

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

Our Privileges 1 Peter 2:4-10 Part One

What is the meaning of the word “privilege?” We can define privilege as a right or benefit beyond the advantage of most. We have the privilege of living in the United States of America. I am sure that all of us have something negative to say about America, but when everything is all done and said it is a privilege to live in this country. Certainly for those of us that have enjoyed hosting Japanese students and who have become familiar with the Japanese way of life we would have to be thankful for the privilege of living in this nation.

It is a privilege to live in a nation which encourages individual initiative. It is a privilege to live in a nation which has allowed its people to enjoy the fruit of their labor. It is a privilege to live in a society which promotes time with the family. It is a privilege to live in a country where children can be free to be children without the heavy demands put upon them by their parents to obtain academic success. One of the Japanese students that Lynn and I hosted a number of years ago told us that she felt sorry for Japanese children. **AMERICANS TRULY ARE PRIVILEGED.**

But though this is true it is far more true of Christians. As Christians we have rich spiritual privileges in Christ which far exceed in other group of people. But before we begin to do this I would like to take a few minutes to review what we have already covered.

Remember that we have just come out of a section of Scripture which dealt with duty. **1 Peter 1:13-2:3** was filled with imperatives and exhortations. We learned that in light of the greatness of our salvation we need to act in certain ways.

In respect to God our proper response is threefold (1) to “fix our hope on the grace to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” **V. 13**; (2) To strive to live holy lives (**VV. 14-16**); (3) And finally to honor the Lord by living in “reverential fear” (**V. 17**).

In respect to others we saw that our proper response was to “**fervently love one another from the heart**” (**V. 22**).

And finally in respect to ourselves we saw that our proper response was to “**Like a newborn babe, long for the pure milk of the Word.**”

Having finished this section on duty we are now entering a passage of privilege. Our life of privilege as Christians begins when we come to Him at the time of our salvation..... Let us look at **V. 4 “And coming to Him.”**

When Christ was in this world He was continually giving an invitation for men to come to Him.

Mt. 11:28, “Come to me all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest. (29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls.”

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And when men respond to this invitation they will immediately enter into a life of abounding privilege. Though our life of privilege began with this initial coming it is not our initial coming that Peter has in mind. The word he chose to use, that is translated “coming”, is the present participle of PROSERCHOMAI. This word does not emphasize the individual’s initial coming or commitment to Christ for salvation but rather it refers to the voluntary repeated or habitual coming to Christ for sustenance and fellowship. We see the same word used to convey this concept in **Heb. 4:16, 7:25, 10:1-22, 11:6, 12:8-22**).

We also notice that when we come to Him we come to him as a “living stone.” Again let us look at **V. 4 “and coming to Him as to a living stone.”** Peter is using an analogy of a stone as a picture of Christ. This is a very interesting choice on Peter’s part. But certainly this is not without precedent. As we shall see in **VV. 6-8** where a number of O.T. passages refer to the Messiah as a stone.

The word translated stone is not PETROS which is a small stone that you might find along the road, or even PETRA which would be a much larger stone or a mass of rock but rather the word used here LITHOS which is used to speak of a “cut or shaped stone.” This would be a stone that we would find in a building. But what makes this analogy particularly interesting is the fact that this stone is described as what? LIVING. Stones are commonly thought of as dead. In fact we often here the phrase “stone dead.” But this stone is “living.”

Why is this stone referred to as living? Because though Christ had in fact been put to death He rose again on the third day and continues to live at the right hand of the throne of God. Jesus by virtue of his resurrection has now become “**a living stone**”. Notice I did not say “**The living stone**”. Rather I said what, “**A living stone**”. Why? Because this is how the scriptures read. There is no definite article in the Greek. This is done in order to emphasis the quality of the stone. The quality of the stone that is being emphasized is that it is “living”.

Next we notice that this “living stone” was rejected by men. Let us again look at **V. 4 “And coming to Him (voluntarily and habitually coming for our sustenance and strength) “as to a living stone” (A dead stone but a living stone meticulously crafted and shaped), “rejected by men.”** In the time of the apostles buildings were primarily built of stone. The most important stone of all was the cornerstone. The cornerstone was like a plumbline. If any of the angles were off the whole building would be off. If the vertical angle was wrong it would collapse. It had to be a perfect stone.

The leaders of Israel who wanted to participate in the building of God’s glorious spiritual temple was looking for their cornerstone, or, in other words, they were looking for their Messiah. And in looking for the cornerstone they examined Christ and applied all their measuring instruments they had at their disposal and they found Him wanting. They therefore rejected Him.

Jesus did not pass their calculations. The word for rejected “APODOKIMAZO” implies a rejection after having been examined and tested. Their rejection was filled with hate. This foolish and poor man could not be their Messiah so they thought. This man who was so quick to rebuke them but ignored the Roman tyranny over them certainly could not be their Messiah.

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But though rejected by men look at V. 4 again. “... **He was choice and precious in the sight of God.**” “He was elect (EKLECTOS) and precious in the sight of God.” God examined Him and took out His instruments of measurement and found him, as His chosen and elected vessel, PERFECT. When Christ was baptized we heard the result of the Lord’s evaluation.... “**This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased**” in Mt. 3:17..... At the Mount of Transfiguration we heard the result of the Lord’s evaluation again “**This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.**” in Mt. 17:5.

Just as the ultimate rejection of Christ by men was demonstrated at the crucifixion of Christ, the ultimate approval of Christ by God was demonstrated at His resurrection.

In Acts 2:22-24 it says, “**Men of Israel, listen to these words; Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know (23) this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. (24) And God raised Him up again**”

The Jewish people looked at Christ and rejected him. They rejected God’s stone. But the Lord raised Him up giving Him life.

The rejection of Christ by men does not reflect badly on Christ but rather on who? On men!! The story is told of a man who went to the New York Museum of Art and he was heard saying as he viewed one of the painting on display, “I don’t think much of that painting.” An art critic standing close by having heard what he had said, “The painting is not on trial, you are. You have only demonstrated your ignorance. ”

But what about those people who agree with God concerning Christ. And who choose to respond to His invitation and come to Him as a living stone. What happens to them? THEY ENTER INTO A LIFE OF PRIVILEGE. AND WHAT ARE THESE PRIVILEGES?

UNION WITH OUR LORD

When we respond to Christ’s invitation and come to Him. We become identified with Christ. But we do not become identified with Christ as we were but rather we become identified with Christ as He is. It is not as if we just worship Him, or pray to Him, or serve Him, but rather we are united to Him. This is why we read in 2 Cor. 5:17 “**Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.**” Christianity is the only religion in the world where the life of its founder becomes the very life of His disciples. We have not heard of people being “in Buddha,” “in Confucius,” or “in Mohammed.” But we are now, if you are a Christian, “in Christ”.

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Everything that is true of Him becomes true of us.

It is not only Christ who was made alive through His resurrection to live to God but this is also true for all those who become united with Him through faith. **Romans 6:1-5** “**What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? (2) May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? (3) Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? (4) Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. (5) For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.**” Again I am telling you that because we have been joined to Christ by faith everything that is true of Christ become true of us. If this is so then if Christ is a living stone by virtue of his resurrection then what are we? Living stones.

Let us now look at **V. 5** “**you also as living stones.**” It is one thing to come to a living stone it is another to become a living stone. Peter by this statement is confirming what I have already shared with you. When we come to Christ by faith and become united with Him we become like Him. As Christ is a living stone we are also living stones. What were the cut stones used for in the time of Peter? They were used for buildings!!! This leads us to the next phrase.

We as living stones are being built up as a “**spiritual house.**” We are all being built up as a spiritual house. God is the builder and He is putting us all in place. More is said about this in **Eph. 2:19-22** “**So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, (20) having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, (21) in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; (22) in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.**”

We are the dwelling of God. This is true individually for the Christian we see this clearly stated in **1 Cor. 6:19** “**Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own.**” This is also true corporately. As we see here and as we have read in Eph. 2.

CONCLUSION

When we come to Christ by faith it is our PRIVILEGE to be united to Him. Everything that is true of Him becomes true of us “in Him.” This is why we can stand before God without fear and address Him as Father and enjoy infinite blessings.

One of those blessings was clearly seen in the passage we examined this morning. Christ through the resurrection became a “living stone,” rejected by men but choice and precious in the sight of God.

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Our union with Him made it possible for us now to become a “spiritual house”.... THE VERY TEMPLE OF GOD.

When we think of Valley Bible I hope that you would not think of the buldings but rather the people. And as you think of the people that make up this fellowship which would include yourself. Let us through our union with Christ think of ourselves as God’s holy temple.

When I do this, do you know what I am overwhelmed with? I am overwhelmed with a a sense of gratitude that this unworthy vessel could be brought to such an exalted position. AND I WANT MY LIFE AND THE LIFE OF THIS FELLOWSHIP TO BE ADORNED.

You might think how I can never get this together. **Eph. 3:20,21 “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, (21) to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. AMEN.**