

Sermon – Welcome to Ministry

Preached at Cloverdale 10/13/24

1 Peter 2: 4-10

⁴Coming to Him *as to* a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God *and* precious, ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture,

“Behold, I lay in Zion, A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.” ⁷Therefore, to you who believe, *He is* precious; but to those who are disobedient, “The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,” ⁸ and “A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense.” They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.

⁹But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

This past week was the Feast celebration of the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur. The Bible states that this was the only day of the year that the High Priest could enter all the way into the Holy of Holies in the temple. Another name for this feast day was to be “face to face” with God in the Holy of Holies.

This was the most solemn day of the year and great concern for Israel; failure by the High Priest meant Israel’s sacrifices would not be accepted and the people’s sins would remain uncovered for another year.

But this was thousands of years ago and there is no temple today, so you may be asking what does this have to do with us today? In short, I see two reasons for us to be aware. First, this feast points to end-time prophesy and the second coming of Christ and the defeat of the anti-Christ. Second, it offers clear guidance and spiritual application for how we should approach and serve God.

Today we will look at what Peter says in tying this together with our Christian walk today.

Peter speaks of Christ as the chief cornerstone.

AI Generated: In the Bible, Jesus Christ is the cornerstone. A cornerstone is the first stone laid in a building's foundation, and it sets the direction for the structure. In the Bible, Jesus is the cornerstone because he:

- Defines reality -- Jesus defines our reality and is the lens through which we filter everything else.
- Is the reference point -- The cross of Jesus is the reference point to make sure our interpretation of the events surrounding us are in line with what is good and right.



Peter describes Jesus the cornerstone as a precious stone that serves as humanity's spiritual foundation. In the Old Testament, Isaiah 28:16a says, "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation". However, the Bible also says that the builders initially rejected the cornerstone, as Psalm 118:22 says, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone"

Peter calls Jesus a living stone. Since Christ dwells in us once we believe and follow the divine steps and principles, we also become living stones. As living stones, we follow Christ in building upon His foundation a temple or place where God dwells and rules in our lives. Therefore, we through our own sacrifices build upon the foundation Christ laid in expanding the Kingdom of God both in our own lives and in the world.

In this Christian life, we remain under construction, allowing God and His authority to continue to be built up in us and in turn, build up others for the Kingdom.

If you have the first four steps and the ministry of Christ through belief, you can move forward to build upon that. If you reject who Jesus is and his ministry, then your unbelief is a problem for you and you are stumbling at the very foundation you need to trust in to be able to stand.

If you are struggling and stumbling in an area, see if Jesus is involved and leaned on in this area.

Peter goes on to compare believers as chosen by God to be a Kingdom of priests, set apart for a special role and work. Part of that work is to praise Him for saving us out of our dark situation and into the light of Jesus. Because of our trust and faith in the work of Christ, we are joined to God through Christ and we are His people and by following the process, we receive mercy.

So, we are more than just His people, His children, His sons and daughters, etc. We are priests. If we are priests, what do we do in that role? Let's look back at history and a major theme of the Day of Atonement to find out.

Lev 16:11-12 – 11"*Then Aaron shall offer the bull of the sin offering which is for himself and make atonement for himself and for his household, and he shall slaughter the bull of the sin offering which is for himself. 12"He shall take a firepan full of coals of fire from upon the altar before the LORD and two handfuls of finely ground sweet incense, and bring it inside the veil.*

The High Priest first went into the Holy of Holies to make atonement for himself.

Lev 16:15-19 – 15"*Then he shall slaughter the goat of the sin offering which is for the people, and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat.*

Next, the High Priest would make atonement for the people.

Atonement means to cover, appease, make (an atonement, cleanse, disannul, forgive, be merciful, pacify, pardon, purge (away), put off, (make) reconcile.

There was a specific process and sequence of steps.

There are seven major pieces of furniture in the Temple.

- Brazen Altar – where sacrifices were slain.
- Laver – where the priest would wash before entering into the Holy Place. Ministry of separation and sanctification.
- Table of Shewbread – where the manna was presented.
- Menorah – golden lamp stand.
- Golden Altar – where incense was burned.
- The Ark of the Covenant (Testimony) – contained the following items (see Hebrews 9:4):
- The Mercy Seat

Why is this important today? As a priest, we have to follow this same model, same process, same sequence in order to build properly our lives on the foundation of Christ.

First, we must ensure that we are in proper alignment with God by following the steps. What steps? Visiting and applying each of the major stops in the temple. I don't even begin to pray or go outside, or conduct a transaction with anyone, or pray or minister to anyone before I first make sure I'm covered and straight with God.

Next, I don't stop there. I'm a living stone. I now ready to build upon my relationship with God by ministering to others. A key here is that the priest goes all the way outside again to the first step, because everyone has to follow the divine process and order to be properly atoned.

The problem we have as Christians is that we:

May try to build things that are not on the foundation of Christ. Anything we build that is not on the foundation of the Gospel will turn out crooked and fail. Flesh has to die, the Spirit has to guide the construction.

Jump to trying to help someone else before ensuring we are straight with God. If you do good works without the leading and guidance of the Holy Spirit, your good works are no good.

Have a right relationship with God and obey Him, but after we reach out to Him, we don't reach out to others to help bring them closer to God. Therefore, we become self-righteous and our faith is dead because there are no living stones to build upon the foundation.

Follow these steps and the process and we actually have evidence of bearing fruit and good works and have made contributions to the Kingdom, but our previous success generates pride and self-righteousness. We think we got it all together, can't tell us that we are wrong because we know we are right and think God is pleased, but we fail to realize we are out of alignment. Our success has blinded us. The root cause is that we fail to go back and repeat the process daily.

In the Old Testament, the high priest could only enter the most Holy Place once a year. But through Christ we can come boldly as often as we need and desire.



If I'm called to pick up my cross daily, why stop at step 3 or 4....why not enter all the way in. Have a good sacrifice when you get there to meet the Father....show Him your works.