

Life Group Notes

Sunday 30th January 2022

Speaker: Andy McCullough

Title: 1 Peter: The Church. What?

Passage: 1 Peter 2:4 -12

1. An extension of Jesus (connection). 2:4-6.

Personal devotion increases corporate connection. As I get closer to Jesus and you get closer to Jesus, we grow closer to each other too.

The cornerstone (or foundation stone or setting stone) is the first stone set in the construction of a masonry foundation. All other stones will be set in reference to this stone, thus determining the position of the entire structure. The cornerstone of the church is the person of Jesus Christ, his incarnation, life, death and resurrection. The church, therefore, is an extension of Jesus Christ. We continue what he began. Our joining to him and joining to one another. We are a continuation of the presence and the story and the mission of Jesus Christ. We serve Jesus by serving his church. We love Jesus by loving his church. The church is an extension of himself.

2. God's house (worship). 2:5.

The church is both continuous and discontinuous with the tabernacle, then Jerusalem temple, in the Old Testament. The quotation from Isaiah 28, "*See I am laying a cornerstone in Zion,*" came at a time when the Jerusalem temple elite were corrupt. God seems to be saying, "*I'm going to lay a new foundation. I'm going to start again.*" The fact that it is in Zion hints at the reality that the existing temple will be replaced by something new.

And before, in the temple, there were priests offering sacrifices. Now, we are the priests, and we offer spiritual sacrifices of praise and worship.

3. A source of honour/identity (belonging). 2:6-7.

The third thing about the church is how it is a community that brings honour to its members. It's an honour, a privilege belonging to the church. Honour can derive from a famous family, or from an ethnic identity. What Peter is trying to tell people is that it is an enormous honour to be a Christian. We are part of an ancient family, a nation, a new ethnicity, a great story.

4. God's chosen people (rescue). 2:9-10.

At the core of us as a people is the gospel of grace. Rescue is the most important thing about our story, about our identity. We have been rescued! That is our point of commonality! We're all huddled in the lifeboat together, dripping wet, freshly plucked out of the ocean, and grateful.

We need to keep the grace of rescue at the centre at all times. How do we keep rescue at the centre of what the church is?

5. Among the Gentiles (witness). 2:11-12.

Now the church is this incredible community. But we are not inward-facing, we are "among the Gentiles." We are outward-facing. We are an extension of the mission of Jesus. Witness is an essential part of what it means to be the people of God. As an extension of Jesus, we embody his mission. We enact his love. We extend his welcome.

Questions:

1. Which of these five ideas is the most meaningful to you, and why?
2. "We serve Jesus by serving his church. We love Jesus by loving his church." Do you agree with this idea? How does it work out in practice?
3. Have you ever experienced pain or disappointment in church life? How can we pray for you about this?

4. Have you become a member of Reading Family Church as your local church? If not, why not?
5. Spend time praying for each other to find your places and express your gifts with the RFC family.