

COUNTER CULTURE

Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

1st Peter 2.4-10 | June 24, 2018

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I. Introduction to this Study

This week we continue our series Counter Culture with a well-known passage about the world's two reactions to Jesus.

II. Connecting with One Another

Have you ever tripped and fallen down? What caused you to do so?

III. Study the Text

a. Read 1st Peter 2.4-8.

In these verses, Peter utilizes well-known stone/temple imagery from the Hebrew Scriptures, referencing Isaiah 28, Psalm 118, and Isaiah 8. Turn to and read these passages in context (try Isaiah 28.14-19, Psalm 118.22-29, and Isaiah 8.11-15).

How does reading these passages in context bring greater clarity to Peter's thoughts?

Do you have any particular questions after doing so?

b. The people to whom Peter was writing were literally "rejected by humans." Did others reject you when you came to Jesus?

Do you think this kind of rejection by others is increasing or decreasing in our culture? Why?

c. Reread 1st Peter 2.5. Notice that we are not "building ourselves up," but are rather "being built up." God is the One at work!

What do you think Peter means by the phrase "spiritual house"? What do you think that is?

d. Meditate on your Christian journey for a moment: How have you been "built up"? How are you *being built up* now?

What do you think Peter means by "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ"? What are those?

e. How is Jesus "A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall"?

f. What is the relationship between "stumbling" and the "message"?

g. Read 1st Peter 2.9-10

What phrase in verses 9-10 speaks to you most powerfully? How do *you* “declare the praises” of God?

- h. Why are Christians “a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession”? What is God’s purpose in this?
- i. How would you translate these words for a nonbeliever?
- j. It has been written, “In any museum we find quite ordinary things – clothes, a walking-stick, a pen, books, pieces of furniture – which are of value only because they were once possessed by some great person. It is so with the Christian. The Christian may be a very ordinary person but he acquires a new value because he belongs to God.”

Where do you think of yourself as an ordinary person and where do you see new value because you belong to God?

How can you increasingly lean into your new value? What practice or habit could remind you of your new identity in Christ?

IV. Pray

- a. Ask God to remind you of your new identity in Christ, that you are “a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession,”
- b. Lift up those you know for whom Jesus is a stumbling stone,
- c. Pray that God would empower you to “declare the praises of God” in natural, authentic ways for those not yet in God’s Kingdom.

V. Digging Deeper

- a. Other places that utilize stone/temple imagery are Acts 4.8-12, Romans 9.30-33, Ephesians 2.14-22, and 1st Corinthians in 3.10-17.
- b. In his “Parable of the Tenants” found in Matthew 21.33-46, Mark 12.1-12, and Luke 20.9-19, Jesus quotes Psalm 118.22-23. Read one of the above gospel passages. How does Jesus’ quotation of Psalm 118 speak to 1st Peter 2.4-8? (Psalm 118.25 is also quoted at Jesus’ Palm Sunday entry into Jerusalem – and verse 26 was supposed to be stated by the high priest, but he forgot his line! See Mark 11.1-11)
- c. Matthew 16.13-18 must have been a personal favorite of Peter’s! Peter could have turned to this text, essentially arguing for his own importance as “the rock upon whom Jesus would build his church”! Why didn’t he do so? What could we learn from Peter’s humility when we talk about our church?

