

Fed, Formed & Sent

Bible reference for sermon 1 Peter 2:2-10

² Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation— ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Grace and peace to you from Jesus Christ, the cornerstone upon whom our lives are built. Amen.

Twenty-seven years ago yesterday, I became a mother when Jonny was born. Some of you will know our story – Jonny was born 3 months early at 27 weeks when I became very ill. In those early weeks of his life, he was supported by a respirator in order to breathe. As a parent I felt incredibly helpless, unable to provide the care that Jonny needed in order to survive. But there was one thing I had that was absolutely essential to his survival.



From the day after his birth, I was encouraged to express milk. Initially he was given just a few drops a day. The midwives cheered me on saying, “this is liquid gold for him, something fundamental we can’t give him. This will help him grow and develop”

I did this for many months, with varying levels of success and frustration. Every mother has their own story about breastfeeding – maybe of joy, maybe of pain and grief, and I just want to acknowledge that today.

Jonny wasn’t able to tell me what he needed – no baby can – but there is something both ordinary and profound about a newborn baby being fed. It doesn’t look impressive. Just a small child, hungry, dependent, reaching out—learning, slowly, how to receive what gives life.

And yet, in that simple act, something remarkable is happening. Life is being sustained. Growth is taking place. A relationship is forming—trust, dependence, connection. The child simply longs for the milk, receives it, and grows.

That is the image the apostle Peter gives us today:

“Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation.”

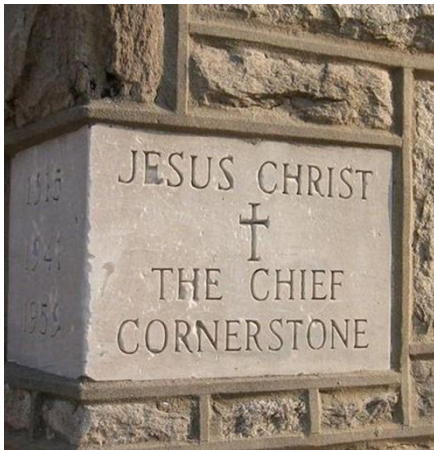
Peter is inviting us into something deeper: a life marked by a continual longing for God. Because the Christian life is not a one-off event. It is not something we complete and move on from. It is an ongoing formation—a lifelong being fed, shaped, and sustained by God.

Peter goes even further. He says, “if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.” Not just heard. Not just remembered. Tasted. There is nothing abstract here - this is us encountering God.

God is not only someone we think about; God is someone we meet. Someone who comes to us. Someone who feeds us, nourishes us, sustains us. And we know where God promises to meet us: in his Word, and in the Sacraments. In the gathered community. In the bread and wine. In the spoken promise of forgiveness.

Here, we do not simply remember what God has done. Here, we receive what God is doing now. We taste and see that the Lord is good.

From that image of nourishment, Peter shifts to another: stone.



“Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God’s sight.”

Christ is the cornerstone—the foundation. Everything begins with him.

But here is the great reversal at the heart of the gospel: The one rejected by the world is the one chosen by God. The one dishonoured by human standards is the one precious in God’s sight.

And that changes everything. Because if Christ is the foundation, then our identity is not built on what the world values—success, reputation, strength,

achievement. It is built on God’s choosing, God’s grace, God’s mercy.

And then Peter says something even more remarkable:

“Like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house.”

Not just a pile of stones. Not scattered individuals.

A house. - A community.

Faith is not a private project. It is not something we construct on our own. It is something we are drawn into. By God and into community.

The words that are used are not “build a spiritual house” but “Let yourselves be built.”

Not: build yourselves.

Not: construct something impressive.

Not: measure success.

This is God’s work.

God is the builder. Christ is the foundation. And we—together—are being shaped, placed, and joined into something living.

That means the church is not defined by its programs, its numbers, or its achievements. It is defined by the presence of Christ, who gathers and builds his people.

And that includes all of us—those who have been here for decades, and those being received today. You are not joining a finished structure. You are being built into a living one.

Peter continues:

“You are being built... to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

This is one of the most radical claims of the New Testament:

All believers share in a priestly calling.

Not just pastors. Not just leaders. All of us.

What does that mean?

It means our whole lives become worship. It means our relationships, our work, our words, our love—all of it is caught up in what God is doing. It means we stand before God on behalf of the world—and before the world as witnesses to God.

Peter then claims: “You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people.”

This is a gift, a gift that comes with a story:

“Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

This is grace. This is inclusion. This is a new identity beyond whatever is in our past.

Whatever has shaped us before—our successes, our failures, our doubts, our history—none of that has the final word.

God does. And God says:

You are mine.

You belong.

You are my people.

And with this identity comes a profound reversal.

The world says: prove yourself.

God says: you are chosen.

The world says: earn your place.

God says: you have received mercy.

The world says: build your own identity.

God says: I give you one.

This is the great freedom of the gospel. We no longer have to construct ourselves. We are given ourselves—by grace.

But this identity is not passive.

Peter continues:

“...in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”

There is a purpose.

We are not simply gathered—we are sent.

Not simply fed—we are formed and sent.

To proclaim God’s mighty acts. That proclamation takes many forms:

In our worship, as we praise God together

In our witness, as we speak of Christ in our lives

In our public faith, as we live differently in the world

This is not about grand gestures. It is about lives shaped by grace, pointing beyond themselves.

So we begin to see the pattern of the Christian life:

We are fed—like newborn infants, nourished by God’s grace.

We are formed—built into a community, shaped into a people.

We are sent—to proclaim, to witness, to live.

This is not a one-off. It is a rhythm. A way of life.

A way of life grounded in the resurrection.

Because Christ is not just a stone. He is a living stone.

And that means we, too, share in that life.

Christian existence is not simply believing something about the past. It is living in the reality of the risen Christ now.

A living hope.

A hope that sustains us when life is difficult.

A hope that gives us identity when the world questions it.

A hope that sends us into the world with courage.

Today, as new members are received into this congregation, we see this scriptural passage made visible.

You are not simply joining an organisation.

You are being welcomed into a people.

A people who are fed by God. A people being formed together. A people sent into the world.

And just as importantly:

You are not expected to have it all together. You are invited to long for God, to receive, to grow, to be built. Along with the rest of us.

For all of us, this is a reminder.

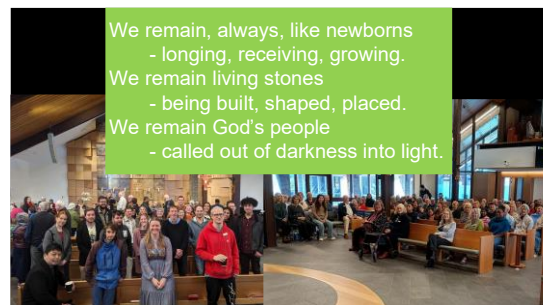
We do not outgrow our need for God.

We do not graduate from grace.

We remain, always, like newborns—longing, receiving, growing.

We remain living stones—being built, shaped, placed.

We remain God’s people—called out of darkness into light.



So hear again who you are:

You are chosen. You are being built. You are a priesthood. You are God’s own people.

And you are sent—to proclaim the mighty acts of the one who has called you into his marvellous light.

Not because you have achieved it. But because you have received mercy and grace.

And that is enough.

Amen.

Video of the service including the above address can be found on the St Paul’s Lutheran Church Youtube page <https://www.youtube.com/@stpaulslutheranchurchboxhi1133>