



**CALVARY**  
TUSCALOOSA

**TEACHING PLAN**  
AUGUST 20, 2017

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1 PETER 2:4-5, 9-10

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## PREPARATION

- > Spend the week reading through and studying 1 Peter 2:4-5, 9-10. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools (such as a concordance or Bible dictionary) to enhance your preparation.
- > Determine which discussion points and questions will work best with your group.
- > Pray for our pastor, the upcoming group meeting, your teaching, your group members, and their receptivity to the study.

## HIGHLIGHTS

**BIBLICAL EMPHASIS:** We are living stones sent to be messengers of mercy.

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**TEACHING AIM:** Our relationship with God comes with the responsibility to declare His praises.

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**GOSPEL CONNECTION:** Mark 1:14-20—The gospel is a call to a relationship and a challenge to responsibility.

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## INTRODUCTION

*As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.*

- 1 What did you want to be when you grew up, and why?
- 2 Do you feel called to your career? If so, how did you sense that calling?
- 3 What things are we called to other than our careers?

### ADDITIONAL INTRODUCTION OPTION

Interact with the following quote:

“Although it’s great to be called a PGA Tour player, and it’s probably greater to be called a PGA Champion, I don’t think there’s any greater gift than is mine, to be called a child of God.”

—Paul Azinger

When you introduce yourself to someone, you usually include your name, your family, and your occupation: “I’m an accountant.” “I’m a salesman.” “I’m a teacher.” However, we typically consider a calling to be something that is associated with professional ministry and pastors. The truth is that many people feel called to their particular line of work, whether it is finance, service, or stay-at-home parenting. All Christians have been called out of darkness and into the light of Christ. Together we worship the Lord and demonstrate to the world that He is worthy of all glory, honor, and praise. The church is not a building, but a people charged with the responsibility to continue the rescue mission of Jesus to all people.

## UNDERSTANDING

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

> Have a volunteer read 1 Peter 2:4-5.

<sup>4</sup> *As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—* <sup>5</sup> *you also, like*

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*living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

Notes:

- What does Peter remind us about Jesus' identity by calling Him the "living Stone" in verse 4? Why is it significant that Jesus is the living Stone?

Jesus is most likely called the "living Stone" because of His resurrection. Peter probably drew this theme from Psalm 118:22, where the stone rejected by the builders became the cornerstone. In Acts 4:11, Peter appealed to this same verse to refer to Christ's death, resurrection, and exaltation. The religious leaders despised Jesus and crucified Him, but God made Jesus the cornerstone when He raised Him from the dead. Jesus is the chosen One, and we are chosen because we are in Him. Our entire identity is wrapped up in our coming to Christ.

- What parts of the stone imagery stand out to you the most? Why?
- Why did Peter say that Jesus Christ Himself is the cornerstone of this building (v. 6)? What does this mean about the place of Jesus within the church?

The cornerstone is the first stone set in a structure, giving the rest of the building shape and definition. The cornerstone is thus the measuring point for everything else. Similarly, this is what Jesus is to the church. He provides definition and shape to everything we do today as the spiritual house.

- Why is it important to recognize Jesus as the cornerstone of our church? Other than Jesus Himself, what might we be tempted to make the cornerstone of our faith?

Notes:

> Have a volunteer read 1 Peter 2:9-10.

*<sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

- In verse 9, Peter laid out some of the blessings we receive by being the people of God. What are they, and what do each of these blessings mean for us?

Peter said to the believers in Asia Minor—and to us today—that we are a chosen race. We are a people of God's possession, those who have been chosen by Him to participate in His blessings. We are a royal priesthood. In the Old Covenant, a priest came from a distinct family and heritage. Now under the New Covenant, all Christians are priests. We are a holy nation. In Christ, we are a people who collectively represent God's rule and reign in the world. We have value not because of who we are, but because of Whose we are.

- Read Exodus 19:5-6. What is the difference between God's promise to Israel and His promise to the church in 1 Peter 2?

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- For what purpose did Peter say we have been called to know and love God (v. 10)?

Notes:

- Why is it important for us to realize that the church is not just who we are, but it is also the mission to which we have been called?

Peter's audience would have been familiar with these descriptors because they came from Exodus 19. However, these were to be the blessings of God's people if they obeyed and kept their covenant with the Lord. Yet all of these blessings are applied to the church today through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The gospel, which we are called to believe in, makes this new identity possible. We have been called so that we may proclaim the praises of the One who called us.

- What are we to do with our calling? What does it mean to "declare the praises"?
- Where were we before Christ called us? To where has He called us?
- When do you first remember really feeling the mercy of God? How should our calling shape the way that we look at ourselves, other Christians, and the entire world?
- How are you living out your calling in the places where God has given you influence? What are we missing if we do not live out our calling?

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The blessings we received from Christ are not strictly for our own benefit, but so that we can tell everyone else who God is. Our calling as believers is one of the manifold ways that God demonstrates His glory in the world. We were once objects of wrath under God's judgment, but through Christ's sacrifice we have been shown mercy. This mercy has made us God's people who declare His praises, both through our worship as a body and in the way that we live our lives. Our calling should be evident in the way that we live.

Notes:

## APPLICATION

*Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.*

- 1 Which do you struggle with the most, knowing that you are called to the mission of God or living out that calling? How will you change the way you live this week based on your calling?
- 2 The church is not just individual living stones, but a group of them mortared together. How can we pursue unity and purpose for our church in this group?
- 3 Do you have any friends, family, or colleagues to whom you can demonstrate the glory of God? What can you do this week to impact their lives?

## P R A Y

Thank God for making us His people through the death and resurrection of His Son. Ask Him to use the members of your group to proclaim the excellencies of Christ to the lost and dying world around them.

Notes:

## M E M O R I Z E

As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him. - 1 Peter 2:4



## 1 PETER 2:4-5, 9-10

2:4-5. We are coming to Christ, the living Stone. Christ is the living, resurrected, and life-giving God. Each person accepts or rejects this “living Stone.” Rejection means “to examine and reject because of lack of value.” This rejection refers to the people of the first century who ultimately crucified Christ and to anyone since that time who has not embraced him as personal Savior.

Notes:

God the Father places infinite value upon Christ. Precious (*entimon*) describes our costly redemption through Christ, mentioned in 1:19 (*timio*).

The decision to believe in Jesus Christ admits an individual into a spiritual building program. When anyone comes to Christ, as the Living Stone, a new stone is added to God’s spiritual building—Christ’s church. As a spiritual building, the church is to be influenced or dominated by the Holy Spirit. Christians are a new temple of God under the influence and power of the Holy Spirit. Together we function as a holy priesthood. All believers are priests. Every Christian has immediate and direct access to God through Jesus Christ and serves God personally by bringing others to God.

A priest offers spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God. What are spiritual sacrifices? The Old Testament speaks of spiritual sacrifices of prayer, thanksgiving, praise, and repentance. The New Testament goes even further by identifying spiritual sacrifices as (1) the offering of our bodies to God for his service; (2) the offerings of our financial gifts; and (3) practical, loving service to other people. Spiritual sacrifices in the New Testament involve our bodies, our money, and our time (Rom. 12:1-2). When you come to Christ as the Living Stone, you become a part of a building, the church. Your growth begins to speak for itself as you offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God.

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2:9-10. In the midst of a culture that stumbles over Jesus Christ, disobeys the message of Christ, and then persecutes any who embrace Christ, believers can easily become discouraged from continuing in the journey with Christ. The thought of further growing pains is certainly not attractive to everyone. So Peter laid out in ascending order some of the incredible spiritual riches that believers have in Christ. This encourages us and reminds us of the value God places on each of us. It also ties us to the Old Testament heritage of the people of God, since much of the language here comes from Exodus 19.

Notes:

A chosen people emphasizes God's loving initiative in bringing people to himself and allowing us to be a part of his church. A royal priesthood reminds us as believers that as priests we serve royalty. We have not landed a maid-service position. We are part of God's "forever kingdom." A holy nation emphasizes that God has set apart the church for His use and that individual believers have a valuable contribution to make to His church.

"A chosen people," "a people belonging to God," and "the people of God" emphasize God's ownership in our lives. Throughout history God has claimed for Himself His own people as His prized possession. Christians are a people for God to possess. A very ordinary thing acquires a new value if it has been possessed by some famous person. Peter's repeated emphasis with the term "people" is that as a believer I may be a very ordinary person, but I acquire an immense new value because I belong to God and am possessed by him.

All of this has come to us not because we deserve it or have somehow earned it but because of God's mercy. The people who first read Peter's letter had lived without God and Christ for a long time. During that time they had tried through many ways to obtain mercy for themselves, but had

failed. In coming by faith to Christ, they received the mercy that so long had eluded them. God's mercy came to them in tangible form, bringing the gifts of forgiveness and eternal life.

Notes:

The New Testament is consistent in suggesting that these kinds of benefits—extended to us through the mercy of God—are not only to be received with gratitude but are to motivate each believer to testify verbally on behalf of God and Christ. Verse 9 contains a purpose statement that describes our response. We are to declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. Declare means “to advertise, to proclaim.” A very literal rendering of the verb would be “to tell out or tell forth.” This suggests we should give a high priority to verbal declarations.

The word is used in other contexts to describe the rehearsing in adoring language of God's righteousness and praises. The praises of God or Christ is a word picture for His character. One translator suggested that “praises” means his “excellent attributes.” The Christian is to be an instrument that publicizes the attributes and character of God.