



Daily Faith Practices

The Fifth Sunday of Easter (A) – 1 Peter 2:2-10

Focus: *Priesthood of All Believers*

word of life

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 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.” (1 Peter 2:9-10 NRSV)

Read 1 Peter 2:2-10

This passage is an eloquent conclusion to the initial section of the First Letter to Peter, providing a vibrant description contrasting the old and new life in Christ Jesus. Life after the resurrection of Jesus is not the same; there is the possibility of a new birth in Christ Jesus.

This rebirth is emphasized as the writer compares his audience to newborn infants. These words are not intended to be insulting, but rather to underscore the radical new life provided by the mighty act of God shown in the risen Christ. “Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation—if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.” (1 Peter 2:2 NRSV) Milk satisfies the basic need of an infant for life itself. There is nothing quite like the cry of an infant who is hungry and needing to be fed.

1. Describe the sound when a newborn infant is ready to be fed milk.
2. How are believers in Christ like newborn infants?
3. What does it mean to taste that the Lord is good?

The writer of First Peter extends an invitation to draw near Christ, but the image shifts to architecture as Christ is described as a living stone. Take a moment to reflect on this phrase *living stone*. Think of the variety of stones found on this earth—beautiful gems for jewelry and practical rocks used for buildings.

4. When you think of Jesus as a living stone, what image comes to mind?
5. How can a stone be living?

Jesus is not the only living stone, but for those who follow him are invited to be used as living stones as well. God intends to build something—a spiritual house. It is the Holy Spirit who calls, gathers, and uses followers of Christ to create an architectural masterpiece built upon Jesus Christ as the cornerstone.

God knows some will reject the cornerstone of Jesus Christ and not accept him as a living stone. They will stumble over him and his message of life. They will not be able to grasp the precious gift given to the world through Christ. “The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner.” (1 Peter 2:7 NRSV)

6. What does it mean to stumble over Jesus?
7. What makes the cornerstone an important feature in a building?

These images help to underscore the divine calling from God to be part of a holy priesthood—people set apart by God for God’s own purpose. The wall between humanity and God has been torn down. The world has been turned upside down. All people will have access to God through Christ. All people! This calling to be a spiritual house, a chosen people, royal priesthood, a holy nation, and God’s own people has laid the theological foundation for the priesthood of all believers.

Word among us

The congregation gathered for a strategic planning session. They broke into small groups with two assignments. First, they were to define *church*. This assignment created some lively discussions. As much as they had experienced being part of a church, it was a challenging task to agree on one main definition.

The second assignment was to read 1 Peter 2:2-10, a passage rich with vivid images to describe the community of faithful.

1. *List the images of church found in this passage.*
2. *If someone is struggling in life, which image might be meaningful to hear?*

Each image of the church in 1 Peter 2:2-10 is helpful in grasping the implications of being part of the body of Christ. Take some time to discuss the implications of each of the following phrases found in this passage.

3. *A chosen race: What is the church chosen to do?*
4. *A royal priesthood: How are people in your church trained to be priestly?*
5. *A holy nation: What does it mean to be connected to those throughout the globe into a Christian nation?*
6. *God's own people: What might be the danger of believing we are God's own people?*

No matter our preference of image, it is God who calls us to *do* something—to proclaim the mighty acts of God. We are not left to pat ourselves on the back because we are living stones, a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and God's own people. There is work to be done. We proclaim the mighty acts of God through both our words and our actions.

7. *Which is your favorite image in 1 Peter 2 for the church?*

faith practice in daily life

Proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed

1 Peter 2:2-10 was a key passage in the Reformation as Christian leaders in the early 1500s struggled with the role of the pope, priests, and laity. The reformers seriously reviewed the implications of a priesthood of all believers. Their questions were basic: Have not all baptized believers received God's grace in Jesus Christ? Are not all believers called out of darkness into the light of Christ?

One of the critical changes during the Reformation was a re-claiming of this core principle of the priesthood of all believers. Priests and pastors are not the only ones who have access to God, but rather all believers can go directly to God. In the same way, all believers—young and old—have opportunities to proclaim the mighty acts of God.

8. *What is the role of clergy within the priesthood of all believers?*
9. *What does it mean for you to be part of priesthood of all believers?*

Prayer

Mighty God, open us to the opportunities to proclaim your mighty acts. Amen

last word

Pray each day this week on behalf of those in need.

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