

1 Peter 2:4-10 Part B

1Pe 2:4 (NKJV) Coming 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.

Throughout this passage, Jesus is referred to as a “stone”. In v4, He is called “a living stone”. In v6 and 7, He is called the “**chief cornerstone**”. In v7, He is referred to as the “**stone which the builders rejected**”. In v8, He is said to be a “**stone of stumbling and a rock of offense**”. In [1 Corinthians 10:4](#), it says of Christ that,

1Co 10:4 (NKJV) and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

In reality, there is no such thing as a “living stone”. Stones have no life. They are inert and without life of any kind. So, when Peter uses a term like “**living stone**”, he is using it metaphorically, symbolically. What is important to understand about the word “**living**” is that when we read it in the passage, it appears to be an adjective (a big stone, a small stone, a grey stone, etc.), but in the Greek text it is actually a participle, or what we call a verbal participle. We can basically call it a verb because it has tense and voice. It is in the present tense and the active voice. So, the way that we can understand it would be to say that Christ is the “**stone**” that is actually “**living**”. It is the idea that because He is living that He is able to impart His life to all those who keep coming to Him (v4 – “**coming to Him**”), and the fact that He is a “**stone**” gives a picture of great strength and stability.¹ Stated another way, the strength and the stability of Jesus Christ become our strength and stability as we find different ways to continually bring our life with all of our failures and successes to Him.

I am convinced that it is perfectly okay to fail, and sometimes to fail miserably, simply because God is constantly using our failures as a primary tool for teaching us the deeper truths of the Christian life. Some people seem to just grovel in their failures. Just because someone fails does not mean that that person is a failure or that their life can never change. Listen very carefully. We are all sinners and that makes every single one of us prone to failure at times, but the strength and stability of the “**living stone**” helps us to always be overcomers. I love what Jesus said in [John 16:33](#),

Jn 16:33 (NKJV) These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Paul encouraged us with this in [Romans 12:21](#),

Ro 12:21 (NKJV) Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

[1 John 5:4-5](#) says,

1Jn 5:4 (NKJV) For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith. ⁵ Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Someone who is maturing in their faith clearly understands that they can become successful in spite of their failures because of two remarkable attributes of God – His grace and His forgiveness. Grace and forgiveness are God’s answer for failure and His strength for becoming and overcomer. I have said if

often, but God has taught me much more through my personal failures than He has through the things at which I may have been successful. One of the ways that God uses failure is to remind the believer of the consequences of making bad decisions. Just because we are Christians does not exempt us from the spiritual law of sowing and reaping. We reap what we sow, so when we sow to the flesh and fail, that failure can teach us to be more careful, to remember the consequences of making bad decisions. I remember a time in our life when we became financially overburdened because of bad monetary decisions. It was a very long ordeal to get out of debt, but once out we determined that we would never again be in debt – and have not been for probably 30-35 years. Here is what we cannot do. We cannot allow our failures to spiritually paralyze us. When I fail, it helps me to understand what I should have done or should not have done and where I went wrong and why.² Those are good things. The point is that we have to keep coming to Christ, to keep finding ways to allow Him to work in our life, and to keep trusting that His strength, His grace, and His forgiveness are more than sufficient for any problem that we may face.

Please notice that Peter is about to quote three (3) Old Testament passages that refer to Christ as a “stone”, so whatever meaning is applied to the word “stone” must be developed in view of those three Old Testament prophecies. However, the actual intent of the phrase “living stone” is that the word “stone” normally in Scripture refers to a building stone and the fact that Christ is called the “chief cornerstone” in v6 and v7 would substantiate that picture. I.e., Christ is the stone on which the church is built. It is His character, His being, His life, His strength, His grace, His forgiveness, and His sacrifice that anchors everything about the Christian life. If there is anything that you want to make sure of in your life, it is that your life is resting on something that is strong and permanent and not something weak and fleeting. If you choose the world, its pleasures, its sins, its ideas, its philosophies, its pursuits, it will crumble under your very eyes. [Hebrews 11:24-26](#) says the following about Moses,

Heb 11:24 (NKJV) By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, ²⁶ esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

People just seem to love sin. The pleasures of sin just fascinate them, but they are all temporary and will vanish away very quickly. They have no eternal value, no reward. They leave people empty, confused, and always searching for that which can never satisfy. [1 John 2:17](#) sums it up best when it says,

1Jn 2:17 (NKJV) And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

That is exactly what should consume our life – doing the will of God. That is where your strength and courage originate – in doing the will of God. The more that you yield your life to the will of God, the more strength you will receive.

So, when we come to v5, Peter says that we as believers are also “living stones” that God is using to build a “spiritual house”. It should be obvious that the reference here is not to the actual local church of which believers may be a member, but of the universal Body of Christ. In fact, in v9 Peter calls the Body of Christ a “holy nation”. As believers, it is not just that we obey Christ, pray to Christ, come to

church, or serve Christ in some way, but the emphasis here is that we as believers are all united to Christ. [2 Peter 1:4](#) says that we actually are “**partakers**” of His divine nature,

Listen to how Paul expressed all of this in [Ephesians 2:19-22](#),

Eph 2:19 (NKJV) Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner *stone*,²¹ in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,²² in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

We have been “**joined together**”. We have the same Father, the same Saviour, the same Spirit indwelling each of us. We are going to the same place. Paul says that we are growing together “**into a holy temple**”. What we saw in [1 Peter 2:4](#) was that the phrase “**coming to Him**” was in the present tense and could have been translated as “**continually coming to Him**”. Well, here in v5, the verb for “**being built up**” is “*oikodomeo*” and it is in the present tense and the passive voice. So, the idea Peter is developing is that as we as believers are “**continually coming to Christ**” in worship, in praise, in prayer, in obedience, in faith, and in thankfulness that we will also “**continually be built up**” by Christ. The passive voice means that the subject is being acted upon by an outside source, so we come (active voice) and He builds us up (passive voice).

We have to come to Christ for whatever it is that we need at any given moment – strength, wisdom, patience, grace, help, love, kindness – whatever it is that we need. We have to make this coming to Christ a habit of our life, a practice of our life, and a rule of our life. We have to continually find ways to bring our life to Christ, and as we do, He will build us up to be what He wants us to be. He builds us up into a “**spiritual house**”, or in our vernacular, a place where God the Father and Christ the Son dwell and become visible to others. Never feel like you cannot come to God – no matter what your situation may be. He is always there. He will never leave you nor forsake you. None of that means that He will make life easy, but in the midst of the struggle and the difficult moments, He will see you through to the end.

We must accept the fact that it is spiritually impossible to be “**built up**” if we never come to Christ. Life gets so busy. It just gets filled with activity and interests and pursuits and recreation and reaching goals, and in that process, the tendency and inclination is for the basic and fundamental areas of the Christian life to get less and less attention. If I can say it this way, we just seem to literally run out of time for God. The schedule for the day is already full before the day starts. All we have to do is ask a young mother with multiple children in school – right? The day never seems to end – endless days. We have all been there, and that is exactly why we **MUST** come to Christ. I am personally convinced, right or wrong, that the more we leave Christ out of our schedule, the greater burden our schedule becomes on our life. I am always so encouraged by Chick-Fil-A and how successful they have been because they have honored Sunday and chosen not to be open. Whatever monies they lose by closing on Sunday, the Lord compounds their profit during the week. Brenda and I were remarking the other day that their chicken sandwich only has a piece of chicken and a dill pickle in it. No sauces, no lettuce, no mayonnaise, just a piece of chicken with a dill pickle – and the cars keep coming and coming and coming. Do you know why? It is because God is being honored and He is blessing. Listen carefully. Do not let

your busy schedule remove God from your life! Give Him your priority and you will find that He will never disappoint you.

ENDNOTES

¹ Vaughan, 44.

² Keathley, ep.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Keathley, Hampton. "Mark 17: The Wisdom to Deal With Failure." *Bible.org*. May 26, 2004.
<https://bible.org/seriespage/mark-17-wisdom-deal-failure>.

Vaughan, Curtis, and Thomas D. Lea. *Bible Study Commentary: 1,2 Peter, Jude.*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Lamplighter Books, Zondervan Publishing House, 1988.