

BELPRES CHURCH

Sermon Title: Can I Get a Witness?

Icebreaker Question: If you had an extra hour suddenly available to you today, how would you spend it?

Opening Question: Looking back to last week's sermon and scripture... How did you live differently or practice what we talked about in your life this week? What did you do and how did it go?

This week's scripture:

1 Peter 2:1-12 (Optional extra reading: Acts 1:1-8; Matthew 5:13-16; Matthew 28:16-20)

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. ² Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, ³ now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

The Living Stone and a Chosen People

⁴ As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— ⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For in Scripture it says:

"See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a chosen and precious cornerstone,
and the one who trusts in him
will never be put to shame."

⁷ Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,

"The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone,"
⁸ and,

"A stone that causes people to stumble
and a rock that makes them fall."

They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Living Godly Lives in a Pagan Society

¹¹ Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

Scripture Reflection Questions: Read this week's scripture together and discuss the following (note: we use the same scripture reflection questions each week so that we can practice using the same tools over time as we examine different scriptures):

- In your own words, what do you think the Apostle Peter's main point is in 1 Peter 2:1-12?
- In what ways are we aliens and foreigners (v. 11)? How does thinking of ourselves in this way alter how we live?
- Does it change your understanding of verse 12 to know that the word in the original Greek for "good" can also mean beautiful? If so how?
- What do verses 9-10 mean to you personally? Do you feel like God's treasured possession?

Sermon Reflection Questions: Reflecting on this week's sermon, discuss the following:

- What are some ways that you already have been or might be more intentional about living a beautiful life – not a perfect life – but a life that lets others see how Jesus has made or is making a beautiful thing of your life?

Closing Question and Application: Given what we've discussed together today, how might God want you to apply these learnings to your life or in the life of your community this next week? Who might you share this with?

Closing group prayer: Spend a few minutes together in your group sharing prayer requests and then praying together for each other. Take the challenging parts of your conversation to Jesus. Thank God for the time together, the conversation shared, the other people in the group, and for encouragement in the week ahead.