

Text: 1 Pt 2.4-5

Proposition: Our connection with Christ produces a three-dimensional spiritual life.

We will move into a new section of 1 Peter tonight. Let's review the sections so far:

Jubilation in our glorious salvation (1.3-12)

Submitting to consequent obligations (1.13-2.3)

Hope for heaven

Be holy

Walk in fear

Love one another

Crave spiritual food

Now we come to another "declarative section." 1 Pt 2.4-10 tells us something about our Christian life. Obligations flow from it, and the previous obligations are related to it, but we are given no new obligations in this section.

(Other than the obligation of a right view of these truths, I suppose.)

The theme of the passage is The Living Stone, Jesus Christ. The passage begins with our relation to that living stone and describes our function with him in that new life he gives us. The rest of the passage expands on the themes found in vv. 4-5.

Read 1 Pt 2.4-10, text 4-5

Some people see verse 5 as an imperative (build yourselves up) rather than an indicative (you are being built up). A couple of commentaries give technical reasons why this is a declaration, not an obligation, which is the way we are looking at the passage.

Proposition: Our connection with Christ produces a three-dimensional spiritual life.

I. Our relation to the living stone (4) [1st dimension]

A. In regular motion towards the living stone

1. Peter mixes metaphors

a. In verse 2, God calls us to crave the spiritual milk (the word, sermons, hymns, Bible lessons, etc.)

b. Now he turns to the metaphor of a stone

1) First, we crave the word and approach Christ: nourishment

2) Now, we are approaching Christ the foundation stone:
stability

2. The approach to Christ is constant (present tense)

a. Not necessarily the same intensity every moment

b. But a regular communion, turning to Christ day by day

B. In a living faith relationship with the living stone

1. The characteristics of the living stone

a. The most obvious is the oxymoron: living stone

1) Normally stones are not alive (you may have noticed)

2) This stone lives (He is our foundation, but not for dead works,
but a living relationship)

b. The living stone is a foundation stone (an allusion to Isa 28.16)

Isa 28.16 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, A costly cornerstone *for* the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes *in it* will not be disturbed.

c. The living stone rejected by men

Ps 118.22 The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief corner *stone*.

1) A reference to the crucifixion

2) A reference to ongoing unbelief

d. The living stone precious to God

1) Choice: specially selected, perfect for the task

2) Precious: highly valued, esteemed for usefulness, function,
and glory

2. Our approach to God is to this foundation stone

a. There is no other way to approach God

b. There is no other way to gain life

The living stone is the foundation of our spiritual life; we approach him through the word and prayer.

II. Our transformation into living stones (5a) [2nd dimension]

Coming to him as a living stone ... you also (as living stones) are being built up

A. The sort of stones we are

1. Living stones by connection with the Living Stone

2. *Lithos* not *Petros*

a. This is true of him and us

b. The word used here denotes a specific kind of stone

1) *Petros*: a rock, a boulder, found in a field

2) *Lithos*: a shaped stone, prepared for a specific use

c. God prepared him as the foundation stone, to give life to us

d. God prepares us for placement on the foundation to build a spiritual building

B. Christian life in the collective

1. The picture in this passage is more collective

2. We have an individual spiritual life, built on Christ

3. Yet, as living stones, we are built together into a spiritual house

a. Paul uses the metaphor of the body, "fitly joined and compacted"

b. Peter uses the metaphor of a building, 'stones fitted to one another for God's glory'

4. This brings us to that 2nd dimension

a. Our relationship with Christ (individual) is one dimension [vertical]

b. Our relationship to one another through Christ is the second dimension [horizontal]

“The plural, ‘you,’ recognizes their existence as individuals, but Peter did not think of them as isolated stones scattered over a field. He pictured them collectively as forming a great spiritual house. They have been brought into a close and permanent union with one another, as fellow members of the house of God.”¹

III. Our function within the living structure (5b) [3rd dimension]

A. Living stones for a spiritual priesthood

1. In the OT, with a material temple, God chose a select group as intermediaries for all
2. In the NT, with a spiritual temple [Jesus and his people], God opened the way for every believer to function as a priest
 - a. Access to God
 - b. Communion with God
 - c. Ministry for God [bringing God to others]

B. Living stones to produce spiritual sacrifices

1. The OT sacrifices were material, bloody, representative, and inadequate
2. The NT sacrifices are spiritual, based on blood [Christ’s], **acceptable**

This produces the 3rd dimension:

- Vertical: towards God
- Horizontal: towards one another
- Spatial: actions through time in multiple directions

3. The NT sacrifices are many, which we will discuss next week

“we should not limit the sacrifices here to any one item, for everything that is pleasing to God is probably included (cf. Rom 12:1; Heb 13:15–16).”²

¹ D. Edmond Hiebert, *1 Peter* (Winona Lake, Ind.: BMH Books, 1997), 132.

² Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, v. 37 (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 107.

Conclusion:

Proposition: Our connection with Christ produces a three-dimensional spiritual life.

What I mean is that in the richness of our relationship with Christ, our perfect, living, foundation stone, we have fulness of life in him.

We have an eternal relationship with our God and Creator [which would be enough!]

We have a permanent spiritual relationship with one another in Christ!

We have a living and busy ministry to one another and God for all time as we serve him forever!