

## Results of the Call

“What kind of project do you have going on in the winter?” asked Lloyd.

Aaron looked up from his perusal. There was a sale on lumber, and the hardware store manager was deciding how many pieces to buy. Aaron’s shift had ended 30 minutes ago, and he had called his wife, Charlotta, to let her know he would be late.

“My family and I do projects for senior citizens in the summer months, and this price is too good to let go by,” said Aaron.

“Side jobs are nice,” Lloyd replied.

“No, we do summer work for free,” Aaron said. “We want to be a blessing to those who are in need. My wife and I decided to do this when we first got married 23 years ago.”

After Aaron left the store, Lloyd mentioned him to a longtime employee. “Aaron is a great guy,” said Carlton. “I’ve known him since I came to work here 13 years ago. He is a solid, stand-up Christian.”

“Who’s always preaching at you, right?” said Lloyd, who had been on the job for the last two weeks.

“Not at all,” replied Carlton. “He may speak on the greatness and goodness of God, but mostly Aaron is just a decent guy. You don’t hear any negative or unkind talk from him. He loves and takes good care of his family. He’s a great manager. He’s a real Christian who’s built his life on the foundation of the Lord.”

**1. Why is the foundation so important when building something?**

**2. On what shaky or solid foundations do people build their lives?**

**3. Why should we be careful in laying our life’s foundation?**

## Long for the Nourishment of God's Word

1 Peter 2:1-3, KJV

1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,

2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

1 Peter 2:1-3, NIV

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. <sup>2</sup>Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, <sup>3</sup>now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

The instructions that Peter gave his readers sprang from a life built on Jesus, our solid Rock. They had been “born again . . . through the living and enduring word of God” (1 Pet. 1:23). So, they could “rid” themselves of the remnants of their past state as if taking off a coat (1 Pet. 2:1).

Due to the ongoing opposition to their faith and unjust treatment they endured, the letter’s recipients likely felt tempted to respond in the ways listed in verse 1. As “malice” and “envy” built up inside them, would it not have been easy to “slander” their opponents by falsely accusing them? Why not try to deceive those persecuting them?

Peter now counsels these recent converts to the faith to “crave pure spiritual milk” (v. 2), which likely refers to God’s Word. In Hebrews 5:11-14, ingesting spiritual “milk” indicates a lack of maturity on the part of the readers, but the sense here is that their longing for it should resemble the intense hunger of “newborn babies.”

Why emphasize God’s Word? Because there we find comfort and encouragement regardless of our circumstances. These believers had already discovered the goodness of the Lord, and it would become more apparent as they grew in their faith based God’s Word.

**4.** *Why might the recipients of 1 Peter feel the temptation to their old way of life as described in verse 1?*

**5.** *What type of response to God’s Word does Peter desire for us?*

## Build Your Life on Christ, the Cornerstone

*1 Peter 2:4-8, KJV*

4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

*1 Peter 2:4-8, NIV*

<sup>4</sup>As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—<sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>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.”

<sup>7</sup>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,”

<sup>8</sup>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.

Those of us who “have tasted that the Lord is good” (vs. 3) continue coming to Him as our source of life and strength. While people around us reject the Lord, we find

our risen Savior to be both a living hope and a reliable source of strength.

Because we share in the life of Jesus as “living stones,” Peter says that we embody a “holy priesthood” (vs. 5). This means that we have immediate access to God the Father through Jesus our High Priest (Heb. 4:14). We do not need a human intercessor, because through prayer we enter directly into the Lord’s presence. Furthermore, we can serve Him knowing that in so doing we offer to the Lord a “sacrifice” that He accepts.

We find another reason for serving Jesus at the end of verse 6: “the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” This quote from Isaiah 28:16 compares Christ to the cornerstone of the temple. Those who ridicule our dependence on the Lord may seek to disgrace us, but they will fail because in the end God’s love will prevail for all those who hope in Him (Rom. 5:5).

In verse 7, Peter distinguishes those who believe from those who reject Jesus. We find Him “precious;” He’s our dear Savior who gave His life for us. Those who reject Christ find themselves at odds with God the Father who has highly exalted Him in the same way that builders place immense importance on finding just the right “cornerstone.”

The root of unbelief is disobedience to the saving message of the Gospel. Those who spurn the Good News “stumble” over the “stone” that could have been their means of eternal life. Proverbs 4:19 puts it this way: “The way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know over what they stumble.”

**6.** *In what ways do these verses describe Jesus?*

**7.** *What’s the significance of being a “holy priesthood”?*

## **Recognize Your New Identity in Christ**

*1 Peter 2:9-10, KJV*

9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy

*1 Peter 2:9-10, NIV*

<sup>9</sup>But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood,

nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light;

10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

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. <sup>10</sup>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.

In contrast to those who reject the Savior and so “stumble” over Him, we who believe receive a new identity. Blessings that once belonged exclusively to the Israelites are now also true of those in Christ. We possess the spiritual blessings promised to Israel under the new covenant while the physical promises that God made to Israel remain on hold until the fullness of time (Rom. 11:25).

We comprise a “royal priesthood.” In ancient Israel, the king could never intrude on the duties of a priest; they remained separate. However, because Jesus fulfills both the offices of King and High Priest, we not only become a “holy priesthood” in Him, but one with the attributes of royalty. Such an exalted position uniquely qualifies us to declare the “praises” of the One who delivered us “out of darkness into his wonderful light” (vs. 9).

Peter's words in verse 10 resemble those of Hosea 2:23 and Romans 9:25. In Christ, the wall separating Gentiles from the blessings of ancient Israel no longer exists (Eph. 2:11-22). God's mercy now extends to all who place their trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

Peter marveled at God's work in making blessings of the new covenant available to all those who believe. Although brought up within the confines of Judaism, he recognized the great mercy of God in receiving all who believe as members of His special people.

**8. What aspects of our new identity in Christ does Peter highlight in verses 9 and 10?**

## What Would Jesus Do?

When we are trying to live a life with Jesus as the Chief Cornerstone, we look at life's situations and wonder, "What would Jesus do if He were here?" In the 1990s, a youth group leader from Holland, Michigan, helped her teenagers understand what He would do by asking that question: "What would Jesus do?" The acronym WWJD caught on and became a worldwide movement.

Over 100 years earlier, a book written by Charles M. Sheldon called *In His Steps* carried the subtitle, "What Would Jesus Do?" Sheldon (1857–1946), a teaching minister, began preaching sermons with various scenarios that ended with the challenge, "What Would Jesus Do?" to encourage his church members "not to do anything without first asking themselves what Jesus would do in any situation." The sermons were so popular that he turned them into a book. Sheldon also took the concept to the *Topeka (KS) Daily Capital* newspaper, and the newspaper's circulation exploded from 12,000 to 387,000.

Sheldon said in the book, "The greatest question in all of human life is summed up when we ask, 'What would Jesus do?' if, as we ask it, we also try to answer it from a growth in knowledge of Jesus Himself. We must know Jesus before we can imitate Him.... Our aim will be to act just as He would if He was in our places, regardless of immediate results. In other words, we propose to follow Jesus' steps as closely and as literally as we believe He taught His disciples to do...." Sheldon said the only way to answer the question was "from a growth in knowledge of Jesus Himself."

**9.** *How does asking "What would Jesus do" help us build our lives on Him?*

**10.** *What examples would show that you imitated Christ even this past week?*

**11.** *In what areas do you need to grow in the knowledge of Jesus?*

## The Wonderful Light

It's amazing what God calls His believers! Those who follow Christ are chosen, royal, holy, and His special possession! Peter said that once we come to the Lord and live in His brilliant light, we have a new citizenship with magnificent benefits, one of which is God's mercy on our sin and rebellion.

► *Write Jesus a letter of gratitude thanking Him for calling you His special possession and committing to live a life built on Him as the Chief Cornerstone rather than something else. Name that "something else" if it is keeping you from wholly building your life on Him.*

### KEY VERSE

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

—1 Peter 2:9, KJV

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.

—1 Peter 2:9, NIV

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

#### Week of February 27 through March 5

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

**Mon.** Psalm 28—Lord, Hear My Prayer.

**Tues.** Matthew 11:25-30—Come to Me, You Weary.

**Wed.** Matthew 14:13-21—Jesus Shows Compassion.

**Thurs.** Psalm 71:1-12—I Take Refuge in the Lord.

**Fri.** Psalm 71:13-24—I Will Proclaim God's Work.

**Sat.** Luke 15:1-10—Heavenly Rejoicing!

**Sun.** Luke 15:11-24—A Rebellious Son Restored.