

1 Peter 2:4-5

In verse 4-5 the Apostle Peter describes what it means to live a sacred life by identifying a sacred relationship, a sacred response, and 8 sacrifices we offer to God.

1. A Sacred Relationship

The transitive verb Peter uses here for “*rejected*” refers to someone measuring the stone and sizing up the stone but then deciding it doesn’t meet their expectations and so they discard it as useless. Peter is saying that those who rejected Jesus are essentially saying, “Jesus doesn’t measure up.” He isn’t what they wanted. “What’s Jesus going to do for me? What’s He good for?” “I’m not interested.”

Peter is making the point that Jesus isn’t an option, He’s an intersection. A person either turns *to* Him or turns away from Him. John the Apostle clearly spelled out the reason why the biblical Jesus turns people off: “*Light has come into the world and men loved darkness rather than Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.*” (**John 3:19-20**)

Vs. 4 – The tense of the verb Peter uses here for “*coming to*” Jesus is actually a reference, not so much to initial salvation, but to repeatedly, voluntarily, habitually coming to Christ for communion, fellowship and strength.

This stone [Jesus] is living because this stone is a Person – a Person with life, vitality, strength, consistency, and permanency; Jesus is alive! “*No other faith can claim a living founder who has passed through death and has risen to a triumph at God the Father’s right hand, and remains continually available to the immediate fellowship of each person who trusts [in] Him.*” [D. Edmond Hiebert]

Verse 4 informs us that God the Father has effectively measured up Jesus Christ and declares Him to be worthy of His election as Redeemer, chosen before time began. Peter adds that Jesus Christ is also precious, of the highest value.

Vs. 5 – In the New Testament there are a number of names for Jesus, in the singular, given to Christians, in the plural:

- He is the Son of God; we’re sons of God
- He is the High Priest; we’re priests
- He is the Lamb; we’re called lambs
- He is the Light; we’re called lights
- He is the Living stone; we’re called here by Peter, living stones

The word used is a reference to “*stones*” that have been dug out of the quarry and then shaped and cut so that they fit the builder’s purposes. We are called “*living stones*;” we’ve been given life by union with the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

“*So then you are . . . of God’s household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit*” (**Ephesians 2:19-22**). The church is pictured as a collection of living, redeemed stones, each stone individually quarried and then shaped by God to fit His specific assignment for each of us.

This text reminds us that without the grace of God, none of us would belong to the church; we’d still be in the pit with the rest of the world. Peter is highlighting the fact that we as true believers are all different in personality and talent, we’re not bricks manufactured to all look alike; by faith in Jesus Christ we are living stones, uniquely fashioned by God’s delight for His service.

There is a warning to Christians: without submitting to God’s continual shaping, polishing, and crafting, none of us will be satisfied with our assignment in the Body of Christ. All believers want to hear Jesus say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” That is why it is so important to sacrifice for the kingdom now, because it is the only time we have to do kingdom work.

There is also a warning to non-believers that at some point in human history, this inspired metaphor of a “*spiritual building*” will one day be accomplished and that last stone will be rescued and added to the church and the building project of the church will be completed. The church (believers) will be raptured to the Father’s house.

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God will call His people home when it is in His sovereign time. The previous point is this: when the last person in history that will be saved is saved, unless God has some other purpose for delaying the rapture, the church will be called home.

2. A Sacred Response

In the Old Testament, God's people had a priesthood; but today, God's people are a priesthood. Believers can now confess their sins directly to Jesus Christ, the "*only mediator between God the Father and mankind*" (1 Timothy 2:5). Worship is no longer a ritual, but a relationship.

Peter is describing a stunning privilege to the New Testament believers:

- We can confess our sins immediately
- We can fellowship with God intimately
- We can serve in His immediate presence daily

Selah – For the Christian, life as a priest can be a life filled with sacred offerings of spiritual sacrifices.

1. We offer to God the sacrifice of our bodies

Paul wrote to the believers living in Rome to offer their "*bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God*" (Romans 12:1). Paul described unbelievers as those who offer their bodies to sin and the believers as those who offer their bodies to righteousness: "*And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God*" (Romans 6:13).

2. We offer to God the sacrifice of praise

The writer of Hebrews identifies our sacrifice this way, "*let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name*" (Hebrews 13:15)

3. & 4. We offer to God the sacrifices of doing good deeds and sharing in good deeds

The third and fourth sacrifices are in the next verse in **Hebrews 13:16**, "*And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices, God is pleased.*" So these are the sacrifices of good deeds and sharing with those in need.

5. We can offer to God the sacrifice of financial generosity

Paul commends the church in Philippi for their sacrificial giving (Philippians 4:10-19). 2 Corinthians 9:7, "*So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.*"

6. The sacrifice of converts

Paul's sacrifice of converts, "*I am a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles.*" He was referencing the unconverted pagans, "*so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit*" (Romans 15:15-16).

7. The sacrifice of love

Paul wrote that we should imitate Christ and His self-sacrificing love for us, "*we should walk in love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma*" (Ephesians 5:1-2).

8. The sacrifice of intercession – prayer for others

As priests, we are to offer the sacrifice of prayer at all times, knowing they are heard and received by our Heavenly Father.

Application:

Take the list of 8 spiritual sacrifices and make a real assessment of your willingness to sacrifice in these areas. Is there a place where you are uncomfortable or unwilling? Is there a place where you are lifted up in pride because of your "sacrifice?" Confide in someone about any unwillingness, discomfort, or pride and ask for their accountability and help.

Take 1 spiritual sacrifice at a time and focus on application of this sacrifice in some area of your daily life. Practice all 8 spiritual sacrifices so they become habit.