**Living Stones**

Based on [1 Peter 2](https://biblia.com/books/esv/1Pe2)

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Lenten Midweek 2

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St. Peter wrote his first epistle to the “elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.” From the beginning, the one true catholic and apostolic church has been dispersed…*scattered* throughout the world as exiles. Though dispersed, the church is still a whole,--one in mind, one in spirit, one in baptism, one in faith, one in the Lord Jesus Christ. **Just as the soldiers divided Jesus’ outer garments, but his inner tunic remained seamless, so too the church may be scattered outwardly, but is inwardly united by the seamless doctrine and faith delivered once for all to the saints.**

And that faith makes us different. We aren’t supposed to chase after the glory of the world, but after the word of the Lord. How many people do you know have grown up to succeed in the world, only to fail in the word? There is nothing sadder than a rich person who has figured out how to make friends and influence people; but doesn’t know the ten commandments or the creed. My God, what a wasted life. My heart breaks for people who are well-known in the community; but unknown to God. God wants such people to turn again and become children. Forget how to please people and learn how to please God. Peter writes, “**Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is Good.”**

Jesus says that to enter the kingdom of heaven you must be born again. That means that in this world, and to this world, we are no longer born not in sin but in the Spirit of God. And as sojourners here, we are infants and children. God is our Father, and the church is our mother, who nurses us with the pure spiritual milk, the pure doctrine of the word of God and His Sacraments.

Born again we are built up as living stones into the house of God, and Jesus Christ is our cornerstone. He was raised up in the same sinful world as us, he was battered, bruised, no place to lay his head and yet he did not turn to the flesh for help. He did not employ malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy or slander, but loved his enemies until they killed him.

He lived in the world, he lived to save the world, but he did not adopt the ways of the world. In fact, though he was worthy of more glory, honor, power and might than the world, he submitted to his mother who raised him, and he submitted to his heavenly Father whose will it was to turn him over to death, so that he would raise him to be the firstfruits of the resurrection of all.

So too, we are called first to put away all malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander; and instead live lives of submissiveness. Peter says, “Be subject to every human institution.” It is a fine line between order and chaos in a world of sin, and much of it hinges on this question of submission. Who do I have to obey? God, of course…but if God is only in heaven. But he is on earth in those who have been given authority over you…even evil people. And when you obey them, you obey God. When you disobey them…you disobey God. So Scripture clearly teaches you are supposed to respect and obey men who are given authority over you. If you are a law unto yourself, then you are your own god, and an idol. But God has placed, parents, governments, ministers, bosses over you. Do not despise them. Do not slander them. Do not be a people pleaser, doing what your told only when eyes are on you.

Peter gives several useful instructions here.

1. Do good to silence ignorant and foolish people. Scripture says do not answer a fool in his folly. Do not rebuke a fool, he will hate you for it. There is certainly a time to correct people, but there is also a time to refrain. St paul says about those who quarrel over words, “Warn them once, warn them twice, then have nothing more to do with them.” At that point, all you can do is live your own life according to the truth, so their slander will fall back upon them.
2. Do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil. As a Christian, you may be subject to governing authorities, but your conscience is captive only to God. Paul says, the spiritual man is judged by no one. many of you have been kicked out of a church for doing the right thing…that doesn’t matter. There is a great freedom in freedom of conscience, but there is nothing stopping you from hiding from God as well. Do not use your freedom to cover up evil.
3. Suffer unjustly.

Salvation is the goal, for yourself, for your neighbor, for the whole world. And we are called to grow up into salvation. In this way, salvation is living a holy life.

Be subject to authority.