

Thursday of the Fifth Week of Easter - I Peter 2:1-10

¹ So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. ² Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

⁴ As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵ 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. ⁶ 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.”

⁷ 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,”

⁸ and

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

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

⁹ 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. ¹⁰ 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.

What do you think distinguishes a Christian from the larger society? What makes a Christian different? Peter seems to be asking that question in the reading we are given to read today. The first Christians were noted for their rejection of a permissive sexual ethic in which the strong abused the weak. They expanded the scope of the people whom they supported and loved to include anyone who was a follower of Jesus. They valued people regardless of class and wealth in a way that the Roman world did not. A slave was just as much a child of God as any wealthy man.

Peter calls us a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, set apart to proclaim the excellence of the one who called us out of darkness and into his marvelous light. Someday relatively soon, we will be allowed back into our church to gather once more. But it will not be the same. The post-Corona church will have an opportunity to rethink and reimagine our fellowship and our life together. Somethings have not changed in this time, others have. The same will be true of those days to come. What makes us Christian? We need to ask that question of ourselves now. Study your scriptures. Listen to Jesus as He defines the Christian life. To what holiness and good is He calling you and the rest of us? Pray for discernment. Prepare for the day we return to Church.

God be with you until we meet again. In Jesus' love and mercy, Pastor Wulf