**Vision Sunday 2020**

**God Builds His Church**

**1 Peter 2:4-10**

David Taylor

Welcome to Vision Sunday. Every year we celebrate God’s work in and through our church body, recognizing that God builds his church (Mat 16:18). We do this by reflecting on Scripture, reviewing the life of CCC this past year, renewing our focus for the coming year, and close by responding to God’s work. Then after the service, we have our annual meeting which lasts about twenty minutes.

**God Builds His Church Through Those Who Believe**

Those who come to him (4) describes those who believe (6) in Jesus and are contrasted to those who reject Christ (6-8). Then he describes those who believe as living stones because we are united to Jesus who died for our sins and rose again and is alive. We are living because he is the resurrected Lord and because of his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope (1:3). For the follower of Christ or disciple, Jesus is more than an object of interest, he is the source of new life, so you come to him for salvation. Faith is tasting and seeing that the Lord is good (2:3). Some of us have come to faith through the ministry and members of CCC.

**God Builds His Church Through Those Who Belong**

Those who believe belong to God’s house and God’s family (5). We are called living stones because we are united to Jesus Christ, the living stone. Because we are united to him, we are becoming like Jesus Christ, the living stone. We are living stones because stones were cut to fit together for building a house (2:5). In the same way living stones are made to fit together for building God’s spiritual house, the church. God builds his church (Mat 16:18; Eph 2:22). The spiritual house refers back to the Old Testament temple which has given way to the new temple, the church. God building his church is central to God’s purposes for humanity. The kingdoms of this world will be swallowed up by the kingdom of God (Rev 11:15). Many of us have found a home at CCC, a place to belong, and our lives are woven into the lives of others. You have found community and friendships who support you, encourage you, and God has used to bring healing and change in your life.

**God Builds His Church Through Those Who Contribute**

God’s house, the church is “a holy priesthood, offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (2:5).” Living stones are likened to a holy priesthood, each priest offering spiritual sacrifices or each one contributing to the building of the church. In the Old Testament priests were set apart for specific tasks in the temple. Priests were necessary for temple worship. God builds his church as the living stones creates an infrastructure now described as a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices or doing their part to build the church. Paul uses the metaphor of the church as a human body which is dependent upon all the body parts to function. Those who *believe* are those who *belong*, and those who belong are those who *contribute* to build the church. The priesthood is called a holy priesthood and a holy nation (5, 9). Holy means to be set apart for God’s purposes in the church. Every single person who calls CCC home has been set apart to contribute! Your contribution includes the use of your time, your talents, and your treasures to build his church.

But holy also means to be like Jesus Christ. We have already seen that as living stones we are becoming like Christ. We grow spiritually to become like Christ *because* we are part of the church. Growth happens best in community. Our church is God’s provision for each of us for our spiritual health. That growth comes through consistently hearing God’s word preached, cultivating meaningful community in a Life Group where we care for and shepherd one another, developing discipling relationships. As you move from involvement in Sundays to Life Groups to Discipleship Groups, you are moving toward more intentional discipleship. Lastly, God builds his church through those who communicate the gospel to others.

**God Builds His Church Through Those Who Communicate**

Look at vs 9-10, we are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, summed up as a people for God’s own possession. We are his, the God of the universe who cares enough about insignificant and rebellious people to make them his own possession. We belong to God. God made each of us his own so that we in turn would proclaim the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness and into his marvelous light. That is, declare God’s saving work in the gospel. Reaching out with the gospel is not about events to bring people to as much as it is about each of us living our lives on mission. That is, seeing ourselves as missionaries whom God has place in the Homer area to have an influence on our community. If God’s mission is central to who he is and to our lives, then it requires that we begin seeing who God has placed in our lives and then begin building relationships with them so that we have the rapport and opportunities to share the gospel.

**Life Group Questions:**

1. What is the main point of this passage?
2. Why does Peter compare coming to him to faith?
3. Why does he describe us as living stones and Christ as Living Stone?
4. Why does Peter use imagery of Old Testament and apply it to the church?
5. Why is Jesus described as the cornerstone?
6. What is the purpose of God making us his own?
7. How is God speaking to you through this passage or sermon?
8. How does this passage relate to making disciples and discipleship?