

You Were Made to Worship

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[0 : 00] That's what we do all day. Trade off. Swap, tag, you're it.

It is tag team. It's good to be with you all again. Glad to see you. And how many of you have been camping already?

Yeah? How many are planning on camping? Yeah? Okay. Y'all are happy campers. Awesome. We're good. We, our recent drama is we found a house.

We are in a moldy house we're moving out of, the 31st. We found a house we're moving into, Lord willing, on the 16th. The closing date is on the 11th.

So appreciate prayers for that. It kind of happened rather quickly. It's a major turnaround for that to happen. And we're happy about that. I'm not excited because I'm just so tired.

[1 : 11] But at least if everything goes well and nothing happens, you know, it's okay. I'm holding my breath because we've, this will be the sixth house we've bought over the years.

And in one house that we had, it was the week that we were supposed to close. And there was a glitch. And we kind of panicked. We didn't think we were going to get it.

But that worked out. And another house that we, we were closing. The very day that we were moving out to move in and get the key and all that.

They called and they said, is this a VA loan? It's like, what? What do you mean? So that was panic. But they were able to work it out in three hours.

You know, as if they didn't have six months because the house was being built. You know, but the last minute that worked out. So who knows what's going to happen. The title company said everything's good.

[2 : 09] It's not going to be good until we get the key, right? In the meantime, my wife goes up tomorrow. For a two o'clock meeting in Fort Collins with her mom and dad.

And her dad is going to be going to hospice. So he's got, he has cancer, but he has blood cancer. And at 88, he's just not, he doesn't want to bother with all this stuff.

And so appreciate prayers for that. So we're in the middle of the move. And either that or we're homeless. We don't know yet. But it's been a wild ride.

Hope all of you are doing well. This morning we're looking at 1 Peter 2, verses 4 through 8 specifically. And we're going to look at the fact that we are really made to worship.

Particularly the fact that we are, we offer ourselves as priests. God calls us priests. This was a big revelation to me.

[3 : 20] Because I grew up going to church in a family, maybe sometimes Christmas Eve and sometimes on Easter. So we were really dedicated, you know, to those twice a year, every four or five years.

Grew up. Mom was Roman Catholic and we were Episcopal. And so when I read this for the first time as a born-again Christian, it kind of shocked me.

That God would call us priests. Because priests wear those funny robes, right? And hats and all that. And that was a revelation. And then to turn to Ephesians and see that God calls all believers saints.

You know, I thought, wait a minute. I thought you had to die and, you know, you had to do something really spectacular to be a saint. But we're called priests. And we'll see what that means in a moment.

1 Peter 2, verses 4 through 8. 1 Peter 3, verses 5 through 8.

[4 : 50] 1 Peter 3, verses 5 through 8.

Grant us, once again, ears that hear, eyes that see, to behold the beauties of who and what you are and all that you've done through our Savior, Jesus Christ. And Father, guide and direct our hearts.

Allow us to understand this and comprehend it. And not just in a way that we have this wonderful comprehension and cognition of the facts, but also that you would pour it deeply into our hearts that we would live it out.

We thank you, Father, for that ability through Christ and through his spirit. Amen. This is speaking, 1 Peter, is speaking to those who have trusted and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And not in a general way, not in a way that just, you know, okay, I believe Jesus was a nice man who came and he died. No, it means that Jesus came, he lived that perfect life, sinless life, without flaw, without shame, without guilt, and he did it on behalf of us.

[6 : 26] And then he died upon the cross. So he lived the perfect life for us, fulfilling the law, and then he dies upon the cross to deal with our sins because we failed.

We are guilty. And then he was buried. And that wasn't the end of the story. Because as we know, three days later, he's resurrected. He comes back. And then after 40 days of working more with his disciples, he is ascended.

He raises up again into the heavenlies. And that's a promise that we have as well. Those of us who have trusted and believed in Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, not just that he is a Savior, but the Savior of our lives, my life, will also be resurrected in our spirits and then physically.

So it's something we get to look forward to. So 1 Peter was written to address the question, if I am a Christian, then why am I having problems? Because if I believe in Messiah, I thought it was supposed to be great.

All of life is going to be wonderful. And he answers, yeah, right. Ain't so. End of story. But he tells us in chapter 2, verses 1 through 10, basically, is that, well, first of all, chapter 1, is the whole purpose of 1 Peter is to remind us that we, in Christ, we live in Christ by the power of Jesus.

[7 : 54] And we do so now, and we yet suffer. And there's purpose in our suffering. There are purposes that God has for us when we suffer, when we suffer in him.

And so in chapter 2, verses 1 through 10, he tells us that the purpose of salvation is so that we would grow in God's word, that we would hear him and believe upon him.

The second thing in verses 4 through 8 is that we would sacrifice as his priests. And this is what we're focusing on. And then verses 9 and 10 is that we would be a witness to the world, that we would proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.

And by the way, a witness can be a good witness or a witness that brings negative news. So for those who are rejecting Jesus, our witness is an affront.

But we are witnessing and testifying by our lives, and even when we talk about Jesus by our words, to their guilt and their shame. And so, you know, essentially, if you're on the witness stand and you say, so-and-so has done such-and-such, they're not going to like you.

[9 : 05] Why is that? Well, because you've told the truth. And that's how it is. On the other hand, you can also be a witness to the good news of Jesus and an encouragement to those that God is leading to come to faith in Christ and a testimony to those who know Christ and an encouragement to them.

So we play a dual purpose there in our lives. And that's a prophetic mission that we have, so to speak. Well, what about this passage that we looked at, verses 4 through 8?

What is this all about? Well, Peter has given us ample symbols so far up to this point, and we'll continue to do so.

Analogies, you know, analogies, similes, and metaphors. Our little guy now has been doing a lot of similes. You know, he'll say, this strawberry is like a ball.

You know, it's like, where'd you get that from? Yeah, you're not supposed to use similes at the age of two, but he is. And he's doing that all year. The airplane sounds like a lawnmower. Okay, yeah.

[10 : 13] Well, Peter does that. He talks and uses similes, but he also uses metaphors. And he tells us that trials are like gold, but are better than gold, more valuable than gold.

He tells us that we are to gird up our minds, to be prepared for action, to go to war in the spiritual dimension. He tells us that we're redeemed by that which is greater than gold or silver, that we're born again of spiritual seed, that we have a living and abiding word of God, that is Jesus.

And we are to put off our vices, and we are to drink in the pure milk of the word. So he gives us all these analogies and symbols, but now he comes to this one, this particular one about the temple. And what he's doing here in verses 4 through 8, he says, What he's contrasting here is the Jewish understanding that the temple was it.

There were two main things in Jewish life. One was the Sabbath, and the other was the temple. And those were two big things.

[11:40] Of course, there were a number of other things. But the temple was very, very important. And in the temple, what he's doing here is comparing the temple of God to the temple of Jerusalem.

And the temple of God is really Jesus. Remember what Jesus said. He made the promise, you know, destroy this temple, and in three days, arise it up again.

And they thought, how can you do that? There's no way that you can destroy this temple. By the way, 40 years later, a general came in, General Titus, and he destroyed the temple.

He leveled the city. It's a terrible, terrible thing. But the temple took 46 years to complete. So you can well imagine, you know, Jesus says, destroy it, and in three days, I'll build it back up.

They didn't get it. He was talking about him, himself, his life, who he was. Josephus wrote, and Josephus was a contemporary of this time, around 50, 60 AD.

[12:44] He wrote, the temple sat on an immense foundation of solid blocks of white marble that were covered with gold. Each block measured 67 and a half feet long by nine feet wide by nine feet.

So 67, what is this room? You know, imagine carving out a block and then bringing it from the quarry and all the way to the temple place and setting it up and hoisting them up and all that. It was rather astonishing that they did that. There were 12 steps leading up to the porch of the temple, and the platform all around was 150 square feet.

Well, that was rather impressive. It was beautiful at the time, white and gold and shimmering. You know, it's really magnificent. But what Peter is doing here is recognizing the fact that Jesus himself is the temple as Jesus said he was, that he is the new temple.

But we are a part of the temple now. We are actual building blocks. We are better than these huge stones made of marble and covered with gold.

[14:00] That's why the illusion in the beginning in chapter 1 to gold. But he's comparing the boast of the Jews with the best of Jesus.

We are far more valuable and beautiful in Christ as his stones of this new temple that he's building. So if you think about it, the fact of the matter is for 2,000 years, God is building and has been building a new temple. And it's not in Jerusalem.

It is all around the world. And ultimately, he will bring us all together, all the stones together, to make that one gorgeous, beautiful temple. So that's what he's doing here.

And that's the analogy that he's bringing out. Well, the first thing that we see is Jesus Christ is the foundation stone. He's the initial foundation stone. He's the one that you put on and you measure the direction and all the rest of the building according to that foundation stone.

[15:03] He's a living foundation stone. Jesus is also the cornerstone. He's that cornerstone.

He's also a stumbling stone, which this is an allusion to the Old Testament, but also to tradition, which said that as the Jews were building the temple, there was one particular stone that they had set aside and had rejected.

And apparently, they needed that stone. So they went back and used it. Well, Jesus, the analogy is Jesus is the one that they rejected. But he's the one that's the foundation to it all.

And without it, you really can't have a solid foundation at all. And then we see that Jesus is, in fact, the true temple. But here's the awesome thing that I want you to see, is that while in the Old Testament, if you think about it, all the occasions in the Old Testament, all the history centers around worship.

All the events are about worship. So with Adam and Eve, it was about, are you going to worship God or are you going to worship yourselves? And the temptation was, well, you can be just like God.

[16:20] Worship yourselves. When we were called to worship God himself. So he sets the test and has the law established. And Adam and Eve failed that. We would have failed it too.

But then as we move on through history, we look at the various opportunities of all the occasions for worship, where it was all about worship. And what was the whole thing about with Israel being in Egypt?

What was the point? Well, remember, Moses initially went to Pharaoh and he said, you need to let my people go out to the desert so we can worship God. Now, there wasn't any indication that they were going to go out and take a hike and leave.

Initially, first of all, they were going to go out and worship. Let my people go to worship. So Pharaoh, being of the belief that he was half God, said, no, because you're going to worship all our gods and me.

You're not going to worship some other god we don't know anything about. And that's what the whole conflict was. It started with worship. And you look at all the events in Scripture centered around who you're going to worship.

[17 : 32] The book of Proverbs has to do with the sun being taught whether you're going to worship God on the holy hill or whether you're going to worship the false gods of the other hills.

Lady Wisdom versus Lady Folly. So the entire Old Testament is all about and centers around worship and the worship of God. Now we get to the New Testament and it's still about worship. So when Jesus came back and came back to life and he enters into the room, what was it Thomas said? He says, my Lord and my God.

He only said that about God. You never use that as an exclamation mark. That would be considered taking God's name in vain. He was declaring Jesus was God. So now he says here that Jesus is our true temple.

But we're all building blocks. Now some of us are blockheads. Others are pretty blocks, right? And yet God still chooses to use us and work us in the beauty of his temple.

[18 : 41] I like Ephesians because the symbolism there is that we are like translucent blocks. So that when people look through us, they ultimately see the Shekinah glory in the center.

And that's the whole point of Ephesians. While here Peter talks about the value that we have as his building blocks in Christ. Hebrews 3 says, for he spoke in a certain place on the seventh day in this way.

God rested on the seventh day from all his works. And again in this place, they shall not enter into my rest. Since therefore it remains that some must enter in. And those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of their disobedience.

There are those who enter in to the realm, into the belief and the faith of Jesus Christ because of what he's done. And because the obedience that faith produces.

They accept Christ and they receive him. And they become a block in his temple. Those who don't are those who are of the disobedience. And then he says in Hebrews 5, what a priest does.

[19 : 55] What do priests do in the Old Testament? He reminds us in Hebrews 5, we won't look at that, but just briefly. A priest serves gifts to God. A priest serves up sacrifices to the Lord.

A priest mediates between God and man. Brings fellow men to God. Leads others to God. A priest is given the duty to protect the sacred things of God.

A priest is a teacher. We see this in Ezra and Nehemiah. The priest went out. The word was declared. And then the priest went out and explained what was just read. And then finally, a priest is concerned with holiness.

Well, that's what we are in Christ, if you think about it. And that's the whole thing that as we look and focus on Jesus who is building this new temple, is to see the fact that while it is all about Christ, you have a part in this.

You are a part of this. All right. Are you with me so far? Yeah? Okay, good.

[21 : 03] So you are part in the new temple. And what that does for me, and I hope it does for you, is it gives another sense of how God sees you in Christ.

How God perceives you as not a downright dirty, rotten sinner that you don't deserve anything. And, you know, you better hold on with all you have.

Otherwise, you're going to go to hell kind of thing. But rather that once you're in Christ, God sees you as something of great value. And one of those things that he sees you of great value is that, one, you are a part of the temple.

And, two, you're a priest. Have you thought of that? You're a priest? Okay, you're a priestess if you're a woman, if you want to go that way. You're a priest and priestess in Christ.

So what does that mean? Well, first of all, you are living stones in the new temple. 1 Peter 2.5 says, You also, as living stones, are being built up in a spiritual house.

[22 : 09] We are living stones. The quality and the characteristics of those of us who are in Christ are significantly different. So that when other people look at us, they compare and contrast.

And it shouldn't be surprising to us if they reject us because they've already rejected Jesus. But they reject us because of who we represent and who we are.

You know, they have this spiritual sense that we are part of Jesus and part of something masterful. That we were made to worship. And we were made to lead others in worship.

So we are living stones. Then 1 Peter 2:5 says, We are a holy priesthood. Collectively gathered together, we are a priesthood.

In fact, this was promised in Exodus 19. Verse 6, it says, You shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.

[23 : 11] Imagine that. That was the whole point in Exodus. That God was pulling his people out of Egypt to conduct the work of the priesthood. They were above and beyond what the priests did in Egypt.

And the priests were the elite. They were high. They were the rich. You know, they had all the secrets and the magic and everything else. But he says, You, my people, you are all priests.

And that's your calling. And so he's reiterating it here in 1 Peter. That we are a holy priesthood.

What does that mean? Well, as priests, the first thing we are is mediators or ambassadors.

We're mediators in the sense not that we save anyone. But mediators in the sense that we represent God to other people. We bring people and lead people.

Just as Adam and Eve were called to become priests by leading their family and leading others in worship to God. That's what we do.

[24 : 20] We lead people to God. The second thing is that we are guardians of the sacred things of God. What are sacred things? What are important to God?

Worship, for one. You set it aside. It's sacred. Justice. Hope. Reconciliation. Those are all expressed.

And those are very valuable, sacred things. You know, Micah? What does he long for us to do?

Seek justice and mercy.

To be a guardian is to have a vital concern for worship. To enjoy God through Christ. To be vibrantly engaged, totally committed, deeply reverent in our time of worship.

Elders have a special sense in which they are to guard the Lord's Supper and to guard the preaching of the word and make sure that it is fitting to what the word says.

[25 : 23] Thirdly, as priests, you have gifts given by Jesus to offer to him. Now, that isn't explicit here. It's implied because that's what priests did.

But we do know, if we go over to Ephesians again, we see that when the victory march had happened and there was a parade to celebrate Christ, rather than people giving gifts to God, God, through Christ, gives gifts to his people in order to be used for others.

So, as priests, what we do is we are given these gifts. And what are those gifts? We are given those gifts to serve others.

Gift of mercy. Serving mercy to others. Showing mercy. Gift of kindness. Gift of grace. I don't know about you, but there are a lot of people who don't deserve anything.

Right? And yet we show mercy and grace. Those are gifts. You know, they are just as tangible as going to a special, you know, Nordstrom's and buying something expensive and giving it to them.

[26 : 32] These are the kinds of gifts that God wants us to employ and give. And we see this again and again, especially in the Old Testament. We're also called as priests to be teachers.

Not in the role of authority, but nevertheless, that's what we do with one another. God tells us to rebuke each other, reprove one another, to love one another, show mercy and kindness to one another, and to teach one another.

No matter how far you are in your journey with the Lord Jesus, you have something to teach someone else. By what Christ has taught you through that journey.

And what Christ has taught you through his word. It doesn't have to be spectacular. You don't have to give, you know, an outline, a 20-page outline of a particular doctrine to teach. Right?

You can teach someone. You disciple someone. It's explaining. And that's a part of our priestly work. And that we are holy.

[27 : 33] We are set apart. We are called to be holy. And, by the way, I got some feedback from a post that I put on Facebook.

I get really aggravated when people talk so much about being holy. Christians, that they focus only on holiness. Yes, we are to be holy because God calls us to be holy.

Because God himself is holy. But our objective, our focus is not holiness. That's not the end. The end, our focus ultimately is in Christ who makes us holy.

And he works in us again and again to become more and more holy. But when we focus on being holy, we try so hard to be holy, we become Pharisees. And then we go around and say, well, you're not holy enough.

You know, you've got to measure up to my holiness. I'm holier than you. You see what I'm saying? And as priests, we are called to be set aside. And we are set aside in Christ.

[28 : 37] That we exude this otherworldly kind of dimension, otherworldly kind of ethics. And morality that sets us off.

And so as we see in the news, we talk to neighbors, and more and more we're becoming stranger. We are stranger things to them. Because our holiness is not anything like what they consider acceptable or holy.

And that's the world. Well, as priests, we are holy, living in contrast to the world and representing the Lord.

But not only are we giving gifts, but we are also to give sacrifices. What does that mean as Christians? Jesus, as we know, was the perfect sacrifice.

He is the ultimate one. He was the one for all. And the complete, he's the end. There was Jesus, you know, they had lambs and all these other animals that they offered for sacrifice.

[29 : 40] But when Jesus came, that was it. No more. Because he was the epitome. He was the ultimate sacrifice. So what do we have to offer as priests in Christ?

What kind of sacrifice? Romans 12, 1 and 2. We are to offer ourselves as living sacrifices. Living sacrifices. So scripture says we can offer ourselves as sacrifice of praise.

Hebrews 13, 15. Therefore, by him, let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God. That is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name. You know, what that means is we don't just praise God when we come to worship.

It means that our life ought to exude the praise of Jesus. That everything we do is a part and extension of the praise that we offer to God.

So as Martin Luther points out, you know, even a cobbler who makes shoes does so for the praise and the glory of God. Because his shoes are the shoes of one whose heart and life is in Christ.

[30 : 52] So everything that we do praises God in that sense. But we also praise God in our worship. We praise God in our personal worship. Hebrews, Psalm 107, 22.

Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving and declare his works with rejoicing. It's a sacrifice of praise where we glorify God.

The second thing, it's a sacrifice of righteousness. Offering up good deeds. Living in righteousness and having the executive ability to do what is right and offering those good deeds on a regular basis to the Lord.

Thirdly, it's a sacrifice of humility. Psalm 51 reminds us the sacrifices of God are a broken heart. A broken and contrite heart. Oh God, you will not despise.

God loves it when we are humble. He loves our humility. When we come before him recognizing that we have nothing. As the song says, the hymn says, Nothing in my hands I bring.

[32 : 00] Simply to thy cross I cling. It's a sacrifice of humility. It's also a sacrifice of self. Losing our life in Christ.

Bearing his cross as we live out the Christ-like life. So it's a wonderful thing and it's a treasure to be considered and to see us the way God sees us.

That one, in Christ, we are his building stones. He is the cornerstone, but he is using us to build that magnificent edifice, that wonderful building that he calls the temple.

Whereas Christ is in us and our bodies are the temple. But together, collectively, we are the temple and Christ. The Shekinah glory is in us.

And that we offer ourselves as priests and that we give ourselves as sacrifices. When we see ourselves in that way, it really gives us a whole different perspective on the world in which we live.

[33 : 07] And how far we do stand apart from the world. Not because we're so wonderful and awesome. But because of what Jesus Christ himself has done in us and through us and what he continues to do.

Be encouraged by that. Father, thank you for the fact that you called us from eternity past. You have chosen us to be your priests, your sacrifices, your temple stones.

Thank you that you've given us the ability and the opportunity to reflect you in all that you are. Lord, we fail every day at this.

We're not perfect and we recognize it. And yet, Father, grant us the grace to be able to look to the work of who and what you are and your word and your spirit and us.
That we would radiate Jesus. And we would worship him in all that we do and say. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen.