

## Built on Jesus. 1 Peter 2:1-10

### Disoriented

Do you ever have one of those disorienting weeks where you think you are living in a different world to your neighbours. I have had one of those weeks.

I live in a world as a believer where the Creator God, our Father, is the source of our life and prosperity, and He is an active judge, and where the fear of Him, that trusting awe of Him that is seen in obeying His commands is the source of the good life. A world where Jesus is Lord – He lives, He hears our prayers, is the loving Saviour of all who will turn to Him, and will return to judge the living and the dead.

A world where God's judgments should be feared, His promises relied on, and where wholeness and healthiness, not just for individuals but for society, is found in conforming your life to His will.

But so many of my neighbours don't seem to live in that world

In fact they seem to live in a world where you can get on with life ignoring God, untroubled about what He might think about how you behave;

where you can cheerfully reject His commands without fear of consequences;

where you can build your life and your society as you see fit, to promote your own goals and ambitions, to express your own values even where those are an open rejection of God – and it doesn't matter.

And where you can treat people who live in my world as weird, even a little bit suspect.

Perhaps that's the world in which some of you who are listening live.

Intellectually I know and accept I share our society with many who live without love for and loyalty to the living God, live ignorant of Him.

But sometimes that difference between my world and the world my neighbours are building around me bears down on me. I feel the difference. And it disorients me, as if I have woken up in an alien world, a world I don't belong in

Believers, do you ever feel like that?

This week was one of those weeks when I just seemed to feel those differences.

I was reminded that we are going to have a public holiday for a horse race, for the public worship of chance and money

I turned on the news to find that a footballer coming out about his sexuality was of national significance, and a cause for celebration

Learnt that we are so dependent on gambling that Crown can be declared unfit – and then be allowed to keep operating

In the background I am aware that the government has passed legislation to make private conversations between consenting adults about sexuality, not sedition, the subject of investigation and prosecution, and is about to pass legislation to limit the capacity of Christian organisations to employ staff committed to their mission. That I live in a world where you can be sacked for not

getting vaccinated after many years of service but can't be asked to leave when you no longer support the values of the Christian organisation that employs you.

A world where we have been by God's mercy spared grievous loss in the pandemic – and we congratulate our selves and don't publicly give thanks to almighty God.

And when you have a week like that

When you feel the difference in the way you see the world and the way those around you see the world, and the discomfort/disorientation of that difference

Can be a whole range of responses, all of which we might experience

You wonder – have I got it right.

I mean – they seem happy and confident, getting on with life. These things don't seem to trouble many others

Is this upset and concern unnecessary self inflicted harm? Should I change my mind to take God less seriously?

Or, because you do think you are right to keep trusting the Lord Jesus

You wonder – how can I keep living in this society?

It is emotionally exhausting to live in a foreign culture, an alien world, to be the odd one out, all the time

It can get you down worrying about the direction of society

Should I just withdraw – stop watching the news, stop trying to engage, keep myself to myself and hope things will improve

Or when I see the inconsistencies and hypocrisy and the harm some of these actions and decisions do, maybe I should get all angry and self righteous and denounce these things

And sometimes we are experiencing all those reactions at once

Sitting in a corner and sighing one moment, at the next watching the news and getting grumpy, and at the back of our head questioning if we have got it right

Do you ever get caught up in thoughts and emotions like that? Up and down, now anxious, now angry, now just plain weary, now agitated

And it was as I was experiencing a little of that I came to *1 Peter 2: 4 As you come to him, a living stone—rejected by people but chosen and honored by God—*

And in those few words the reality of Jesus was held before my eyes

It was a bit like in the movies where one of the characters is going into a bit of a panic and the other gets him and gives him a good shake, or a slap in the face, and tells him to pull himself together

God is saying look at Jesus and pull yourself together so you can live well in an alien world

And that is what we are going to do now from this passage

Look at Jesus

Remember the privilege we have as believers in Jesus

And see how to live well as His followers in this world.

### **Jesus – the living stone**

In vv. 4-8 Peter reminds us of Jesus' reality through an OT image, that of the cornerstone, and through OT texts Jesus used of Himself [Matthew 21: 42-44]. The cornerstone was the stone that was the key in those days to the stability and shape of the whole building, the one on whom the whole building depended. The whole building had to be in line, square, with the cornerstone

Firstly he reminds us of the truth of the gospel

#### **v. 4**

*1 Peter 2: 4 As you come to him, a living stone—rejected by people but chosen and honored by God—*

Jesus is living. He is risen. He lives, and so HE can be called upon for help, for rescue

He lives now, even though He was rejected by people.

That is what we read in the gospel. The Lord Jesus came to His people, taught and performed wonders amongst them, and in the end they just wanted to get rid of Him.

He was crucified, which is about as emphatic rejection as you can get

More than being told to shut up

More than being excluded

Killed and shamed in the process – so He would never trouble them again, be out of their lives forever

But the story didn't end there. We are talking about a living stone, the one God raised from the dead, because He was chosen and honoured by God.

Jesus wasn't on a write your own adventure, leaving Nazareth to fulfil His dreams

He was about doing His Father God's will, fulfilling God's plan and purpose – in His death and rising

He was chosen – the one sent by God to save His people

And Honoured, the beloved Son, the One to whom the Father entrusted His Kingdom

Peter knows that.

He witnessed His sufferings [1 Pet. 5:1]

He witnessed the risen Jesus [1 Pet. 1:3]. Our Lord appeared to Peter and spoke with Him [Luke 24:34, John 21:15-18] repeatedly after He rose.

He was the one who declared to the people of Jerusalem

Acts 2:32, 36

Peter knows Jesus is the living Lord, once rejected, now reigning.

But he has deliberately used language from a couple of Old Testament passages to bring home what Jesus being the living stone, rejected and exalted, means for those who believe and those who don't,

for those who want to keep living, like many, as if you can ignore God and build your life without Him.

Firstly he quotes Isaiah 28, which speaks of Jesus as the chosen and honoured cornerstone

v. 6 [Is. 28:16]

<sup>6</sup> *For it stands in Scripture:*

***See, I lay a stone in Zion,  
a chosen and honored cornerstone,  
and the one who believes in him  
will never be put to shame.***

Reminder – Jesus is fulfilling the plan of God.

And secondly – it is those who trust Him, who believe in Him, who will emerge triumphant, with honour, in the judgement of God.

Let me unpack that

God had said more than 700 years before Jesus' birth that He would have this cornerstone, the one on whom He would build His renewed people, and the one on whom God's people could rely wholly – trusting whom would never be a cause of shame to them

In Isaiah 28 the Lord has pronounced his judgment on Samaria, the capital of the Northern kingdom of Israel. Because they had rejected God's word they will now receive commands from a people whose language they do not understand, the Assyrians.

In v. 14 Isaiah turns to address the people of Judah, the southern kingdom, and especially the rulers of Jerusalem. They scoff at the word of God and are confident in their own capacity to keep themselves safe. They were taking their security from their own choices and decisions, Their idols and lies. God said to them

*Is. 28: <sup>15</sup> Because you have said, "We have made a covenant with death,  
and with Sheol we have an agreement,  
when the overwhelming whip passes through  
it will not come to us,*

*for we have made lies our refuge,  
and in falsehood we have taken shelter";*

<sup>16</sup> *therefore thus says the Lord GOD,*

*"Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion,  
a stone, a tested stone,*

*a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation:*

*'Whoever believes will not be in haste.' [be put to shame LXX]*

<sup>17</sup> *And I will make justice the line,*

*and righteousness the plumb line;*

*and hail will sweep away the refuge of lies,*

*and waters will overwhelm the shelter."*

<sup>18</sup> *Then your covenant with death will be annulled,*

*and your agreement with Sheol will not stand;*

*when the overwhelming scourge passes through,*

*you will be beaten down by it.*

God responds to their arrogance by saying safety in the judgement HE sends on their proud rebellion will only be found in Him, in His provision – His cornerstone, the one in whom and by whom He will rebuild His people

He will judge justly, expose the emptiness of their lies – by measuring what they construct by their lies against the true and sure cornerstone He provides v. 17

The people of Jerusalem had a choice for security, a choice for salvation from judgment and death

To trust in Themselves

Or God's cornerstone

To save those who believe in the cornerstone, God's chosen one, had always been God's plan

And Jesus is that one

The one in whom God's people can find salvation, safety, in that judgement on human pride

Who will never fail or let them down when they trust Him, never expose them to the shame of those who have believed lies about themselves and God.

Jesus being the cornerstone, and to save those who believe through Him, was something God had planned and purposed from long ago

Salvation from deserved judgement was always going to be God's way through God's provision, not man's way

The people of Jerusalem had a choice

To trust in God's provision or not

And in Jesus' fulfillment of that prophecy, in His being God's precious and chosen cornerstone, now that choice is everyone's choice as they hear the gospel.

They can either keep on trusting in themselves and their lies

Or they can believe in Jesus – rejected, but now living and exalted

And that is a choice with consequences

God's making Jesus the cornerstone who will never let those who trust Him down means there is honour for those who believe

The honour of being among God's saved people – and Peter will give us a glimpse of the rich content of that honour

But it will also mean shame and judgment for those who don't believe

Peter goes to the next Old Testament quote, from Psalm 118, to bring out the consequences of God making Jesus the cornerstone for those who will not believe

v. 7 [Ps. 118:22]

*<sup>7</sup>So honor will come to you who believe; but for the unbelieving,*

***The stone that the builders rejected—  
this one has become the cornerstone,***

God making Jesus the cornerstone, revealing Him as the foundation of God's people, the source of salvation

Means those who reject Him – first the rulers of Jerusalem, but then all who want to build their life, create their society, without Him – are convicted of a great error

Not just that they have got things woefully wrong about who rules

They did that, and they do that.

Psalm 118 is about God's King returning from victory over His enemies, an unlikely victory worked by God, a wonderful reversal [vv. 10-16].

The builders had taken the side of God's enemies, written this king off. But God has given His King victory over all His enemies

just as the resurrection and Jesus' gift of the Spirit to His followers exposed the rulers in Jerusalem as wrong in crucifying Him, those same events, that victory of Jesus over death and lies and hatred expose Those who don't believe in Him now as wrong in rejecting Jesus, wrong in thinking they can build without Him, build Him out of their lives

And they are not just exposed as wrong, they are exposed as foolish builders. Without Jesus they are building without foundation – they don't have the piece that makes what they build secure and sure, and so what they build will not be able to withstand the testing of judgment

Rejecting Jesus – exposes them to shame

They claim authority to decide, to shape the building, to construct for themselves their security and hope

And in their pride they are completely wrong, are already demonstrated to be wrong, for the Lord Jesus is already proclaimed to be, and seen to be in His resurrection, the precious cornerstone – the one on whom all must build

And the consequences of their wrong choice can't be avoided

Jesus is not going away. In the end He can't be ignored

v. 8 [Is. 8:14]

<sup>8</sup> and

***A stone to stumble over,  
and a rock to trip over.***

*They stumble because they disobey the word; they were destined for this.*

That is the point of Peter's quote from Isaiah 8.

*Isaiah 8:<sup>11</sup> For this is what the LORD said to me with great power, to keep me from going the way of this people:*

<sup>12</sup> *Do not call everything a conspiracy  
that these people say is a conspiracy.  
Do not fear what they fear;  
do not be terrified.*

<sup>13</sup> *You are to regard only the LORD of Armies as holy.  
Only he should be feared;  
only he should be held in awe.*

<sup>14</sup> *He will be a sanctuary;  
but for the two houses of Israel,  
he will be a stone to stumble over  
and a rock to trip over,  
and a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.*

<sup>15</sup> *Many will stumble over these;  
they will fall and be broken;  
they will be snared and captured.*

In Isaiah 7 and 8 the people of Jerusalem were very disturbed by external events – the assault on Jerusalem by their neighbours, and then the rise of Assyria.

God had sent them word that safety and security were to be found in Him, in being His people by trusting His word and keeping the covenant.

But they chose to reject that word and find their own security in their treaties and intrigues, putting their trust in people, not God

But God is God. He is the only One they should fear

He will be a sanctuary for those who trust Him, who believe His word.

And He will be the judge of all who reject Him, the one who will bring all their unbelieving plans to ruin.

Now Peter applies what the LORD says of Himself to Jesus

And the consequence of unbelief, of choosing to trust yourself and not God, to those who won't believe the gospel that Jesus is Lord

To continue to reject Him is to bring upon yourself your own destruction

For He lies across every one's path. There is no path to a better future stepping over or around Christ

He will not be anything but Lord, not change to accommodate our desires to be in charge, to do as we please. He will not abdicate, and He should not – for it is as King He brings life, He saves and there is only salvation in Him, and as King He will judge all who choose to keep on ignoring, rejecting and disobeying God's righteous commands.

Jesus divides

He will either save those who put their trust in Him or judge those who continue to ignore and reject God by not believing God's gospel

And this is by God's will

This too is God's plan, that the One who saves those who believe should be the One who brings judgement on those who persevere in sin, on those who continue to reject His word

*They stumble because they disobey the word; they were destined for this.*

Those who will not believe the word, who want like the people of Jerusalem in Isaiah's day to put their trust in themselves, their own schemes and efforts, are appointed to stumble at Christ – to take offence at the call to repent and believe in a crucified, a rejected, Saviour.

Troubled by people's dismissal of Jesus

Their unconcerned ignoring of Him?

Their insistence on building their lives and society without Him

Wondering if you are right

Think of the greatness and the glory of Jesus – the living stone

Rejection doesn't stop Him from being who He is – God's exalted King, the sure Saviour of His people. It was through rejection, His crucifixion, He was revealed as the cornerstone, God's chosen and precious One, the fulfiller of God's great saving plan.

And rejection is not outside His rule – in rejecting Jesus, in ignoring Him, people aren't escaping His rule. That rejection and ignoring of Jesus is the means God uses to exercise His judgment on their proud rebellion, the cause of their stumbling

Rather than be angry, we should tremble

And for believers this conviction of the greatness and glory of Jesus is more than a conviction of the historical truth of the gospel or a set of ideas

<sup>2</sup>*Like newborn infants, desire the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow up into your salvation,* <sup>3</sup>*if **you have tasted that the Lord is good.***

An experienced reality – we have tasted that the Lord is Kind or good

And the measure of that kindness is seen in the privileges bestowed on believers in Jesus, and their source

**Jesus – the kind Lord [v. 5, 9-10; Isaiah 43:20-21; Ex. 19:3-6, Hos. 2:23]**

What is given to believers in Jesus?

<sup>4</sup>*As you come to him, a living stone—rejected by people but chosen and honored by God—* <sup>5</sup>*you yourselves, as living stones, a spiritual house, are being built to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

By the work of the Spirit of God We become like Him – living stones v. 5

Through trusting Jesus we have been fitted to live in God's presence by His Spirit

Peter calls believers a spiritual house or temple. Having new life from the Spirit and indwelt by God's Spirit, we live in His presence always, and He lives amongst us.

That tells us we matter to God, for His house matters to Him. We are secured by His presence, for He is zealous to protect His house.

And believing in Jesus we are being built up to be a holy priesthood – set apart to Him, to be those who can safely enter into His presence



And Offer spiritual sacrifices - that is give Him acceptable worship through Christ – the response of the whole of our lives lived in the power of the Spirit

And again – this speaks of a continuing, secure relationship with the holy God through Christ. Our sacrifice is always acceptable through Christ

And it speaks of an extraordinary transformation – not just of worship, but of the significance of our lives.

The language of priesthood is language of special people, special activities like animal sacrifice, special places – who could come intermittently, at special times, to God with their sacrifices.

But now every believer can come – all the time, wherever they are, to offer our lives lived in the Spirit – all because of what Jesus has done, His atoning death – His being rejected by people

And His exaltation as God’s King entrusted with the Spirit to give to His people because of that obedient death

Lot to think about there

But as you go about your life trusting and obeying Jesus, changed by the Spirit to want to live pleasing to Him – being faithful in your work, in your parenting, in your conversation, in loving your enemies, in forgiving – you are offering worship

As you cut the kid’s lunches, deal with that difficult customer, speak about the Lord with your neighbour

As you care for that aging parent, are patient with that upset family member

As you humble yourself to obey the government, turn your eyes away from sexually immodest images

You are offering a spiritual sacrifice acceptable God through Jesus Christ

A life that now matters, matters to God, that can be lived in His presence

That is the privilege the Lord Jesus gives us in His kindness

And Peter brings home the privilege, the honour, of a believer’s life by applying the Old Testament titles of Israel’s privilege to believers in Jesus, to those who are now in Christ God’s people

*<sup>9</sup> But you are **a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, so that you may proclaim the praises [the excellencies ESV] of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.***

Peter is drawing on Exodus 19, where God addressed Israel at Mt Sinai, and Isaiah 43:20-21 where the Lord speaks of their second exodus, their deliverance from Babylon.

Believers in Jesus – but you, those who have believed, not those stumbling at Christ

Chosen race – the ones called by God to be at the centre of His plans for the world, like Abraham and his descendants to bear His promises to the world, to be the people through whom God will show His glory in the history of the world as He keeps those promises

Royal Priesthood – royal because they belong to the King and so share in His rule, a priesthood because they have access to God and can intercede for others

Holy Nation – set apart from the world for God, and so committed to Holy lives, to being given and living by God's good law

Set apart and so special and dear to Him

A people of His own possession – precious to Him, such that those who attack them are attacking God, those who are trying to detach them from God will face His fierce jealousy

In a world where Christ's people share in Christ's treatment by the world, where we can feel marginalised or even excluded by those who trust in themselves, never, never are believers in Jesus anything less than dear and precious to God, recognised as His own, the ones who will enjoy the fulfillment of His promises in the new heaven and earth. Never forgotten, never at the periphery of His vision

And the source of all this privilege, of our experience of the Lord's Kindness

Mercy

*<sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

All by mercy, the mercy Peter started His letter praising as the source of our new birth in Christ.

Peter alludes to Hosea to let us feel the greatness of that mercy.

In Hosea Israel was seen to have broken the covenant, to be like the Gentiles – idolatrous, and worse - unfaithful, ungrateful, despising God's kindness

Fully and only deserving rejection by God, but promised hope -hope of restoration by God's gracious mercy that could forgive even their adultery

But in Christ what was promised rebellious Israel now includes idolatrous Gentiles – so great is that mercy, the mercy that provided Christ as the lamb without fault or blemish to redeem us.

Perhaps you don't need the reference to Hosea to see the wonder of God's mercy

You know well enough your own ingratitude and disobedience

Or perhaps the reference to Hosea assures you God can have mercy even on you.

Israel's was spit in your eye contempt.

Enriched by God's kindness

Knowing His will

And doing exactly the opposite

The kind of sin many of us who have grown up in Christian families commit, when we knowingly disobey

When we lie, or steal, or commit sexual immorality

Yet mercy is promised, and mercy found in Jesus for all who will repent and seek forgiveness

Because of who Jesus is

Believers in Jesus are a privileged people

How do we live in the world, a world where we feel like aliens – where, by God’s grace, because of the privileges He bestows on us in Christ, making us living stones, making us His people, we are aliens, sojourners, staying for a few years on our journey to the fulfilment of God’s promises,

people who should not feel at home in a world where Jesus is not honoured as Lord, where the builders are still rejecting Him

Peter tells us

### **Living privileged lives in the world v. 2, v. 9 [Ps. 118:22-24]**

Craving Grace v. 2

*1 Peter 2: 2 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all slander. <sup>2</sup> Like newborn infants, desire the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow up into your salvation, <sup>3</sup> if **you have tasted that the Lord is good.***

*[<sup>2</sup> Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—  
<sup>3</sup> if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. ESV]*

Firstly, we should live as those who know that their life in this world is sustained by another source, and crave that life sustaining nourishment.

Since, for it is not in doubt, you have tasted that the Lord is good, like newborn infants desire pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation.

As a newborn longs for its mother’s milk ‘instinctively, eagerly, incessantly’ so in this life we should long for what will keep us alive until the salvation of the end, the salvation revealed with the coming of Jesus, arrives

Milk here is not used for the diet of the spiritually immaturity. This is a powerful image of a thirsty dependence which every believer should know all their lives.

But what is this milk? The CSB has identified that milk as the milk of the word, the word that gave us new birth as the word that will sustain our new life to the end. We should long to keep drinking in God’s word faithfully taught, unadulterated by false teaching

That is undoubtedly included in the ‘pure spiritual milk’.

But the word translated ‘spiritual’ has a wider sense. It can mean reasonable, or ‘true to its real nature’. Peter is urging believers, having tasted the goodness of the Lord, to long for, to keep drinking in, all that mediates the grace of Christ to us, all that brings the life of Christ to us. It is the

way of life characterised by attention to the word, to prayer, to sharing together in the Lord's supper, by trusting obedience to Jesus.

Believers can't be indifferent to what will sustain their life.

If we are to live, thrive, grow to the fulfilment of our salvation we must long for, seek always, what will give us more of Christ

Do it as if our life depended on it – just as a baby's depends on its mother's milk

Hope lockdown has reinforced or given you the habit of daily prayer and bible reading

And more – passion to meet with His people

A constancy in prayer

A life lived in step with the Spirit, that turns away from the sins of the flesh -some of which Peter mentions in v. 1

Fulfilling our calling vv. 9-10

<sup>9</sup> *But you are **a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, so that you may proclaim the praises** [the excellencies ESV] of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.* <sup>10</sup> *Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

And just as we live in the world drawing our life from Christ who gives us life, so we live are to live in the world fulfilling our calling

As people called to **proclaim the praises** [the excellencies ESV] of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light

This is not talking primarily of singing. It is speaking of witnessing to God's greatness in His saving works both in the world by our faithful lives lived in obedience to His word, and to the world by our faithful words that speak His gospel word.

We proclaim in word and deed how good God is in saving His people through His Son Jesus, the rejected chosen one

His faithfulness in keeping His promises to His people

His justice that doesn't let the innocent be crushed

His righteousness in upholding both the justice and steadfast love of His covenant commitment to His people in the death of His Son Jesus for sin

His might in raising His Son from the dead

His mercy – the wonder of His mercy in calling us from darkness to light, from death to life, from bondage to lies to the freedom of the truth.

There is so much to call people to wonder at and admire in the rich salvation we have in Jesus

So many reasons, having tasted God's kindness our selves to say to our neighbours "O taste and see that the Lord is good"

We live in the world looking up – craving more of Christ our Lord, and looking out, longing for others to know for themselves the excellencies, the wonderful saving work, of our God

When you are disoriented and discouraged by our world's ignoring of God, its determination to build the Lord Jesus out of our world, to live as if He doesn't matter and has nothing to contribute to a full and flourishing life

Take a breath – and think of Jesus

Let His word direct your heart again to the truth about Him

That He is the stone the builders rejected who has become – through that rejection – the cornerstone, the sure Saviour of all who believe in Him, the source of the extraordinary privilege believers have of becoming like Him, and being included in Him in the people of God

Precious to Him

So that you can say with the Psalmist <sup>23</sup> *This is the LORD's doing;  
it is marvelous in our eyes.*

And know every day of our sojourn in this world <sup>24</sup> *This is the day that the LORD has made;  
let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

*Psalm 118: <sup>22</sup> The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone.*

<sup>23</sup> *This is the LORD's doing;  
it is marvelous in our eyes.*

<sup>24</sup> *This is the day that the LORD has made;  
let us rejoice and be glad in it.*