



Living Hope

A CALL TO GOOD WORKS

1 Peter 2

Teaching Notes

INTRO

First Peter is one of the eight General Letters of the New Testament. Peter was one of the most significant figures in the origination of the church. Repeatedly, Jesus gave Peter direction on what he must do to obey God and follow Him. Typically, it required that Peter be given the message three times before he grasped it and understood it, even though Peter was the closest disciple to Christ and had the most intimate connection with Christ.

TEACHING

1 Peter 2:1-25: Peter had seen a lot and had learned a lot of lessons. Peter made a number of mistakes, but now he was speaking to believers about persecution. Rome had been burned down. Peter was writing to the believers who were scattered in various provinces of Rome, including Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.¹ Peter encouraged these believers to hang on and keep going. Apostles like Peter and Paul had experienced persecution and understood what was required for believers to persevere in difficult times.

Peter was reminding the persecuted believers that they had a *Living Hope*. The living hope comes through the resurrection of Christ and their new birth as believers. As the pressure takes place these believers were encouraged to walk out practical holiness. There was a call for Christian holiness and a call for maturity.²

In verse 1, Peter called for the people to rid themselves of all malice. McGee raised the question: “What is malice? The best definition I have found is concealed anger. It means to have an unforgiving spirit.”³ First Peter calls for believers to rid themselves of guile, envy, hypocrisy, slander, and deceit.

A believer’s desire should be to grow and desire the Word of God. According to *Nelson’s Commentary*, “Desire does not mean merely to want something, but rather to long for something with all of one’s being.”⁴ That desire comes because of salvation through Christ. Because believers have been saved, they should want to know more about the Lord.

Romans 15:4 states that “whatever was written in the past was written for our instruction, so that we may have hope.” Hope comes through the encouragement and endurance of Scripture. By living in the Word, hope becomes established more and more as a part of the believer’s life.

In verse 4, the “living stone” refers to Christ. What is of interest in this passage is the comparison of Peter’s name that was translated as rock and Christ as the living stone. The living stone had been rejected by men. According to John 3:18, if the living stone was rejected, the nonbelievers would already be judged because they did not believe in the Son of God. Those who rejected Christ would have no excuse and they would face God’s wrath according to Romans 1:18–23.

Believers are also identified as living stones in verse 5. Therefore, they are part of the building of the Church along with the prophets and apostles. They are a part of the construction and Christ is the cornerstone. The believers are being built into a spiritual house, a living temple.

Believers are a living temple in which spiritual sacrifices that are brought to the temples include our praise, our possessions, and ourselves.⁵ Everything is based around the living cornerstone. MacArthur writes, “Metaphorically, God is building a spiritual house, putting all believers in place, integrating each one with the others, and each with the life of Christ (cf. Ephesians 2:19; Hebrews 3:6).”⁶

Verse 6 states believers have a “living hope.” Peter quoted Isaiah 28:16. The references in Isaiah pointed specifically to the Messiah as the cornerstone.

¹ Thomas Constable, *Constable’s Expository Bible Study Notes: 1 Peter*, p. 11; available at <https://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1peter.pdf>.

² Earl Radmacher, Ronald B. Allen, and H. Wayne House, eds., *Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Commentary* (Nashville, Thomas Nelson Publisher, 1999), p. 1680.

³ J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible, 1 Corinthians–Revelation*, v. 5 (Nashville, Thomas Nelson Publisher, 1983), p. 689.

⁴ *Nelson’s Commentary*, p. 1680.

⁵ McGee, p. 692.

⁶ MacArthur, p. 1907.



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The role of living stones includes holiness, being built into a spiritual house, and becoming a holy priesthood. All this is based on Christ as the cornerstone. MacArthur states, “Old Testament Priests and New Testament Believer Priests: Both by elect privilege, both are cleansed from sin, both are clothed for service, both are prepared for service, both are ordained to obedience, both are to honor God’s Word, both are to walk with God, both are to impact sinners, and both are to be messengers of God.”⁷ These are the expectations of the believers who are the living stones. The living stones are to be at work doing these expectations.

Nelson’s Commentary explains that in verse 7, “The Greek more precisely reads, ‘the honor is to you who believe.’ The honor or privilege that we experienced is that we will never be ashamed of our relationship to Jesus Christ (v. 6), nor will we stumble because of Him (v. 8).”⁸

Verse 9 states believers make up “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a people for His possession.” McGee states these are believers who belong to a chosen generation because of the new birth.⁹

What makes believers a holy nation is their position and posture in Christ. They are a people for His possession. McGee explains, “Therefore, there is in the world not only a new nation but also a people that belong to Him. I don’t know why some Christians are afraid of this concept. It doesn’t mean that we are to be peculiar in conduct and act strangely but that we belong to Him.”¹⁰

CLOSING

When people come to Christ, He will embrace them and they will become part of the holy nation, the chosen nation. The role as believers was to be a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, and a holy nation. Believers are His own special people who are to proclaim the praises of Him, and Christ is shepherding us through the process.

⁷ MacArthur, p. 1908.

⁸ Nelson’s Commentary, p. 1681.

⁹ McGee, p. 693.

¹⁰ McGee, p. 693.