

The graphic features the word "Rooted" in a large, brown, serif font. Below it, the phrase "in the soil of a vibrant, growing faith" is written in a smaller, brown, sans-serif font. The background of the graphic consists of a network of brown roots spreading out from the top, resembling a tree's root system.

# Rooted

in the soil of a  
vibrant, growing faith

Sermon-Based Study Guide  
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2.4-12  
May 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>

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## I. Connecting With One Another

Spend a moment thinking of your fondest memories. What are they? Why are these events among your favorites?

How many of these memories involve other people?

## II. Introduction to this Study

This is week six of our series "Rooted: In the Soil of a Vibrant, Growing Faith", which may strike you as odd, especially if you're familiar with the Protestant Reformation, or you have noticed that in previous study guides or messages we've talked about the *five* solas. "If there are five solas, what are we studying in week six!?" Good question! (If you've missed any, catch up here: [gspc.org/dig-deeper](https://gspc.org/dig-deeper)).

Indeed, the five essential "onlys" provide the basis of biblical Christianity: Scripture, Jesus, grace, faith, and glory to God, but have you noticed anything missing? Though I'm no expert on the Protestant Reformation, I've come to believe there is a sixth sola, which was constantly implied by the Reformers. While this sixth sola may have been implicit for Martin Luther, John Calvin, and countless others, we need to make it explicit: *Sola Ecclesia* – or Church Alone!

It is my contention (and I believe it was the Reformers' as well) that if we're seeking to be rooted in Scripture, Jesus Christ, Grace, Faith, and the glory of God, we will also be rooted in church. In fact, the church is meant to be the embodiment these doctrines! John Calvin went so far as to say, "Away from [the church] one cannot hope for any forgiveness of sins or any salvation."

Furthermore, as we will see, the church is central to the mission of God! To put it another way, how will people hear about the God's Written Word, God's Living Word, God's gift of Grace, God's gift of Faith, and that we can give all glory to God? The church! The church is the instrument by which God has chosen to extend the gospel to the world!

## III. Study the Text

### a. Read 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2.4-12.

Think through the previous five weeks' study guides and messages: Where do you see the five solas show up in these verses? (For a hint, see the bottom of the page)

Where do you see Peter discussing the church?

### b. Modern day English features a few words to describe different kinds of rocks. In verse 4, Peter employs a specific Greek word for "living stone" which called to mind not a rock taken from the ground, but rather a dressed stone, ready for use in construction. Why do you think he uses a specific term that denotes construction? If he were writing today, what type of building material do you think he would use to describe Jesus as the foundation of the church?

- c. Verses 6-8 quote from Isaiah 28.16, Psalm 118.22, and Isaiah 8.14. To get the full context of these passages, read Isaiah 28.1-16, Psalm 118.19-27, and Isaiah 8.11-17.

After looking through these passages, what do you think the connection is between these verses and stone construction? Here's some hints: Isaiah 28 engages the wicked ways of religious leaders and Psalm 118.25-26 was quoted as Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (according to first century culture, the High Priest was supposed to state the second half of verse 26, but forgot his line!).

- d. Peter uses Temple-themed language to communicate that we are the people of God, founded upon Jesus, the stone the builders rejected. I know what you're thinking: "Are there any other places that the Christian Scriptures use this language?" Good question! And yes, there are!

Check out Jesus' statement to first century religious leaders in Mark 12.1-12, Peter's speech in Acts 4.8-12, Paul's letter to the Romans in 9.30-33, to the Ephesians in 2.14-22, and first letter to the Corinthians in 3.10-17. After thinking through these profound passages, how would you summarize them for someone unfamiliar with Christianity? Try writing your summarization here:

- e. Reread 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2.5. Notice that we are not "building ourselves up", but are rather "being built up." God is the One at work! Meditate on your Christian journey for a moment: How have you been built up? How are you being built up now? How could God use our study of the *solas* to build us up? What do you think Peter means by "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ"?
- f. What phrase in verses 9-10 speaks to you most powerfully? How do you "declare the praises" of God?
- g. Read verse 12, then verse 11. Why do you think Peter discusses living "such good lives among unbelievers" *after* urging his friends to live "abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul"? Can you do one without the other? Why or why not? How does this connect with "being built up"?

#### IV. Reflect and Respond

- a. What do you think of John Calvin's statement, "Away from [the church] one cannot hope for any forgiveness of sins or any salvation"? Do you agree? Why or why not?
- b. If Jesus is the true temple of God, through whom we are being built into the temple of God, how should we understand church buildings, worship gatherings, or denominations?
- c. It's a hallmark of Reformed faith that God is the One at work. But how are we involved in that? How can you better allow God to "build you up" within the community of Good Shepherd?
- d. After talking about the church, in verse 12 Peter shifts to discuss living "among pagans." How do you *live among* your coworkers, neighbors, friends, and family who haven't yet been "called out of darkness"? How could you be equipped to do so even more?

#### V. Spend some time in prayer:

- a. Thank God for His work by which He is "building us up" in Christ!
- b. Pray for Good Shepherd, as we discern our denominational affiliation,
- c. Lift up the families of Good Shepherd to connect with God, grow in faith, and serve in love,.
- d. Ask God to give you a heart for those who don't yet follow Jesus and help to you "live among" them as an example of Christian faith.