

1 PETER 2:5-9 GOD'S HOUSE

⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." ⁷ Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone," ⁸ and, "A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall."

They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for. ⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

How often in our speech do we confuse the church with a building? The church is not the building, but the community of believers that meets in the building. The church is a dynamic, living organism and not a static edifice made of dead stones. As a creation of God, the church has a purpose. That purpose is not to entomb God or to be a place to make atonement for our sins, but to be a living witness to the world of the nature of God.

As living cells make up a living organism, a living church is made of living stones. Jesus told the religious leaders that God is the God of the living (Matthew 22:32) so it is fitting that his spiritual house is made up of priests that continually make living sacrifices. Such sacrifices demonstrate and announce the purpose of God to the world. Such a priesthood follows from a Messiah who was raised from the dead after demonstrating and announcing God's salvation on the cross.

By definition, priests are those who are called to make sacrifice to a god for a people. A key aspect of the role of a priest is that he presents the people before the god. Traditionally, it is the priest who intercedes, makes atonement and returns thanksgiving for the people. Jesus is the Great High Priest, but as the church, as his body, we are called to intercede for others, remind them that Jesus has provided the eternal atonement and live as a community of thanksgiving to God.

Jesus is risen! He is alive and so is his body – the church. Jesus was God's only plan for our salvation. Likewise, the church is God's only plan for announcing and demonstrating his purpose to the world. God's plan – a living Word incarnate in a living Messiah demonstrated in the world by a living church.

Thank you, Lord, for the call you have placed on my life. Thank you that you are alive and that you have called me into a living relationship with you, my fellow believers and the world. Invigorate me through the Holy Spirit so that I can share the truth of your word through my life. Amen.