

Sample sermon for 1 Peter Bible Study. Lockdown 2020
All Saints Mudeford

Title: Living Stones

Reading: 1 Peter 2:4-10

Text: *As you come to (Jesus) , the living Stone—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house* 1 Peter 1:4&5

Aim: To come to Jesus the living stone and to become living stones.

INTRODUCTION

Israel is a very rocky country. Rocks ideal for building of fortresses or walled cities (Jericho) or a temple as a place of worship, downside was that these native rocks, which often jutted out of the ground, could trip you up. (Stumbling blocks

The rocky countryside perhaps influenced religious thinking?

A. A monolithic faith.

As early in OT as Genesis, 49:24 God is described as the ROCK of Israel and King David in Psalm 18 calls God his Rock following his deliverance from all his enemies.

The law of God was written on tablets of stone and the people worshipped at the magnificent temple made from massive stones which were adorned with gold. Jesus' disciples were very impressed and remarked on what wonderful stones what beautiful buildings. This temple was destroyed as prophesied by Jesus in AD 70 by the Romans. Nevertheless, Jews can still be seen in Jerusalem today praying by the stones of the Western (wailing) Wall and insisting on the inheritance of this rocky land of Israel.

B. The Living Stone

Peter is writing to Christians in what is now Northern Turkey. They are beginning to be persecuted for their faith. Peter writes about Jesus: the Messiah, who also has suffered. Often quoting from the Prophet Isaiah. He takes up this image of Jesus the Living stone, which Jesus used of himself quoting from Psalm 118. *The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone. (v22)*

Throughout his ministry, Jesus was at odds with the scribes and Pharisees who failed to recognise who he was and wanted everything to stay just as it was. Set in stone.

But Peter came to see that "*Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring us to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.*" 3:18

Instead of being recognised as The Rock of Israel, Jesus was a stumbling block to many.

C. Living Stones

The Christians to whom Peter was writing were probably a mix of Jewish converts and Gentiles. They needed to be reminded about Jesus. Come to Jesus. Peter's letter is very much like all apostolic preaching and teaching (read Acts) in that it proclaims that Jesus is the Messiah. But Peter goes further by presenting the suffering Christ.

In times of trial, we need to keep our focus on Jesus. To remember and draw strength from the fact that he too has suffered: *since Christ suffered in the body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude* (4:1).

If our places of worship are closed, we can get by, as we are living stones, part of the body of Jesus here on earth. As Paul says "*do you not know that you are God's temple.*" (1 Corinthians 3:17)

As living stones we are called to worship and prayer. As Jesus said of the actual temple. "*My house shall be a place of prayer.*"

I hope that in this time of lockdown you have managed to maintain a life of prayer at home.

CONCLUSION

What is your faith like? Monolithic? Set in stone? Or dynamic and alive! Overflowing in praise to Jesus, love and service to others.

Jesus calls us to follow him, the living stone, that we might also be living stones: living lives to the praise and glory of God. Amen.