

“Under Construction”

1 Peter 2:1-12

Series: Hope Rising Week 3. Solid Hope

Rev. Joe Cain

The Woodside Church

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This house is “under construction” and we are being trained to do a job, the holy priesthood, to do and live out the commands of God for all to witness and to proclaim the truth to all the universe, the Gospel Christ Jesus. 1 Peter 2:1-12

“Therefore” - Peter, after sharing his thoughts in chapter 1, starts his next thought with “therefore” to join 2 thoughts together. Thought from chapter 1, that Pastor Doug shared with us last week. The thought that we ought to be holy in how we live, love each other deeply from the heart because we have “purified our souls” by our “obedience to the truth...through the living and abiding word of God;” 1 Peter 1:22-23

And this thought, in holiness and love for Christ and one love for one another we must, we must RID yourselves - to purge, cleanse, purify, free - to take off the old self and put on the new self. The “Be holy for I am holy.” 1 Peter 1:16. “Preparing our Minds for action.”

These thoughts are vital to what Peter is saying in the rest of this chapter and in his letter to those past believers in exile throughout the region and all believers today. The reason Peter wrote this letter is to challenge and lift the people of God who were and are in great discouragement. This is par for the course, don’t let yourselves “get stuck” in the world’s stuff and stinkin thinkin. Why? He is reminding us that even though all this is happening, that we are exiles, dispersed throughout the known world separated from each other and suffering, that the whole world seems to be against us, Covid, stuck in our homes, socially distant, and masks and we have no place to turn, we are to first not live as we have before, as people who have no hope. Instead RID ourselves of these things Malice, deceit, and hypocrisy, envy, and slander. This is what can happen to stuck and lost people.

What is the answer to these things, these things that make us stuck, what is the answer to maintain living unstuck? We must long for, crave the pure milk of the Word! Desire with an insatiable hunger and thirst THE WORD OF GOD!

The source of life and growth, “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes out of the mouth of God.” Matthew 4:4

This is important since we have TASTED the kindness of the Lord - Verse 3 and...because of all this stuff, this stuck thinking, the feeling like exiles, Peter is reminding us what we are, our place in God’s plan and who and what we represent.

The pagans that surround the people of God, worshiped idols carved in stone and in many temples in every city dedicated to false gods. Their priests were treated like superstars with all their foolery. Doesn't this remind you of Hollywood or even the music industry?

We are different, why? Because we come to Him... Coming to Him - present tense continuous action. You just keep coming continually. Coming right up to Him. The word Proserchomai - erchomai means "to come" pros means "next to" you literally come right next to him, as a child to the father. You have the father's ear. But, we sinners, by grace, have constant and complete full access to Him.

We worship the LIVING STONE. The source of all LIFE. The one who is not dead, who rose from the dead. The Rock of Ages, the cornerstone of the church, this Living Stone real and true, He is the Choice Stone and the Precious Stone in the sight of God. All the other stones, false gods, are not,... just idols. LIVING STONE is used to remind us that we don't worship a false idol, stones carved by men, but the Living God.

We are "also... living stones," how are we living stones? We were once dead in our trespasses and sin. We were without God in the world without hope, but we have been born-again and brought into God's family, and are now "living stones being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Christ." Not priests of false stone idols but priests of God and of the holy priesthood. What are these spiritual sacrifices? They are the ...giving of yourself, your body as sacrifices (Romans 12:1-2.) Your praise is a sacrifice, sacrifice of praise - Hebrews 13, your prayers are a sacrifice, our righteous deeds, our obedience, our love, our service, we offer all these sacrifices in His name, the name of Jesus and the heavenly Father accepts it all done through the power of the Holy Spirit. We are the Church, not the building.

Here at Woodside we have many opportunities to live out our holy priesthood, our spiritual sacrifices by participating in the 75 days of prayer and service. As we celebrate our 75th anniversary we have on our website the 75 days of prayer list and 75 days of service that you can get involved in. Join in prayer by signing up for a day of prayer or doing 75 days of service, 75 acts of kindness for kids, or join with us as we raise \$75,000 dollars for Family Promise.

The Gospel is the power of God for us, but for the unbelieving, it is foolishness, the "stone of stumbling and the rock of offense"

In closing, Peter in verses 9-12 exhorts, warns, and challenges us.

In verse 9 we are reminded of what we are and our purpose for God and His kingdom. The believers are a CHOSEN PEOPLE, the race of God and a people from all nations, tribes, tongues, colors and creeds, A holy, heavenly kaleidoscope family. WE ARE A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, we have a calling to serve the King and the God of all creation, to do His bidding His way with all reverence and fear, with great expectancy as we lead His people in worship, share the Gospel to all peoples, and to live in such a way as to bring all attention and glory to Him and His name. We are a HOLY NATION, a Nation

with a constitution (the Scripture), we have laws (The commandments), we have a mission (to go and make disciples), and a King who rules all things from His throne. AND we are GOD'S OWN POSSESSION, bought by the blood of Christ, once slaves to sin and bound to death and the grave, but now free and slaves to Christ, no longer bound to sin, death, and the grave. We are Loved and part of the beloved, the Holy Family of God.

What should our response be and what are we called to and commanded to do since we are all these things in Christ? WE WERE MADE, CALLED, AND SAVED TO "PROCLAIM THE EXCELLENCIES OF HIM WHO HAS CALLED US OUT OF DARKNESS INTO HIS MARVELOUS LIGHT."

Why? Here is the warning. For (BECAUSE) at one time you were not all those things. You were not a people, and have not received mercy but now you are a people who have received mercy. So act like it, live like it, and speak like it.

Lastly, here is the challenge - Since they were exiles and since we are exiles, this is not our home, we are foreigners and strangers, sojourners passing through. We are to live as people of God, not as they do, but to abstain from lusts which are waging war against us. Instead, we are to keep (live out, holdfast) to what is true, and set our minds on things above. We are to long for the pure milk, grow in respect to our salvation, especially in front of the unbelievers "so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may, as a result of your good deeds (your spiritual sacrifices in the Holy Priesthood), observe them (your life and how you live), and glorify God on the day of Christ's return."