

THE HOUSE OF GOD ADVENT COURSE

SESSION THREE " THE SPIRITUAL HOUSE"

Welcome to the third session of this Advent Course.

CMP 1045 From the squalor of a borrowed stable

READING:

Jesus Announces the Good News

14 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

Jesus Calls His First Disciples

16 As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 17 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." 18 At once they left their nets and followed him. 19 When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. 20 Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him. (MARK 1: 14 – 20)

Jesus in many of the disciple stories [*Mark 1 v14-20*] said to His disciples and others "COME FOLLOW ME" This was more than just a physical following of Jesus but very much a spiritual one.

The disciples are so struck with His prayer life that they ask Him to teach them how to pray. Jesus asks Phillip at the feeding of the five thousand "Where are we going to get this bread from?"

Jesus taught in parables but he explains them to the Disciples. He encourages them to go out in twos to replicate His ministry.

All of this is more than just physically following Jesus.

QUESTION 1

We are on a journey with the Gospel readings though Advent to Bethlehem. How can we also follow Jesus spiritually on this journey?

QUESTION 2

How will answers to the above question 1 enable you and your Church to be built into a spiritual house?

[Remember a house is not a building but a family or household.]

READING:

The Living Stone and a Chosen People

4 As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— 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 cornerstone,” 8 and, “A stone that causes people 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, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 PETER 2: 4 – 10)

Peter calls the Churches in His letter to be a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices to God. I would imagine we all understand what it means to sacrifice our money, talents and time. What about our spiritual sacrifices?

QUESTION 3

What do we understand our calling to be a royal priesthood to look like?

And from our understanding of this call to each one of us, what will be our Spiritual Sacrifices? [note plural]

Jesus is related to a stone that makes people stumble and fall. v8. They stumble because they disobey the message.

Ever walked along a pavement and tripped over a slab that sticks up above the surrounding slabs.

This was what Peter is getting at. Jesus has been lifted up by His Father but many do not see Him and trip over his presence even though He stands out.

QUESTION 4

Discuss what it is in Jesus's life and ministry that still makes people stumble and fall.?

Does this mean some people are predestined to stumble and fall and so disobey God's message as v8 seems to suggest?

In v9 Peter tells his readers that they are called out of darkness into His wonderful light. This echoes the opening passage of John's Gospel.

READING:

The Word Became Flesh

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. 6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. 9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or

a husband's will, but born of God. 14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (JOHN 1:1 – 14)

READING:

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 PETER 2: 9 – 10)

QUESTION 5

Compare these 2 pieces of Scripture

What parts have the same ideas and which parts are different? Why?

[Think about the words darkness and chosen.]

Prayer

Father God , once we were not a people but now because of what Christ Jesus has done on the Cross we are the people of God.

We praise you O Lord for your incarnation.

We praise you O Lord for your earthly ministry.

We praise you O Lord for the Cross and Resurrection.

We praise you O Lord for your Ascension into Glory.

We praise O Lord that you are now seated at the right hand of God interceding for each one of us.

We therefore in humility ask you to pour out the Holy Spirit upon us so that this Christmas we may become a Spiritual House of God.

AMEN

Peter Castle September/October 2021