

1 Peter

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Preacher: Dawson, Herbert (1890-1969)

[0 : 00] As the Lord shall be pleased to help me, I shall call your attention to a subject you will find in the first epistle of Peter, chapter 2, and the fifth verse.

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

Chapter 2, first epistle of Peter, and the fifth verse. This is a wonderful picture of the Church of Christ down through the ages.

And it brings before us what is the true nature of it. The Church of Christ is a spiritual house. Denominations are not considered.

Ye are all one in Christ Jesus. The two opening words are wonderfully important.

[1 : 27] And in approaching the subject, I would look at them. Ye also, as lively storms, are built up a spiritual house.

Dear friends, young and old, does it include ye also? The apostle Peter was addressing people thought of God, strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

And it is not only these places which he names.

But it is not only these places which he names. Beddeston is included, although not put in the sacred pages. But it is not only these places.

Wherever there are poor sinners, born again, whose great concern is to win Christ and be found in him.

[2 : 36] To have matters right between their souls and God. Ye also. What will it avail if all your life long you come to Union Chapel and are known, respected as a chapel-goer, always found in your seat in the attitude of worship?

What will it avail you if it does not include? Ye also, as lively storms, are built up a spiritual house.

Ye must be born again. Something must be known and felt of the blessed reality of the things of God. Then it will be ye also.

You are included. You are indeed a living stone in the church of Christ. Built up therein by the Spirit of God.

Sometimes you sing. May I be found a living stone in Salem's house above. And help to sing before the throne, free grace and die in love.

[3 : 59] Ye also. As lively storms. The illustration is very striking. A stone is inanimate.

But not these storms. They are designated lively storms. And yet they more often feel like a stone than they feel to be a lively stone regarding their interest in the things of God.

They are made lively with an exercise unto godliness. The things of God are made of supreme importance in their life.

And they desire to live with this concern that I may win Christ and be found in Him. Oh, they do want matters to be made right, as I have said, between their souls and God.

And it is good when you feel within a lively exercise unto godliness. And when you do not feel it, it is still good that you do not feel it if you are conscious that you do not feel it.

[5 : 18] Remember that the aching void is known and felt which the world cannot fill. And now, I want as the Lord to help me to look at this subject from various viewpoints of it.

And the illustration is very simple. It is likened to the building of a house. And in building a house, one thing is essential that the foundation is good and strong, substantial, and strong enough to bear the building that is to be erected upon it.

And now, God in His eternal purposes laid the foundation of the church of God in His eternal purposes before the world was built or time was born.

And that foundation is beyond all preachers ordained to preach of God to describe as it should be set forth. Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ.

And He is the rock of ages. And the hymn writer says, on the rock of ages founded. And that is what you must have in your religion if things are going to be made right between your soul and God.

[6 : 55] On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand. And now, suppose you saw building in preparation a foundation being laid and a very great foundation, very strong, tons and tons of concrete being poured in.

What would you think if when all was finished and this foundation stood forth so strong, so substantial, if the man who was building simply built a pig pound on it or a chicken house?

You would be astonished and say, the building is not at all in proportion to the foundation. You would be expecting to see a very large superstructure comparable to the foundation in its strength.

And do you think God, when he is building his church, will build the equivalent of a pig pound upon it or a chicken house? No.

The superstructure must be in accordance with the foundation. And so you find in the context to whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious.

[8 : 25] Here, Jesus Christ is set forth as the church's one foundation. And on that foundation, he is building down through the ages his own church.

And this is its character, the spiritual house. It is not bricks and mortar, not cathedrals, no, churches with beautiful architecture.

It is a spiritual house. It is sinners coming together, feeling the unity of the spirit, one with each other, and one with the Lord.

And oh, I do hope it includes ye also. That should be a matter between your soul and God as whether it does, because when all is said and done, you are having the privilege, and you have had it from baby days on, many of you, to worship God, and to hear the gospel preached to you.

But the great question is, what have you gained by trading? What business have you really done in heaven's own marketplace? In thinking on this subject, I thought of that one which is very familiar to you all, and there is one thing that you must keep in mind.

[10 : 05] Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and do it then, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock.

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not. For it was founded upon a rock.

And now here is someone else who sat in the same pew at the same time. They sat side by side, it might be, and everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand.

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.

And the poor man who lived in it was inside it. He and his house went down together into eternal misery. the teaching is that his religion was not built upon a good foundation.

[11 : 28] He built his house upon the sand, which is equivalent of making our religion to be the doings of the great eye. Whereas what saith the scriptures, by the deeds of the flesh, there shall no flesh live in, be justified.

And now looking at this subject then, to whom coming as unto a living stone, Jesus Christ is referred to there as a living stone, the foundation which God has laid in Zion, living.

And that means this, as he is the foundation of the church of Christ, every stone hewn out of nature's quarry, and built upon this one foundation, Jesus Christ declares, because I live, ye shall live also.

But here is a word which you might think about, as it is applicable to you, at least I hope it is, to whom coming as unto a living stone.

Have you been coming unto Jesus Christ this Sabbath morn, desiring to get good for your soul, help in the worship of God, and that you might get some token for good, something to strengthen your assurance of an interest in the things of God, to whom coming, and remember, it is put in the present tense, not ye have already come, to whom coming, coming every day, sometimes in one sense of the word, coming all day, with sighs and cries and groans, and painful exercises of mind, that you might get in touch with God, and feel a sure setting on this blessed foundation that Jesus Christ is to the church of God, to whom coming as unto a living stone, and look how this living stone has been treated down through the ages, disallowed indeed of men, and that means we will not have this man to reign over us, depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thee, or thy ways, disallowed indeed of men, and thou solemn it is to think that in hundreds of pulpits this

[14 : 29] Sabbath morn, where the gospel should be preached, the gospel of the grace of God, yet Jesus Christ is disallowed by the man preaching therein, because he does not receive Jesus Christ for who he is, verily God, verily man, disallowed as to his divinity, being the eternal son of God, in his divine nature, allowed to be a good man, an example, but nothing more, disallowed indeed of men, and that is the cause of all the woe and wickedness which is abroad in the world today, man is at war against his maker, and Jesus Christ is disallowed indeed of men, is he disallowed by any of you?

You dear young people, do you ponder these things? How many sermons you have heard since you were born? Has any one sermon at any time done you any good?

Has it ever set you thinking, where shall I spend eternity? Has it ever made you go aside and get into a secret place?

And smite your bosom and say, God be merciful to me, a sinner. Oh, if all the sermons you have heard, all your life long it may be, and no sermon whatever is made any use to your never-dying soul's eternal welfare, when you go down into eternal misery, as you will do when you die, if Jesus Christ is disallowed in your life, that is the inevitable end of such a life, then I will tell you this, all the sermons you have ever heard, you will hear them all again, word for word.

People in hell have got wonderful memories, just the same as they have in heaven, wonderful memories in heaven, to remember all the good, that God has bestowed upon you, but in hell, to remember the life you have lived in every detail of it, not one detail omitted, and you will hear all those sermons again, and remember how you felt in listening to some of them, we will not have this man to reign over us, and then you will realize that you are just reaping in accordance with the life you have lived, and in how you have sown, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God.

[17 : 40] How wonderful it is that Jesus Christ should have been chosen of God. That may seem a very elementary saying to bring before you, but you think about it, and you will find there is a depth in it that you cannot fathom, nor can any angel fathom it either.

God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious. And now, thinking of this word precious, what think ye of Christ?

Can you say, let your conscience tell you the truth about it, as it will do if it is in working order, and it should be, to me Christ is more precious fire than life and all its comforts are.

Precious. Oh, how precious is the rock of ages to poor sinners, when by living faith they feel they are fixed upon it, built as a lively stone in the church of God, built up a spiritual house.

[19 : 12] Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house. And this foundation, I have said it was laid first of all in eternal purposes.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And if you can receive it before the beginning, God established this spiritual house to be built in its plan, all who should be numbered in it as lively stones.

And he made a covenant and it was made with Jesus Christ as the church's one foundation, that in the fullness of time, Jesus Christ would come down into this world and do love's redeeming work.

That the foundation of the church might be laid to stand for time and eternity too. Laid in eternal purposes. And it is laid in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Laid in the life that he lived, in the death that he died in his triumphant resurrection from the dead on that Easter morning long ago.

[20 : 39] And it is laid in this blessed fact that he is in heaven this Sabbath morn, looking with pleasure that this spiritual house, the church of God, is being built up.

He looks with pleasure on the Holy Spirit doing that which is his own work to do. And the Lord added unto the church daily such as should be saved.

Ye also as lively stones have built up a spiritual house. And then this foundation is not only laid in eternal purposes, laid in the life that Jesus Christ lived and in him doing love's redeeming work so well.

It is laid by every man ordained of God to preach the gospel. Wherever his work is to be, he preaches Jesus Christ as the church's one foundation.

And he is used of God that sinners may be made manifest and made lively stones to be built up in the church of God.

[22 : 03] It is a wonderful mercy and a wonderful privilege and it gives you a wonderful pleasure when any man ordained of God to preach realizes God has used his labors that a poor sinner should be born again.

I remember how I felt the first time I ever learned that one was born again under my ministry and it is a pleasure which no words can describe and it makes you willing to be anything the Lord ordains you shall be that you might go labor on spend and be spent your work to do the master's will in preaching the gospel that poor sinners might be hewn out like stones from nature's quarry and made lively with a gracious heaven sent conviction of sin and be born again and laid upon this blessed foundation God has laid in Zion and you have to watch every man whom you hear preach the gospel whether he preaches Jesus Christ as the alone foundation of a sinner's hope of heaven being built upon it ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house then there is another place where this foundation is laid and that is in a sinner's affections when he is born again how glad a poor sinner is to know that there is a foundation which

God himself has laid for poor sinners to build their heavenly hopes upon and you find in your heart an affection a spiritual affection flowing forth to Jesus Christ for his great mercy in coming down into this world that he might be the church's one foundation and your great concern is to be found a lively stone built there upon much might be said under that heading ye also as lively stones let us look at this adjective lively and it means first of all when they are first made lively I mean they are lively with convictions of sin very solemn convictions of sin and they hardly know what they are or where they are in things divine but they're being made aware that they are sinners beyond their own words to describe and they can understand how the publican felt

God be merciful to me a sinner lively with convictions of sin lively with soul exercise there seems very little soul exercise evidenced in the church of Christ nowadays but it is a mercy to be the subject of it and you can well ask the Lord to grant you that soul exercise for it will do you good it will make you more than ever concerned to have sure work about the foundation of your religion that it is that which God is the author of and remember Paul said to Timothy exercise thyself unto godliness you may say but then being what we are poor sinners utterly helpless in things divine how can we exercise ourselves you can ask God to do it for you and he will give you an answer to prayer if you are in earnest about it you must never think the scripture contradicts itself what the scripture says is what God will be pleased to do and

Paul did say to Timothy exercise thyself unto godliness which is to say let it be your great concern that godliness shall govern all that you are and all that you do and all that you desire to be godliness exercise thyself unto godliness for godliness is profitable unto all things having the promise of the life that now is and that which is to come and then these lively stones they're not only made lively in soul exercise how good it is when they're made lively in prayer how often you feel your prayers your attempts to pray are cold and formal and there is much repetition therein you cannot always feel out of the abundance of the heart the mouth is speaking and so when these lively stones are made lively in prayer whenever you are dear friends suffer a word of exhortation make the most of it the word of god says open thy mouth wide and i will fill it that is to say when you feel a little of the spirit of prayer and the grace of supplication remember what you sing thou art coming to a king large petitions with thee bring for his grace and power are such none can ever ask too much we are often too contracted too limited in our attempts to pray we overlook the fact that god is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or even think good it is to be as it were a lively stone when you feel it is good to draw near unto god and how good it is to be a lively stone as regards praise when you feel your heart made soft broken and contrite when you desire out of the abundance of the heart for the mouth to speak and offer unto god thanksgiving for all his goodness and mercy which attends you with such unfailling regularity lively in prayer lively in praise and how good and how good it is too when you can feel what this chapter tells us lower down unto you therefore which believe he is precious to be lively with a consciousness of the preciousness of Christ to be able to say that Jesus

[29 : 57] Christ is all your salvation all your desire compared with Christ in all beside no comeliness I see the one thing need for dearest Lord is to be one with thee ye also as lively stones have built up a spiritual house and now looking at these lively stones from another viewpoint I have already said they are hewn out of nature's quarry God as a rule uses his servants in preaching the gospel to be the means of conviction of sin being granted and they are hewn out as stones from nature's quarry sometimes they may have lain there a long while people but it is good when one is young in years and hewn out and made a lively stone because then there is all the length of that man's life to live to the glory of

God when people are called in later life they have not much longer of their life to live unto God and for God and if it was possible to be sorry in heaven which it is not remember that I'm using it as an illustration the dying thief would be sorry in heaven itself that he did not live any of his life to the glory of God only in the latest moments of it his life was a wicked life and yet his death was the death of the righteous he was made manifest as a lively stone built up in this spiritual house the church of Christ and his redeemed spirit is in heaven but the other thief was lost here you see the sovereignty of God and the sovereignty of God is seen in these stones being hewn out of nature's quarry do remember that

I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy then these lively stones being hewn out they are not put into the church of God just as they are hewn out they have to be prepared they all have to be squared to fit into that niche that God has ordained where they should be in the church of Christ and this squaring of these lively stones is done according to the law by the law is the knowledge of sin we who try to preach often speak about a law work and every sinner taught of God knows something of a law work though he may not know the phraseology of it but every poor sinner made manifest as a lively stone is squared to fit into the foundation where

God has ordained his or her life shall be lived to his honor and glory they are squared under the law and that means they are brought to know by the deeds of the law there should no flesh living be justified if thou Lord should mark iniquity O Lord who shall stand and they are all made to realize not the labor of my hands can fulfill the laws demands squared under the law and they are fitted into the foundation knowing that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone which believeth but they are not only hewn out and squared but they are made ready you have noticed in the record concerning

Solomon's temple that the things were made ready before they were brought thither to where the foundation was laid for the temple to be built upon it and these lively stones are made ready they're not only squared under the law and made to know salvation is of the Lord in every jot and tittle of it not only are they made to realize by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God not of works lest any man should boast but they are what I may call fashioned and to be fashioned there is a graving tool that God uses it may be affliction it may be adverse circumstances whatever the nature of the affliction may be or the circumstance that

[35 : 43] God overrules it will be as a graving tool so that every one of these lively stones is fashioned according to the image of Jesus Christ be ye conformed to the image of his son and here we read in this chapter for even here unto were ye called because Christ also suffered for us leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps they are fashioned with the graving tool and it is a wonderful mercy when whatever trouble it is God allows to come into your life it is so overruled that you exhibit therein some conformity to the image of Jesus Christ you remember the hymn writer's prayer as the image in the glass answers the beholder's face thus unto my heart appear print thy own resemblance there all these lively stones are fashioned like that so that you can see in their lives at times not all the time alas but at times

I said that they have been with Jesus and they evidence whose they are and whom they serve and then there is another evidence of these lively stones built up a spiritual house they are all united to the foundation from whence they draw their life to live the life of the righteous and they are all united to each other so that whenever you meet a sinner born again if he is born again and gives you evidence of it and you are then you feel this unity of the spirit unite in you one to each other as a brother or sister in the Lord love is this blessed cement love is the golden chain that binds the favored souls above and he is a hair of heaven who finds his bosom glow with love it is wonderful to feel we know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren you have found it you may have met one who to you is a stranger and yet the things of

God have become the theme of conversation and you have found the one with whom you are talking is one who is a sinner born again and he speaks of Jesus Christ and his preciousness speaks of the things of God what he has tasted handled and felt and your heart goes out to such an one you feel he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit and I have told you that this church of God is declared to be a spiritual house it is to do with the things of the spirit it is not to do with denominational labels no it is to do with the things of the spirit ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house and they are all united to the foundation all will say the same thing when you ask what think ye of

Christ to them is all their salvation and all their desire they are one with each other and one with God whose they are and whom they desire to serve ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house and now here the apostle Peter goes on and holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ spiritual sacrifices that should cause some searchings of heart among us as to what we know about offering up spiritual sacrifices the sacrifices of God are a broken heart and a contrite spirit have you ever felt a contrite spirit strange to say godly scholars tell us that this word contrite has got the meaning of being pounded to pieces when all that you are by nature is pounded to pieces and you are before

God a poor sinner willing to be molded and willing to do whatever the will of God is for you to be and to do contrite you may well say the Lord does happiness divine on contrite hearts bestow oh tell me gracious God is mine a contrite heart or no contrition of spirit and then there is the spiritual sacrifice of godly sorrow for sin when you feel sin to be exceeding sinful when you really do before God hate it when you can say what you sometimes sing may you ever say amen to it whenever you sing it take away the love of sin alpha and omega

[41 : 54] B yes and this godly sorrow is very precious some of us would like to feel it much more often than alas we seem to do it is a spiritual sacrifice when you can humble yourself before god as a poor sinner and say jesus blood for sinners built i depend on solely to release me from my guilt but i would be holy hate way and And then there is the sacrifice of praise.

Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me, the psalmist said. How often do you offer unto God thanksgiving?

How often do you offer praise, a spiritual sacrifice? Are you not sometimes troubled, like the preacher, that your words of thanksgiving are often put together, but you cannot always feel that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth is speaking, and that it is a spiritual sacrifice.

It is a sacrifice of words, but then you want it to be out of the abundance of the heart the mouth is speaking, a spiritual sacrifice.

Then, in the epistle to the Romans, you read of another sacrifice, and that of a truth is a spiritual one, and yet, strange to say, it is to do with you, your body.

[43 : 48] I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Read that word over again when you get home, and pray over it. Your bodies, your bodies, a living sacrifice, the sacrifice of a lively stone, built in the spiritual house, the church of God, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

What a good argument that is. The apostle Paul, when he penned the epistle to the Romans, he says, I beseech you, therefore, brethren.

He did not say, as it were, I come to flog you, and to show you what you ought to be and ought to do.

He says, I beseech you, and he says about a living sacrifice, which is your reasonable service. As though Paul said, you think of what God has done for you, and then you will need no argument from me as to what you should be concerned to do for God who has done so much for you.

[45 : 16] Your reasonable service. You are dependent on God for all that you are, all that you possess. Your bodies, a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God, a spiritual sacrifice, and then good works can be a spiritual sacrifice, and all good works will be spiritual sacrifices, if in doing them you do them unto God and not as unto men.

whatsoever ye do, do heartily as unto the Lord, and not as unto men. Good works are acts that spring from love.

Love to God and love to those for Jesus' sake whom you desire to show friendship or kindness and to do good unto.

Spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. And then there is loving service that you render wherever God may have ordained your lot to be.

and you you find the Apostle John will help you in that line of things because he speaks about these spiritual sacrifices in a very practical way.

[47 : 00] And what does he say? Hereby perceive we the love of God because he laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

But whoso hath this world's good and seeth his brother have need and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him out dwelleth the love of God in him.

My little children let us not love in word neither in tongue but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth and shall assure our hearts before him.

It means that sometimes you will make your body a living sacrifice you will be weary with loving service by day by night and yet you will do it for Jesus' sake as well as your own and because those whom you desire to render the service unto are those who are spiritual stones built up in the church of God as you humbly hope you are.

Much might be said along that line of thought. Another spiritual sacrifice is submission to the will of God and it is a wonderful experience to realize that when your will is subjugated and you can say before God thy will O Lord not my will be done.

[48 : 47] ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house and holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

O that you and I may have sure work that we are indeed lively stones built up by the Spirit of God in this church of God then come what will all will be well for time and eternity too.

Amen.