



## Praising our Exalted Cornerstone

MATT BLACK, Sun, Aug 13, 2017

1 Peter 2:9-10, "Joy in Suffering" series

**Introduction:** Open your Bible to 1 Peter 2:9-10. We are continuing in a series in 1 Peter called "Joy in Suffering." This morning's study is entitled: "Praising our Cornerstone."

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### 1. Welcome to our Visitors!

"Christ is the chief Cornerstone, that unites the whole number of believers into one everlasting temple, and bears the weight of the whole fabric. Elected, or chosen, for a foundation that is everlasting. Precious beyond compare, by all that can give worth." ~ **Matthew Henry**

### Prone to Complain

One of the marks of a believer is a heart of praise. When our focus is not on Christ we tend to be unhappy, and the "crabby-meter" gets to dangerously high levels if you know what I mean. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the skies display his handiwork" (**Psa 19:1**). If nature can praise God so should we. If we don't, then the "rocks will cry out" (**Lk 19:40**).

Jesus is worthy of all glory, honor and praise. Listen if you don't praise him, it shows your focus is off. If you are a complainer or a crabby person, you need to readjust your vision to Jesus. That's what this message is all about – stop looking at all your problems. Anxiety never increased your stature by even an inch. You don't grow taller by worrying. But you will grow spiritually by praising Jesus. Praise him! He's worthy.

"Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!" (**Psa 150:6**).

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice" (**Phil 4:4**)

"I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth" (**Psalms 34:1, KJV**).

Wayne Grudem says, "The answer to our search for ultimate meaning lies in declaring the excellencies of God, for he alone is worthy of glory. Salvation is ultimately not man-centered, but God-centered. To declare God's excellencies is to speak of all he is and has done ... This purpose is too often thwarted by our silence or pride, but even brief associations with a Christian whose speech fulfills this purpose invariably refreshes our spirits."<sup>1</sup>

### Scripture

**1 Peter 2:4-10**, "As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, 5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For it stands in Scripture:

"Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,  
a cornerstone chosen and precious,

<sup>1</sup> Grudem, W. A. (1988). *1 Peter: an introduction and commentary* (Vol. 17, p. 112). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

7 So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone,”

8 and

“A stone of stumbling,  
and a rock of offense.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

So how do we build our lives on Christ our cornerstone?

Have you given your life to Christ? In order to become a “living stone” you first have to see Jesus as a “living stone.” This is peculiar. Peter is talking about an organic Temple – a living, breathing abode for God.

## **You are Called to Praise God!!**

1 Peter 2:9-10, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

We often complain about so much. Some of us ought to have an honoring doctorate in murmuring because we complain so much.

The Bible says we are to put off “murmuring and complaining” and to put on the praise of God. Church of Jesus, do you have your praise on?

Here Peter begins by quoting **Exodus 19:4-6**, “You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. 5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; 6 and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

### **I. You are a chosen race, vs. 9 – From abandoned to adopted.**

1 Peter 2:9, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession.”

Brothers and sisters, we have no reason to complain. **Philippians 2:14** (CSB), “Do everything without grumbling and arguing.” No complaining, no crabbiness! That’s not allowed because you are a chosen race!

The people of Israel did not like life in the wilderness, and they complained and grumbled. They said in **Numbers 14:2**, “Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness!” They complained and grumbled against the Lord and against Moses and Aaron.

### **The Exodus: from Abandoned to Adopted**

Peter is quoting Moses' words. The context is **the Exodus**. He says in **Exodus 19:4-6**, "You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself..." These people who were once abandoned in Egypt for 400 years are now adopted into God's family.

### **Egypt – a Dark Place – Spiritually Orphaned**

Egypt was a dark place. It was a place where they no longer had freedom, but were torn from their homes into slavery. They didn't have family life, only slave life.

Egypt was a dark place. Remember when you were in a spiritual Egypt? Remember when you were spiritually orphaned?

Remember when you were dead in your trespasses and sins? You were forgotten? You were alone. Remember when your heart was not yet transformed by the Spirit – it was still a stubborn heart of stone?

### **You are a Chosen Race**

But God changed all that! Peter summarizes Moses and says, "you are a chosen race." "**I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself**" (**Exo19:4**). You were slaves in the Egyptians houses and I brought you into my home. You were not a people, but now you are a chosen race.

I adopted you. I gave you a name above all names. You have a new name – Jesus is your banner. Jesus is your identity.

- You no longer belong to **Pharaoh**.
- You now belong to the **Living God**, the God of **unrelenting love and abundant in mercy**.

You are now God's "chosen race." He could have passed over you, but he chose to love you. He could have justly forgotten you forever, but he chose to bear you up on eagles' wings. He brought you to himself.

**Isaiah 40:31**, "They who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

You are a chosen race precious family of God. Now you need to "**proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.**"

Are you a part of God's forever family? Praise him!

Are you adopted with a new name and a new identity? Praise him!

Hasn't he engravened your name on his hands? Praise him!

You are a chosen race! Praise him!

Display the light of Christ. Be the aroma of Christ!

### **CHOSEN**

God identifies those who believe in Christ as **chosen**, just as God had chosen Israel to demonstrate his redemption (cf. Isa. 43:21). They didn't deserve it, and neither do you. It is crucial for you as a Christian to understand that your salvation is based not based on your good deeds. You'll never do enough to be worthy. You are not worthy. You'll never be worthy. God doesn't choose us based on a merit system. He chooses you based on his own sovereign, electing purposes according to his glorious grace.

You are a race of people chosen by God. You are no longer "in Adam" but "in Christ." Your family, race, is Jesus. Know Jesus. Love him. Embrace him. Proclaim him. Exalt him!

Now here is another reason praise him...

### **RACE (genos) or GENERATION**

The idea is you have been generated by the Holy Spirit. You are a new and chosen generation. You were brought to life by the Holy Spirit.

Think of Ezekiel 36 and 37. You have a new heart. The heart of stone has been taken out, and you've been given a new tender heart of flesh.

**Ezekiel 37** – you were nothing but dead bones in a Valley of dry bones. You were “dead in your trespasses and sins” and Christ made you alive (**Eph 2:1-4**).

You are a **chosen generation**, a **new humanity** (**Eph 2:15**).

You are a **new creation** (**2 Cor 5:17**). You are not what you once were, and you will never be what you once were.

## **II. You are a royal priesthood, vs. 9 – from rejected to received.**

**1 Peter 2:9**, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession.”

You were once dead in your sins. You were **rejected**. But now you are **received**. Before you had no access to God. Now you are a **kingdom of priests**!

### **We Believe in the Priesthood of All Believers**

We are in a war, and we are to minister Christ's grace through praise and intercession like the priests of old. As priests, we participate in the high priestly ministry of Christ.

As one who is born again, you don't need a special status as pastor or elder to have access to God. We all have access to God and we “come boldly to his throne of grace, and obtain mercy, and ask for grace and help in time of need” (**Heb 4:16**).

## **THE POWER OF THE PRIESTHOOD**

### **The Power of Grace**

You have the power of the priesthood. It is the **power of grace**. You have the power to point wanderers to Christ. Go after Christ's lost sheep. Bring them back into the fold.

### **The Power of Prayer**

The power of the priesthood is the **power of prayer**. You can ask whatever you want according to Christ's will and he will do it for you. “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you” (**Mt 7:7**). Jesus “ever lives to make intercession for us” (**Heb 7:25**).

### **The Power of a New Position**

The power of the priesthood is the **power of a new position**. God said to Israel: “you shall be to me a kingdom of priests” (Exo 19:6). Now a priest has an **exalted position** in Christ. Remember when you were stuck, and the Lord “brought you up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay”? (Psa 40:2a). Remember you could say, “And set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps. 3 He has put a new song in my mouth— Praise to our God; Many will see it and fear, and will trust in the Lord” (Psa 40:2b-3).

You were so low in your position. You were an enemy of God, separated from the Holy One. You were never allowed to enter. But our High Priest went in before us! Jesus entered into the most holy place in heaven and having paid the full price as sacrifice and High Priest, he sat down at the right hand of God and granted all of us access to God our Father.

The power of the priesthood is the **power of praise**. The Father took off his judicial robe, and we were transformed from criminals to his dear children. Our Father in heaven opened his arms because Jesus gave us access as priests. Oh how he loves us. I don't understand it, but I don't need to go to a priest. I am a priest.

We don't have a priestly line of one certain family, like the family of Levi. No, we are an entire kingdom of priests. We are a priesthood of God's royal kingdom.

### **The Power of Praise**

The power of the priesthood is the **power of praise**. I'm no longer abandoned! I'm an ambassador. The blood of Christ grants entrance to me, but also to all who believe. Proclaim the praises of Jesus everywhere you go.

- "Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!" (Psa 150:6).
- "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice" (Phil 4:4)
- "I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth" (Psalm 34:1, KJV).

**Royal** means we have authority in Jesus name, we utilize the power of Jesus' kingdom.

**Priesthood** means we stand in the place of Christ in this world, interceding and pointing people to God.

This is an office of evangelism. You were called to praise the name of Jesus as a royal priesthood. Preach the Gospel to every creature. Have you ever witnessed to someone? When is the last time you witnessed to someone?

### **The Story of a Persecuted Brother**

Do you realize the power you have? You remember my friend from a persecuted nation? Well he called me and said the police were going crazy in his home country looking for him. He said, "please pray!" And we did.

We gathered as deacons and elders the other night, and we put on the ministry of the priesthood and we prayed. We prayed that God would blind the eyes of his enemies.

And my persecuted friend called me later and said the Lord had blinded the eyes of his persecutors. They said because of his telephone number and the fact that they were talking only in English, they are looking for an American. It's in all the news reports that an American is evangelizing in this persecuted country.

God answered our prayers to blind the eyes of his enemies! What a privilege to have the power of the priesthood.

You are no longer **rejected** but you are **received**.

### **III. You are a holy nation, vs. 9 – from idolatry to identity.**

**1 Peter 2:9**, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession."

God's people were a nation of slaves. Their names were forgotten. They were no longer a people group, but a group of tools for Egypt. This was a nation of idols. They built perhaps the pyramids, who knows. But they were enlisted as slaves they lost their identity for idolatry. They were used to build Temples and pyramids for the gods of Egypt.

### **Moses and the Burning Bush**

This goes back to Moses and the burning bush. God's people were not a nation. They lost their identity. They were slaves. And all the sudden, God speaks to Moses from a burning bush. He says, "Take off your shoes, for you are standing on holy ground." "Now Moses, you go to Egypt and you tell Pharaoh, Let my people go, so they may worship me."

He says to Moses, "I don't want them building idol shrines in Egypt anymore. I want my people to be free to worship me."

And God promises them in Exodus 19 – after they were delivered, didn't I tell you "you shall be to Me ... a holy nation"(Exo 19:6)?

### **ETHNOS – A NEW NATION OF PEOPLE**

Now Peter in the NT designates the same title to believers are separated to Christ as **a holy nation**. The word **nation** translates *ethnos*, which means "people," as an ethnic group (Luke 7:5; 23:2; John 11:48, 50–52; Acts 2:5; 10:22; Rev. 5:9)<sup>2</sup>

St. Paul says, "But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil 3:20).

God's nation is ethnically diverse. We are from "every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages" (Rev 7:9).

Christians are out of place in this world. We don't fit. We are salt in a rotten world. We are light in a very dark world. We cause offence. We bear reproach for Christ's name. Jesus said Cursed are you when all men speak well of you. We are "pilgrims and foreigners in this earth." We are citizens of heaven on this earth.

### **HOLY!**

You have gone from idolatry in this world to a new identity in Christ.

**In Christ**, we are **positionally perfect** before a holy God. That makes Christians **a holy nation** before God because His own righteousness is imputed to them. And practically, they are progressing in holiness by the work of the Spirit (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18).<sup>3</sup>

*No guilt in life, no fear in death  
This is the power of Christ in me  
From life's first cry to final breath  
Jesus commands my destiny  
No power of hell, no scheme of man  
Can ever pluck me from His hand  
Till He returns or calls me home  
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand*

<sup>2</sup> Macarthur., 128-129.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 130.

What are ways we can praise God by being a holy nation? Meet together for fellowship and prayer. Never miss. When you are on vacation, find a body of believers and live in the truth that you are a holy nation. Praise the Lord with other Christians everywhere.

#### IV. You are a **treasured people**, from **worthless** to **worthy**.

**1 Peter 2:9**, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession.”

**1 Thess 5:18**, “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

#### THE STORY OF THE PASSOVER

Remember the people of God were worthless slaves in Egypt, but God bought them with a price. He says, “I brought you out of Egypt.” How did he do it? Through the blood of the lamb. He said, Put the blood on your doorposts and on the header, and “when I see the blood I will Passover you” (**Exo 12:13**).

#### The Blood of the Lamb

Remember the Lamb of God is now revealed. **Jn 1:29**, “John saw Jesus and exclaimed, ‘Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’”

You may be complaining today and hurting and saying, “I feel worthless!” But you are not worthless. You have nothing to worry about. You were bought with a price!

#### Turn Worry into Worship

Turn your worry into worship! You are bought with the precious blood of Christ. You are now WORTHY child of God!

**1 Cor 6:19-20**, “You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”

At Sinai God promised the Israelites, “If you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples” (**Ex. 19:5**; cf. Deut. 7:6–7; 14:2; 26:18; Mal. 3:17). Again, that foreshadowed the truth of Peter’s statement that Christians are now **a people for God’s own possession**.

The Greek term rendered **possession** (*peripoiēsis*) means “to purchase,” “to acquire for a price” (cf. Eph. 1:14). Believers belong to God because He bought them at the ultimate price (1:18–19; cf. 1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23; Heb. 13:12; Rev. 5:9). As Paul reminded Titus, that price was “Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us [Christians] to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession” (Titus 2:13–14; cf. Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 6:20).<sup>4</sup>

You belong to God. You are his purchased treasure. Do whatever he wants you to do. Know that he has you in his hand and no one can pluck you out of his hand!

#### My People: A New Name

Then Peter ends by quoting Hos. 1:6–10.

**1 Peter 2:9-10**, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 130.

into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

God told Hosea to name his children unique names: Rejected, Not my people, cast off. But now he gives us a new name!

### **Conclusion**

Remember the day you came to know Christ? He turned your complaining into conviction and your worry into worship. We are a people of praise!

### **Father Daughter Camp Out**

This past weekend we were out in nature, and if you were quiet you could hear the praise of all creation. Listen, if we do not praise him, then the rocks will cry out! Let us “proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”