling. And a praising people. A praising people. Surely we're the blood bought people of God.

I mean. I mean. What if we're to have some praise. Deep, deep down. And flowing out of our soul.

A blood bought ransom people. Ransom from sin.

And we see. What's more. As a hungry people. A spiritual people. A praising people. An added one.

You could put verse 10. That we are the people.

Of God. Wow. That's something isn't it? I think you are the people of God. You are very precious.

Very special. In his keeping.

Verse 10. Which in time past were not a people. But are now the people of God. Which have not obtained mercy. But now have obtained mercy. I think that we. Us mere gentiles.

[46:21] I'm sure. Largely here. That he would make us his people. That he would deign to. And extend his invitation. To such as we.

That we can receive mercy. That we can trust him. That we can be saved. That we can be saved.

That we can be saved people. That we can be the people of God. God has shown his great mercy.

His undeserved grace. And how truly we should want to be. Friends. Again. Hungry. A hungry people. Keep hungry. Keep desiring the word.

To be fed. Hunger after it. After every meaning. Be a spiritual people. Have a spiritual heart. Put aside the carnality. That so often.

Would drag us back. To where we were. To be a spiritual people. To want to be. Led by his spirit.

To be a praising people. Such that we will. Keep on praising.

[47:15] It won't be just praising. That we have a meeting. But we will be praising him. Morning noon. Time. And night time. And in between time. Day by day. Moment by moment.

We will be a praising people. Because we have something to praise him for. His great salvation.

And to be the people of God. But think of that. You are such a people. That he would call you out of darkness.

And into his marvellous light. Think of it. People of God here today. Lively stones. Built up a spiritual house. A holy priesthood.

And as it reads further. That you are a chosen generation. A royal priesthood. A holy nation. A peculiar people. That. You should show forth the praises of him.

Who has called you out of darkness. Into his marvellous light. Let's pray. Dear Lord. We praise you.

That you are precious. So precious to us. We thank you Lord.

[48:14] That there is no greater value. No greater treasure than to know you. To know you. To be possessed by you. To be a people of God.

Made. Saved. Sanctified. Your people. Saints. Lord. Thank you for this church. For the faithful ministry here.

For Lord. The privilege we have. Every time we can. To gather. Unto your name. Lord. That this be an assembly. Of God's people. Lord. We thank you for this.

This gathering. For this. Faithful assembly of God. Lord. For each one. That knows you. Lord. We pray for us. Any. Who get to trust you.

That they can see. How. You can. Take us out of darkness. And into. Your marvellous light. Lord. Not by any virtue. Or working of our own. Not by any. Effort of.

[49:09] Our flesh. But yet. Lord. Everything that you've done. That. You did it. The cross. Was for us. Amen. When you laid down your hands freely.

Your feet were nailed. Your. Brows. Bleeding from the. Crown of thorns. Lord. That blood that was shared. Was that we can be saved.
That we can be a blood for the people. Lord. That you showed mercy to us. Who were not a people.
And you made us. And you declare us to be. The people of God. Lord.
Help us to. Grow. To be a. A. Cemented together. As those. Wildly stones. Lord. By your spirit's power. Draw us closer to you.
Help us to grow. Individually. And grow. Corporately here. For your glory. We pray. In your precious. And worthy name. Lord Jesus. We pray. Amen.