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## A BETTER RESISTANCE | WHO NEEDS THE CHURCH? (6)

February 21, 2021

1 Peter 2:4-10

*<sup>4</sup> As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, <sup>5</sup> you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup> For it stands in Scripture:*

*“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,  
a cornerstone chosen and precious,  
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”*

*<sup>7</sup> So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,*

*“The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone,”  
<sup>8</sup> and*

*“A stone of stumbling,  
and a rock of offense.”*

*They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.*

*<sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

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### BACKGROUND

In Jesus’ day, the Temple in Jerusalem was the center of religious life and worship. It was the place of God’s dwelling where worshippers would come to meet with God and to offer prayers and sacrifices. It was a magnificent building that stood as a witness for all the nations to God’s special presence with his people. But in this passage, Peter uses the image of “living stones” to illustrate that together, believers are God’s new temple and God’s true dwelling place in the world. They are “living stones” because this “spiritual house” grows as God builds it up himself. And the foundation of this new temple is Christ himself who serves both as the cornerstone and the “rock of offense.” Through him, Christians form a new humanity as “royal priests” and a people who belong to God. As a community—the church—they proclaim the surpassing goodness of Jesus Christ who has summoned them from the hopelessness of sin and ushered them into God’s marvelous light.

### PURPOSE

To understand how God forms a new community through Christ who exists to declare God’s praise

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Through Jesus Christ, God creates a new people for his own possession. What words and phrases does Peter use to describe this new community? Which descriptive word or phrase resonates with you the most, and why?

2. How has this community group helped you to experience this new reality described in verse 9?

## LEADER'S NOTES

**Question 1:** The purpose of this question is to understand the new identity that Christians receive through Jesus. In verse 4-5, Peter refers to Christians as “living stones” that are being built up as a spiritual house—the new temple! God dwells in the midst of his people. This means that together, as a community, they serve as God’s presence in this world. It is through the Church that God makes himself known.

All Christians are priests! As holy and royal “priests” (verses 5 and 9), their role is to connect people to God and God to people. Through Christ, all believers are anointed to share in his priestly status. This means that all Christians have the unique role of mediating the knowledge, presence and forgiveness of Christ to others according to the gifts that they have received through the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:11-12). God has given every Christian specific gifts for them to serve in building up this new spiritual community. As a follow up question, you might ask, “How do you experience your role as a holy and royal priest of God?” This includes any way that a Christian helps others to know and experience God through everyday activities such as friendship, discussion, teaching, prayer and evangelism. God uses such activities to communicate his grace, kindness and love.

Christians are also a “chosen race” in that they are a people of God’s own choosing. God’s grace is the ultimate explanation for why some people come to faith and others do not. They are chosen not based on any quality or condition in themselves, but according to God’s sovereign love. They are the very object of God’s affections!

We see that Peter also views the church as a “new Israel” in the way that he picks up what is said of Israel in Exodus 19:5-6 and applies it to the church (as a “holy nation”).

*“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”*

This community belongs to God for his special purpose of declaring his praise. This implies that the life of every Christian is meant to tell a story of God’s grace and redemption through Jesus Christ.

**Question 2:** The purpose of this question is to reflect on how Peter’s description of Christian community applies to us. What are some ways that we embody these descriptions? How can we experience this reality more deeply?