

Living Here, Longing for Home: Clarity

1 Peter 2:1-10

Read 1 Peter 2:1-10 together:

So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, 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. For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." 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," and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

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. 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.

Have you ever heard the term “a shade tree mechanic”? This refers to a person who enjoys working on cars at home. This is a do-it-yourselfer who keeps their cars working under the shade of the tree in their yard. Sadly, this might be a dying breed of mechanics, what with all the electronics and complexity of modern automobiles. But the physics of the internal combustion engine have not changed. For an engine to run, it needs three things: air, fuel, & spark.

We live in a world that “spins” truth to obtain their goals. Truth is said to be a “lived experience”. Whatever a person has experienced becomes their basis for all “truth” and it can’t be denied.

As the Living Church, we need to recognize three truths laid out by Peter in 1 Peter 2. Let’s look at them together.

One Common Hazard in every human heart: Sin

Ever since the fall (Gen. 3), every human being has been born with a sinful nature. We are, by our very nature, sinners. But we are not only sinners by birth, but we are sinners by practice! Even as born-again believers we need to guard our hearts constantly against sin. Why? We are exiles and we must be prepared for action as children of the Most High God.

In verses 1-3, Peter addresses Christians. We are called to grow up; to mature. We need to know what we believe and Who we believe in. Peter starts by calling us to put away malice, deceit, hypocrisy, and envy. We need to

recognize our hearts, our motives, our lust for power and pleasure. We need renewal, redemption, and repentance daily!

? How can we check our hearts?

? Should you check your heart privately or with another Christian?

? What are the potential dangers of private inspection without a fellow believer?

? What do you think Peter means when he tells us to “conduct yourselves with fear”?

? What does Peter say we need to know to be successful in this endeavor to live rightly?

And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

1 Peter 1:17-19

One Clear Solution: Jesus

In verses 4-8 Peter speaks of the Cornerstone as “chosen and precious”. This is deeply rooted in Old Testament prophesy (see Ps. 118:22; Is. 28:16; Lk. 20:17). Whoever believes in Jesus, the precious and chosen cornerstone, will not be put to shame. Peter himself, boldly proclaimed while on trial, “There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

? What is a cornerstone? What are its function and importance?

? Why did the religious rulers reject Jesus? What reasons can you think of?

Do not be distracted or intimidated about the crucial needs of the world:

Food? Yes, but with the message of the Gospel

Justice? Yes, but not without grounding it in the impartiality of God

Safety? Yes, but not without pointing out God’s ultimate security

Education? Yes, but not devoid of truth about life, death, and judgment

Love? Yes, but not without showing the model of love itself: God

On the field of battle, there is only one question: What do you say about Jesus?

One new people: Elect & Chosen

Christians are referred to in Scripture as both chosen (1 Thess. 1:4) and elect (1 Peter 1:1). A theological debate has raged for 500 years as to the exact balance between God’s providential call to salvation and man’s response to God in salvation. The following chart shows the differing views between Calvinists and Non-Calvinists.

Calvinists	Non-Calvinists (Arminians)
Election is individual	Election is corporate
God chooses/elects unconditionally	The elect/chosen are responders to the gospel
The Elect are selected	Those “in Christ’ are the Elect

However this mystery fits together the outcome is something brand new! “You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession” ...God’s people! From many tribes, nations, tongues, ethnicities, and experiences, God has created **one race**. God is rescuing a fallen race to be a new race that is reborn and has new DNA, new parentage, an exalted purpose, and a forever future!

Do you have a business card? Some people do as part of their employment. It is very common to speak to a salesperson and have them hand you their business card, asking you to call them if you are ever in need of what they are selling!

- ? Have you ever thought about how your daily actions may be leaving your “business card”?
- ? How can you live in such a way to share the gospel, both in words and actions?

Our strategy for combatting racism, injustice, and oppression is to make more and deeper disciples of Jesus Christ. We cannot hide behind walls of white insulation, sanitized theology, and heavenly good-for-nothingness! We must proclaim the gospel of universal hope for a broken, stalled, and wartorn world.