

Summary

This sermon from First Peter 2:4-10 explores the identity of Christians as 'living stones' built upon Jesus Christ as the cornerstone. Using the illustration of Plymouth Rock's deterioration over time, the pastor warns that both individual Christians and churches can experience spiritual erosion if they don't intentionally protect their identity in Christ. The message emphasizes that believers are not just individual stones, but collectively form a spiritual temple - a royal priesthood called to shine God's light in a dark world.

The sermon highlights three key truths: there is only one cornerstone (Jesus Christ) upon which we build, every believer is a vital living stone with spiritual gifts to use, and together we form a life-giving temple that serves as a far-reaching priesthood. Unlike the Old Testament temple system characterized by fear and death, the church today is meant to be a place of joy where believers celebrate what Christ has accomplished and actively participate in God's mission to reach the world.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You for gathering us together as Your people today. As we dive into Your Word and discuss what it means to be living stones built upon the cornerstone of Jesus Christ, we ask that You would open our hearts and minds to what You want to teach us. Help us to be receptive to Your Spirit's leading and to encourage one another as we grow in our understanding of who we are in Christ. May this time strengthen our faith and equip us to live out our calling as Your royal priesthood. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Ice Breaker

What's the most interesting or unusual building or structure you've ever visited? What made it memorable to you?

Key Verses

1. 1 Peter 2:4-10
2. Matthew 16:16
3. Acts 1:8
4. Romans 12:1-2
5. 1 Corinthians 13

Questions

1. How does the illustration of Plymouth Rock's deterioration help us understand what can happen to our spiritual lives if we're not intentional about protecting our faith?
2. What does it mean that Jesus is the 'cornerstone' and why is it important that there is only one cornerstone for the church?

3. The sermon mentions that we are all 'living stones' with spiritual gifts. What gifts do you think God has given you, and how are you currently using them to serve His kingdom?
4. How is the New Testament church different from the Old Testament temple system, and why should this bring us joy?
5. What does it mean to be part of a 'royal priesthood,' and how should this identity change the way we live our daily lives?
6. The pastor mentioned that God's presence isn't limited to church buildings but goes wherever His people go. How does this truth impact your view of your workplace, neighborhood, and other places you frequent?
7. What are some practical ways we can 'devote our time, tithe, tongue, and toil' to Christ's work as mentioned in the sermon?
8. How can we as a church community better support each other in living out our identity as living stones and avoid the spiritual 'deterioration' that can happen over time?

Life Application

This week, identify one specific spiritual gift you believe God has given you and commit to using it intentionally to serve others and advance God's kingdom. Whether it's hospitality, leadership, teaching, helping, or another gift, look for at least one opportunity to exercise this gift in a way that points others toward Jesus Christ.

Key Takeaways

1. Jesus Christ is the only cornerstone upon which we can build our lives and churches - there is no other foundation that will last.
2. Every believer is a vital 'living stone' equipped with spiritual gifts that are meant to be used actively in God's mission, not left on the sidelines.
3. Together, Christians form a spiritual temple and royal priesthood that brings joy and life, unlike the Old Testament system of fear and death.
4. Our identity as God's people is not limited by location, background, or role - we are all empowered to be witnesses for Christ wherever we go.
5. We are called to devote 100% of our lives (time, resources, words, and work) to glorifying Christ and advancing His kingdom in the world.

Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for making us living stones built upon You, our perfect cornerstone. Help us to remember throughout this week that we are not just individuals trying to follow You on our own, but that we are part of Your living temple, Your royal priesthood. Give us the courage to use the gifts You've given us to serve others and share Your love. Protect us from spiritual erosion and help us to be intentional about growing in our faith and supporting one another. May our lives shine brightly for You in this dark world, and may others see You through our words and actions. We commit this week to living out our identity as Your chosen people. In Your precious name we pray, Amen.