



BULLEEN BAPTIST CHURCH

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SERIES : Studies in 1 Peter - "A Living Hope"
July 8, 2007. Study 5 : "A NEW COMUNITY" 1Ptr 2:1-13

THE STUDY SERIES

The practical principles that guided and shaped Peter's life also shaped his letter. His first principle is that Christians have "A New Citizenship" and that we are "aliens and strangers" in the world. The 2nd and 3rd Principles are that we possess "A New Hope" in Christ and have "A New Perspective" on what God has planned for us through him. All these emphasise what God has done for us. The way we live is our response to God's initiative. So Peter's 4th Principle (last week's Study) is that we are called to "A New Lifestyle."

Today, Peter's fifth principle - we are called to live that lifestyle in "A New Community"

INTRODUCTION TO STUDY 5

As you come to him, the living Stone - rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him - you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. **1Ptr2:4-5**

Rejected by their society, (remember that the background of the letter is growing persecution), Peter acknowledges that they are strangers in the world. (1:1) He has already reminded them that to God they are elect and chosen. (1:1-2). just as Jesus is also precious and chosen. (1:19-20) Now Peter takes up these themes and develops them :

A. COMMUNITY : All through Chapter 1, Peter addresses his readers as individuals - which is how they (and we) come to Jesus. But they are not just a band of loosely associated individuals - they are a CORPORATE entity; God's spiritual house.

B. PURPOSE : Living in fear of their lives, they could have given way to despair. Peter teaches that their lives have tremendous significance and meaning - offering spiritual sacrifices.

We will develop each these points as the Study progresses.

A : CORPORATE IDENTITY

Stripped down to their central theme, verses 4 and 5 look like this :

Coming to him ... like living stones (you) are being built into a spiritual house

NOTE :

1. The Change from INDIVIDUALITY : We can only come to Christ personally.

2. The Change from CHOICE : Having come to Christ, God acts as the Master Builder. It is his work to "build us together." It is God's purpose to make us a part of his people, not our choice.

3. The PROCESS : The tense is "present continuous." While an end result is implied, the focus is the ongoing nature of the project you are being built

Compare v2 with verses 4 and 5

Like newborn babies ... you may grow up in your salvation. **1Ptr2:2**

as you come to him ... you ... are being built into a spiritual house **1Ptr2:4-5**

Notice that they match : **MATURITY** in the faith involves living in **COMMUNITY!**

Then we will no longer be infants ... Instead ... we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. **Eph4:15-16**

B. CORPORATE VISION

In the Introduction to the Study, we noted that Peter taught that his readers' lives have tremendous significance and meaning.

1. Their IDENTITY (1Ptr2:9a, 10)

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

NOTE: This is the fuller definition of the spiritual house of 2Ptr2:5a

Each phrase is taken from the OT descriptions of the people of Israel - now descriptive of all, Jew or Gentile, who acknowledge Jesus as Messiah & Lord.

See, for example, Deut7:6; Ex19:6; Hos1:9-2:1, 2:23-3:5

For other New Testament uses, see Eph2:11-22; Rom9:23-26; Titus 2:14,
See also Rom2:28-29; 4:1-25; Gal3:6-9

2. Their FUNCTION (1Ptr2:9b)

that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light

NOTE: This is a more complete definition of the spiritual sacrifices of 2Ptr2:5b

So, what are "Spiritual Sacrifices? Check these references:

Rom12:1 - Our BODIES offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

Heb13:15 - Our WORSHIP let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise - the fruit of lips that confess his name.

Heb13:16a - Our GOOD WORKS And do not forget to do good ... for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Heb13:16b - Our GENEROSITY
and Php4:18 And do not forget to ... share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased I have received ... the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

How do we, then, "Declare God's Praises? Peter suggests how in verse 12 :

Live such good lives among the pagans ... that they may see your good deeds and glorify God.

A further hint is buried in the meaning of the cornerstone of 1Ptr2:6 - For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." (quoting from Is28:16)

Paul uses this same concept in Eph2:19-22 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together & rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

In ancient times, the Cornerstone was a large, perfectly square stone that was laid first, true and level. The rest of the building took its form and shape from the accurate "first brick." So the Christian takes their "shape" from the pattern of Christ's life.

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus Php2:3-5

REFLECTION

First century Eastern Christians living in fear of their lives?

Twentieth Century Western Christians living in relative ease and plenty?

Both need to "listen to the beat of a different drum"

Easily distracted by either suffering or relative ease, all need to hear afresh that God calls us into Community so that, together, we can reflect the presence of God to a needy world.