

1 Peter 2:1-10 “God’s Special Possession” 11/20/22

The Schönbrunn Palace was the main summer residence of the Habsburg rulers - It is in Vienna, Austria - The nearly 1500 room palace is one of the most important architectural, cultural, and historic monuments in Austria

Since the mid-1950s it has been a major tourist attraction - The history of the palace and its vast gardens spans over 300 years¹ - When Napoleon defeated the Austrian army, he moved into the great palace of Schönbrunn

At that time, he mounted two eagles - They were symbols of his empire, one on each side of the main entrance - Napoleon was soon chased back out of Austria, and the palace returned to Austrian hands

But the eagles are gold plated, very attractive and they look so good there, that nobody has ever bothered to take them down and they are still there today

As believers, the devil has been defeated in our lives - But like those eagles at the Schönbrunn Palace that are still there centuries after Napoleon had been defeated, it is possible that some of the things of the fallen world still cling to us as well²

If so, we ought to get rid of it at once - And our Scriptures urge us to do just that - 1 Peter 2:1 “So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander”³

My dictionary defines malice as, “A desire to harm others or to see others suffer; extreme ill will or spite”⁴ - That couldn’t be further from the character of a true Christian

¹ Schönbrunn Palace background information: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schonbrunn_Palace

² Robert C. Shannon, 1000 Windows, © 1997, (Standard Publishing, Cincinnati, Ohio)

³ Scripture quoted has been taken from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version,

© 2001 by Crossway (Good News Publishing, Wheaton, IL)

⁴ American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Copyright © 1992 Houghton Mifflin Company

As followers of Jesus Christ, we are to desire only good for others - Never wishing harm or suffering on anyone else

The same goes for deceit - Instead, we are to be truthful and honest - Proverbs 3:3-4 “Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and (humankind)”

1 Peter 2:1 also warns us against envy - And this goes along with wanting good for others - Because when you are rejoicing that someone else has received a blessing, there’s no room for being envious or jealous of them

We should guard ourselves against slander, too - It doesn’t matter if it is the truth - If saying it will just hurt someone else, and not do any good, we’d better have enough sense not to say it in the first place

That’s enough for the “Thou Shalt Not” part of the passage - Next Peter switches to encouragement, and advice about what we should do

1 Peter 2:2-3 “Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good”

All of us have either known babies - Or have had one or more babies ourselves - And I’m sure we can all picture a hungry baby - A child who is desperate to be fed - That’s the picture that Peter is painting here

As believers, we are to be hungry for God’s Word - Spending time with our Bible is as important to our Spiritual growth - As a baby being fed is important for his or her growth

When our son Matthew was younger, he didn’t like milk very much - Joanne would trick him into drinking it by adding strawberry syrup or Ovaltine - But as he became an adult, he discovered that milk tastes pretty good after all

Yet, as good as drinking milk is, none of us should be existing on milk alone - As we get more mature, we need solid food

Hebrews 5:13-14 “for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.”

Our walk of faith is to keep growing, like the growth of a child - Soon we graduate from milk to more substantial food

The construction of Solomon’s Temple is recorded in 1 Kings 5 & 6 and 2 Chronicles 4 & 5 - About that project, Warren W. Wiersbe wrote,

“When Solomon built his temple, his workmen followed the plans so carefully that everything fit together on the construction site - If all of us would follow God’s blueprints given in His Word, we would be able to work together without discord and build His church for His glory”⁵

Perhaps if all of the Churches today would follow the blueprint of God’s Word, we could build something amazing - We could have more unity, and more people could come to faith in Jesus - And maybe, if we are all trying to follow God’s Word, we’d spend less time disagreeing

Next, Peter’s imagery transitions from the first baby steps of faith - To building a solid faith on a sure and certain foundation

1 Peter 2:4-5 “As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, 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”

Jesus Christ is that living stone, in the words of verse 6 “the chief cornerstone” on which we are to build our faith - If we are putting our trust anywhere else, we are building on sinking sand

⁵ Warren W. Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary, © 2003, (David C. Cook, Colorado Springs, CO)

To again quote Warren Wiersbe, “Believers are living stones in His building. Each time someone trusts Christ, another stone is quarried out of the pit of sin and cemented by grace into the building”⁶

It’s great to live a holy life, treat others nicely, care for the needy, lift others in prayer, and do good things - But these are things we do because we love Jesus - Not things we do to earn the right to be called children of God - That is a title we can only have through our Savior Jesus

John 1:12-13 “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God”

Our faith is to be built firmly on the solid foundation of Jesus Christ - Once it is, we too are considered living stones, which God uses to build up His Church

Peter isn’t talking about a Church building here - But a living Spiritual House - As such, we are to be a community of worship - Singing songs of praise - Communing with God in sacrament and prayer - And proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Notice also who is doing the building here - It is God who builds up His Church - Psalm 127:1 reminds us, “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain”

Today’s passage contains two of the most encouraging verses in this entire epistle - Maybe in the entire Bible

1 Peter 2:9-10 “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. 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”

⁶ Ibid.

That's us that the Bible is talking about! We are: A chosen race of people!
A royal priesthood! and a Holy nation! God's own special possession!

We are the ones He has trusted with the wonderful message of Jesus
and His love - And not only are we called to share the Gospel of Jesus -
But there is to be no end to the praise we lift for the great things that God
has done in each of our lives

Once, we were not a people - We were not even recipients of God's
mercy - But now God has called us, and we are His special people,
blessed with God's Great Mercy

In that mercy, we no longer stand condemned for our sins - But we are
forgiven through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ

The story is told of a 4-year-old girl who went to the doctor's office with a
fever - The doctor looked in her ears and said, "Who's in there? Donald
Duck?" - She said, "No"

He looked in her nose and said, "Who's up there? Mickey Mouse?" -
Again she said, "No"

Then he put his stethoscope on her heart and said, "Who's in there? Is
that Sponge-Bob in your heart?"

The little girl replied, "No, Jesus is in my heart. - Sponge-Bob is on my
underpants"⁷

Is Jesus in your heart today? - If He is, you are part of His Holy Nation -
And as our Lord's Holy Nation, our actions should show it

A relationship with Jesus Christ is a powerful thing - When we accept Him
as our Savior - We are born again - We are made brand new Spiritually

⁷ Carol Leet, New York, Today's Christian Woman, Vol. 18, no. 4

In that New Life in Christ we must keep growing - So we spend time in the Scriptures - Spend time with other believers - Spend time in Worship - And spend time serving Him through His Church

If you can't say Jesus is in your heart, please don't wait a moment longer - In the words of Acts 16:31, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved"

In conclusion, don't stay in the infant stage of faith - Keep growing every day with prayer, devotion, time in the Bible, and time spent with other believers

Rejoice that God has chosen you to be a building block of faith in this world - Be that living stone upon which others may lean

And recognize that you are God's special possession - Someone the Lord takes great joy in - Someone God has an awesome plan for