

Living Stones
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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. I Peter 2:4-5

I've heard it said that if you want people to do great things, don't tell them about the great thing you expect them to do. Rather, tell them who they are at their best and the great thing will follow. I'm not sure that's always the case, but the Apostle Peter in I Peter 2:2-10 certainly tells us who we are at our best. He says that we are, "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his [God's] own possession." [I Peter 2:9a] With these grand ways of describing us, he goes on to say that we are these things for a great purpose, "that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." [I Peter 2:9b] What honors our Lord bestows on us in this verse! What a great thing to proclaim His excellencies as our Redeemer, Savior, Friend, and Lord!

Yet, for our focus in this devotion, I'm drawn to how Peter compares us in verse 4-5. He says we're like "living stones" who are being built into a "spiritual house." Stones doesn't sound like such a noble description. You don't expect stones to do great things. Likewise, besides keeping the weather out, it may not seem like houses do great things either. Yet, as we inwardly digest what Peter is saying here, it is a lavish gift!

In these verses, Peter first tells us who Jesus is. He is a living stone. Stones aren't alive. Neither are people who have been crucified. Yet, Jesus is alive! A good stone can serve as a foundation for a building. Who we are, at our best, is solely built on who Jesus is and what He has done for us. Jesus is rejected by men; by our sinful nature we do not believe in Jesus Christ or come to Him. Yet Jesus in His Father's sight is also chosen and precious.

As Peter tells us who Jesus is as a living stone, he then tells us that we are like living stones! How am I, how are you, as a sinner described with the same terms as our Lord Jesus? Our Lord graciously covers us in Himself in the waters of Holy Baptism where we receive a new identity. The Temple in Jerusalem was the place where God said He would cause His Name to dwell [Deut. 12:5]. He'd be where His Name is, with His redeeming grace. Now, His Name is on us, and we are built into His House, His Temple, where by His same grace, we offer spiritual sacrifices, declaring His excellencies, telling the nations of His blood-bought gift of eternal life for us...for all!