

## Peter 2A

Johnny's mother looked out the window and noticed him "playing church" with their three kittens. He had the kittens sitting in a row, and he was preaching to them. She smiled and went about her work.

A while later, she heard some loud meowing and hissing and ran back to the open window to see Johnny baptizing the kittens in a tub of water.

She called out, "Johnny, stop that! Those kittens are afraid of water!"

Johnny looked up at her and said, "They should have thought about that before they joined my church."

- That story reminds me a little of Peter's letter
  - Because sometimes I feel a little like those kittens
    - One minute I was playing church, and everything was easy and convenient
    - And then the next minute, the Lord got serious with me, and He began to show me the truth of His word in new ways
      - And the next thing I know, He began to get serious with me about my purpose in this faith He gave me
      - And His expectations for what I was to do in my walk as a Christian
    - And all of sudden, I felt like I had been dunked in cold water
  - Perhaps Peter's letter is having that effect on you
    - This is a splash of cold water in the face of Christians who may have been unprepared for what their faith required

[1Pet. 2:1](#) ¶ Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander,

[1Pet. 2:2](#) like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,

[1Pet. 2:3](#) if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

- Chapter 2 begins with the word therefore,

- Because you were brought into faith by the word of God,
  - Therefore, do two things
    - Put aside the characteristics that marked your life prior to your new birth
    - And long for the word of God
- Earlier Peter had commanded the believers in these churches not to be conformed to their lusts
  - Now he gives specific direction to cease five sins
    - The first two are attitudes of the heart
    - The next three are actions that arise from those attitudes
- As we look at this list, it's interesting that we don't see a broader spectrum of sin
  - There are many sins Peter could have listed, so why does he chose to focus on these five?
    - We don't see sexual sins
    - We don't see sins of greed
    - We don't see sins of violence
  - Peter is writing to the church, and the church is generally vigilant against certain sins
    - For example, it rarely tolerates believers who openly engage in sexual impurity, or financial impropriety
    - It usually contends with members who open display hostility to one another in its various forms
  - But these five sins are sins that often live quite comfortably in the church
    - And yet they are serious impediments to the growth and maturity of believers
- The first two are attitudes are
  - Malice, which is ill intent or evil thoughts and feelings

- Deceit which is simply lying in all its forms
- And these two sinful attitudes result in three general actions
  - Hypocrisy, which is a form of deception where we pass ourselves off to be something we're not so as to look better than we really are
  - Envy is a form of malice in which we despise another for what we want for ourselves
  - And slander is the perfect intersection of malice and deceit
    - It is deception in order to cause harm to another
    - False defamatory statements designed to cause injury to another
- We would all like to think that the church is safe haven from these kinds of attitudes and behaviors
  - We've come to expect such behavior from the world
    - We all encounter deceit and malice almost everywhere we go
    - We see it on the freeway on the way to work
      - People who seem to take joy and delight in obstructing another car's path or denying them entry into traffic
    - We see it in the office among coworkers
      - People willing to spread false statements about us
      - People who envy our success and try to turn it against us
    - We see it in our neighbors and even in those we count as friends
    - And we see it in family relationships from time to time
  - But then we come into the confines of a church building, and magically those traits disappear
    - Or do they?
    - Peter's point here is that they don't magically disappear

- And yet in the church, we tend to act as if they have
- We don't often acknowledge them, much less demand that we contend with this attitudes and behaviors
- In verse 1 Peter said put aside these things
  - The phrase in Greek literally means to lay aside a piece of clothing
    - The same word is used in Acts 7 when we hear the crowd laying aside their coats at the feet of Saul as they prepared to stone Stephen
  - Peter says Christians need to lay aside – take off – these traits
- The reason we set these traits aside is because unless we make a conscience effort to set them aside, they can easily coexist with our Christian experience
  - We must not allow ourselves to slip back into these old comfortable clothes, these comfortable habits that defined our past existence
- The second reason Peter says to set them aside, is because they stand in the way of Christian maturity
  - While there are no doubt many sins that lead a Christian to fail in their walk, I think malice and deceit are probably at the top of the list
    - Malice stands in the way of fellowship and an abiding relationship with other believers
    - And deceit stands in the way of transparency, and the conviction that transparency provokes
      - If we are willing to be honest with one another, we can't help one another
      - And if we can't help one another mature, we are sheep wandering by ourselves waiting for the enemy to pick us off
- How do we leave these kinds of sins?
  - Verse 2: long for the word of God

- Specifically, Peter says be like a new born child that longs for milk
  - The picture is a perfect representation of how we are to view the word of God in our lives
  - The relationship is one of trust and dependence and necessity
- The newborn doesn't eat a variety of foods, but only milk
  - Milk is not only best, it is the only appropriate way to nurture a new born
- And that newborn enthusiastically desires that milk
  - He/she longs for it
  - And the baby is completely trusting and dependent on that source
- And by that milk, the child will grow strong
  - And by the milk of the Word of God, a believer will likewise grow strong
    - The Word of God isn't just one source of growth for the Christian
      - It is the only source appointed by God
    - Like a newborn who can't eat junk food and expect to prosper
      - A Christian can't expect to mature properly on a diet of humanistic teaching, self help, Christian psychobabble

"It is sad when Christians have no appetite for God's Word, but must be 'fed' religious entertainment instead. – Wiersbe

- We can't improve on the Word of God
  - We can't make it better – there's no substitute for mother's milk

- Take a moment and look at the transition Peter made from the end of Chapter 1 to this beginning of Chapter 2
  - Peter said that we could prosper in our pursuit of holiness because we had been born of a new seed,
    - And the seed was the Word of God
  - And now he says that it is this same word of God that will be the instrument to draw us toward maturity

[Eph. 5:25](#) ¶ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,

[Eph. 5:26](#) so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

[Eph. 5:27](#) that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

- The very same instrument by which God brought us into faith – the word of God
  - It's the same means God has appointed to bring us to holiness
    - The solution hasn't changed
    - What worked in the beginning is what continues to work
      - If it ain't broke, don't fix it
  - But inevitably, we try to fix it
  - And Peter says that the church must put off those obstacles that stand in the way of us being useful to Him
    - We must long for God's word in our lives
      - Make it a priority,
      - Learn to seek relief from our difficulties by what we find in the pages of Scripture – for that's why God gave it to us
      - Stop seeking solutions in the junk food of the world
      - Including "Christian" junk food, which is spiritualized pop psychology dressed up with a few scripture verses and intended to sound wise but lacking the substance of God's wisdom

- Once we do these things, we may grow in respect to salvation

[1Pet. 2:4](#) ¶ And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God,

[1Pet. 2:5](#) you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

[1Pet. 2:6](#) For *this* is contained in Scripture:

“BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER *stone*,  
AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.”

[1Pet. 2:7](#) This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve,

“THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED,  
THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER *stone*,”

[1Pet. 2:8](#) and,

“A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE”;

for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this *doom* they were also appointed.

- Now how is God going to put our obedience and holiness to use?
  - If we the church do devote ourselves to holiness and self control
  - If we do put aside those persistent sins associated with our former selves and grow in maturity by the Word of God
    - Now what?
  - Well, Peter says that just as Christ Himself was called the chief corner stone, choice and precious in the sight of God
    - Then we likewise are like living stones
- By the comparison Peter makes in these verse, he shows us how we are like Christ
  - Christian just means little Christ, and Peter begins to build a comparison here for how we are like Christ, the cornerstone
    - First, Jesus was a stone rejected by the builders
    - The picture is one of masons inspecting stones to select the one that would be the cornerstone for a building
      - The cornerstone was the most important stone in a building because it established the line for everything else

- If the building was to run true and rise straight, the cornerstone must be perfect
- Any defect would be magnified over the growth of the surrounding stones
- When the leaders within the nation of Israel inspected Jesus, they rejected Him
  - They declared that He was unfit to be the one that could establish God's kingdom
- And yet He was the stone God chose
  - He was considered precious
  - What men rejected, God chose
- Does this sound familiar?

[1Cor. 1:26](#) ¶ For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;  
[1Cor. 1:27](#) but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,  
[1Cor. 1:28](#) and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are,  
[1Cor. 1:29](#) so that no man may boast before God.  
[1Cor. 1:30](#) But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,  
[1Cor. 1:31](#) so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

- Like 1Cor, Isaiah's prophecy tells us that God intended it to be this way
  - He planned it this way
  - God had chosen Christ to be the cornerstone of a new kingdom
    - Yet He had also appointed Him to suffer at the hands of men who refused to accept Jesus as that cornerstone
    - Instead, they rejected Him
- And from that truth Peter makes the comparison to the church
  - The church is being built up today as living stones

- And Christ is the cornerstone, the foundation of a new structure
  - We each represent additional stones used to construct the building
- That building is the church, the Bride of Christ
  - Together with OT Saints and the saints yet to come, we all form the kingdom of believers who will join Christ in His glory
- And like the chief cornerstone, we are choice and precious
  - Chosen by God and precious to Him
  - Though like the cornerstone, we should expect to be despised and rejected by men at times

[Matt. 5:10](#) ¶ “Blessed are those who have been **persecuted** for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

[Matt. 5:11](#) ¶ “Blessed are you when *people* insult you and **persecute** you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.

[Matt. 5:12](#) “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they **persecuted** the prophets who were before you.

- In verse 5, Peter says that the living stones are a holy priesthood
  - Priests under the Mosaic Law were the ones appointed to serve the Lord in the tabernacle
    - They performed the sacrificial ceremony before the altar on behalf of the people of Israel
    - Spiritual sacrifices were offered by priests on behalf of the nation of Israel, who relied on those sacrifices to be made acceptable before God
  - Peter says that we are now the royal priesthood serving God in his temple of the Church
    - The Church is not the building, but the people
    - We serve God in serving His people and in our service to spread the gospel so that new stones may be added to the building

- And in this role are sacrifices are the personal sacrifice of our life in the pursuit of God's glory

[Rom. 12:1](#) ¶ Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is your spiritual service of worship.*

- How are we doing in upholding our priesthood as believers?
  - Are we building up the church – God's people?
  - Are we pursuing a life of holiness in a desire to bring God glory?
    - Becoming a part of the church was about a calling into a priestly service
    - We don't become a Christian to see what we can get out of our faith
    - We are called into a new life so we can serve God and His people because of our faith
- We can't afford to be like the ones Peter describes in verse 8
  - The leaders in the nation of Israel who encountered the Lord in His day, were disobedient to Him and His word
    - They rejected the stone and they stumbled spiritually
      - They were appointed to doom, Peter says
    - These were the men who had responsibility for leading the nation of Israel
      - Yet they wouldn't see their opportunity to serve as anything more than entitlement to privilege and status

[1Pet. 2:9](#) ¶ But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR *God's* OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

[1Pet. 2:10](#) for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.

- Peter expands his comparison here to include a comparison between the church and the nation of Israel prior to the New Covenant

- Peter uses a series of brief references to the OT, as touchstone verses to prick the Jewish believer's memory
  - Chosen race (Isa 43:20)
  - Royal Priesthood
    - Ex 19:6 made all Israel priests
    - But their disobedience at Mt. Horeb resulted in the Levites becoming priests
  - Holy nation – set apart from sin
    - Set apart as a beacon among the nations
    - Placed at the cross roads of civilization
  - God's possession
    - A people He could dwell with
    - But they played the harlot with the surrounding idols
- Israel failed God in their day, and they were judged for it
  - God has not forsaken them (Rom 9-11)
  - But for a time they are hardened, and the church has become the one through which God will accomplish this work
  - God will still get the work done
    - One day the window of opportunity for the gentiles closes again and God will return to complete His promises in Israel
  - But in these days of the church, Peter reminds us that these expectations now fall on us
    - We are God's chosen people for a time
    - We are the priesthood of believers (Catholic priests)
    - We are the holy nation set apart from the world to be a light
    - We are the people that God calls His own and He dwells with us through the HS

- We were once not a people, but now we are the people of God
  - If God has selected us to be the ones through whom He shows Himself to the world and works His purposes in the world
    - But then we don't go out, we don't shine, we don't pursue holiness, or service to one another
    - We don't uphold His word and proclaim how God's word will be fulfilled...who will?