

Your Identity and Purpose (1 Peter 2:4-10)

Everyone is searching for meaning and happiness. We all long to find fulfillment and purpose in our lives. Peter writes about the identity and purpose found in a life centered on Jesus. He describes it as a life that is both called out and sent in. Called out of what? And sent in where?

1. A life centered on (or stumbling over) Jesus (1 Peter 2:4-8)

As we “come to him” – to Jesus; as we commune with him and experience relationship here’s what we discover: *“you yourselves are living stones” “being built up as a spiritual house”*.

VV6-8 Peter quotes Isaiah 28:6, Psalm 118:22; Isaiah 8:14 to communicate that Jesus is actually the fulfillment of what the Old Testament was anticipating.

V5 “offering spiritual sacrifices” = our attitudes and actions, can be *spiritual sacrifices*. See Romans 12:1; Philippians 4:18; Hebrews 13:15-16

V6 Jesus is either the foundation stone of your life OR he’s in your way and will cause you to trip.

2. The called out and sent in people of God (1 Peter 2:9-10)

Followers of Jesus have discovered they have a “double identity” – they are *called out* and *sent in*.

Rooted in Exodus 19:3-6, Peter weaves titles together making clear the New Testament church is to be understood as THE called out people of God, his unique or “treasured” possession.

= **Called out of darkness.** Ephesians 5:8-16; Colossians 1:13-14

“You’re given this title, this role for a reason – there’s a whole lot of purpose (mission) attached to it!”

“THAT we may PROCLAIM the excellencies (praises) of Him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”

= **Sent into his marvelous light (his presence) AND into our surrounding culture.**

We have to fight to preserve this “double identity.” This vision can easily be lost / forgotten.

“If we’re not “a set apart – holy and distinct people of God” then we’ll have nothing to say! But if we’re not deeply involved in the world – entering the pain and suffering of those around us then we’ll have no one to say anything to!”

Invite The Holy Spirit to empower us to trust and obey Jesus and to reflect his character to a watching world – especially within relationships closest to us (family, school, work).

QUESTIONS (Pray, read the passage and pick 4-5 questions to discuss. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide.)

1. Have you ever thrown something out only to later find out you really needed it? Read 1 Peter 2:4-8. What is Peter communicating about Jesus? Why is he described as a stone? As we people to Jesus, what do they become as a result?
2. Peter goes on in VV6-8 to quote Isaiah 28:6, Psalm 118:22 and Isaiah 8:14. What point is Peter driving home about Jesus and about people’s response to him?
3. Peter is saying Jesus is God’s NEW Temple (the place of God’s presence) and as we come to Jesus by faith WE too are a part of that temple. This temple has a priesthood that offers “spiritual sacrifices.” Since Jesus already made the once-for-all sacrifice, what might these sacrifices be? Consider Romans 12:1; Philippians 4:18 and Hebrews 13:15-16.
4. Read 1 Peter 2:9-10. What is the significance of the titles Peter uses for the New Testament church? Consider Exodus 19:3-6 and Hosea 2:23. How do these titles encourage you?
5. What does it mean to be called out? What are we called out of? Colossians 1:13-14
6. What does it mean to be sent in? Sent in where? And for what?
7. What is involved in *“declaring the excellencies (praises) of Him who called you out of darkness”*? Describe ways you’re doing this in your own life. The temptation is to either withdraw (isolating / separating ourselves) OR to blend in and compromise. How can we push against these temptations and live *called out and sent in*?

Thank God for the identity and purpose we have in Jesus. Ask that Local Church St. Pete would live “called out and sent in.” Invite the Holy Spirit to empower you (us) to reflect God’s character to our friends, family, co-workers and neighbors.