

1 Peter 2:1-10
“You Are Who He Says You Are”
5th Sunday of Easter

May 14, 2017
Our Redeemer
Rev. Brent Hartwig

Grace, Mercy, and Peace be unto you from Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

[A People]

You are who he says you are.

“You Are a Chosen Race, a Royal Priesthood,
a Holy Nation, a People for His Own Possession”(v 9).

As holy, kingly, priestly, and chosen people
he purchased you to be with his holy blood and innocent suffering and death.

His Word defines who you are.

His Word proclaims who you are.

His pronouncement of forgiveness endures forever.

You were not always his people. He was not always your God.

You had not received mercy.

BUT Now, because of the death and resurrection of your Lord Jesus Christ...

You are his people.

You are the people belonging to God.

You have the Lord as your God.

And mercy? You have mercy upon mercy through Christ.

You are not getting what you deserve!

Jesus was shown no mercy by God when he died in your place.

For you, the wrath of God fell upon him as it should've fallen upon you.

For you, he suffered and died.

But he is not a dead stone. He is the living stone.

God the Father raised him from the dead on Easter morning.

The stone that the builders rejected has become
the first-laid stone of the Church's foundation.

The stone on which the whole building depends, the cornerstone.

He is chosen and precious in the sight of God.

You are chosen and precious in the sight of God in him.

In him,
Through him, you, like living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house.
A house not made of bricks or stone, but of living stones.

[*A BROKEN People*]

Yet, life doesn't always fit into that beautiful picture
of all of us being built together
into the Church, does it?

There is suffering and pain. Real pain. Real loss.

And the other stones around you? They are no help.
In fact... doesn't it feel like sometimes they try to tear you down
more than they build you up?

They should be supporting you, not hurting you.
Sure, sticks and stones may break my bones, but their words still hurt.

Now, if you were honest with yourself,
you hit people with stones too, don't you?

They hurt you; you hurt them back.
You are hit with stones, so you hit others with them.
Do unto others, stone others, before they stone you.
Many times that's how we live.

Amidst our being built into spiritual houses, bad stuff still happens.
Really bad, unfair stuff is going on all around you.

Loved ones get sick. You don't feel so hot.
And it's easy to think, Believing in Jesus should count for something.
It should get me something . . . something more than the other guy
who doesn't believe.

It should get me a pass, a get-out-of-suffering-free card.
The people around me should be better.
God should be better to me.

Things should be better than this!

And we are left to think:
Chosen? Unlikely.
Kingly? We aren't even ruling our little corner of our lives,

let alone anything in heaven.
Holy? A people of his own possession? Are you joking?
There seem to be more stones crushing us than building us up!

[A Living Stone]

All of this talk is just utter unbelief! A trick of the Devil!
For your Lord's words are not a matter of what you see or experience.

That is so important, so I am going to say it again.
Your Lord's words are not a matter of what you see or experience.

They aren't made true by things working out for you
OR made untrue by things not working for you.

You aren't kingly priests because you look like kingly priests.
You aren't a chosen family because you act like a chosen family
or events turn out your way to prove to you that God loves you.

Nor do you do something and make yourself his own possession
and make life work out for you the way you want it to work out.

You are who the Father says you are.
You are worth what he paid for you. He paid the death of his Son.
It's not a matter of whether you measure up or things turn out the way you plan.

Christ did what he did for you,
and that makes and defines who you are and what you are worth.
Christ is the stone rejected by men but chosen and precious to God.
And after his death on the cross, he was raised as a living stone.

You, you find your identify in him.
He's the living stone. You are living stones in him.

But not just you individually.
All of you right now are living stones,
being built into a spiritual building through him.

His building. His people.
He the Way, the Truth, the Life. You the ones receiving the Way, the Truth, the Life.

Apart from him, you are nothing but dead rocks.
Not God's people.
Unholy priests who deserve no mercy.
Just people stumbling around, disobeying his Word.

But in him—through the sacrifice of Christ—God considers you precious.
His death for your sins. His resurrection for your resurrection.
And you are made alive, living stones, built together into his Holy Church.

He is working among you. He is building you together.
His holiness has become your holiness.
His kingliness is now your kingliness.
His priesthood, your priesthood.
His mercy showered upon you in his gifts.

[Conclusion]

All so that you might proclaim the glorious deeds of him
who brought you out of darkness into his glorious light.

In Jesus,

Are no longer living in your sins, your despair, your evil, your deceit, hypocrisy, envy, slander, or whatever other stones you toss at one another.	But loving others, for others, for the sake of others, he takes the stones that fall around you. He builds you all together.
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He makes you a building, his spiritual building, his Church.
His Word is the final word on who you are and who you will be.
“You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (v 9).

That is who you have been.
That is who you will be on the Last Day.
That is who you are now.
You are who he says you are. Amen.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, ...
to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations,
for ever and ever! AMEN!
