

Lesson 11 • Living Stones in Service

Guiding question: How does God form a people who serve and carry the message of reconciliation?

Central understanding: Christ is the living cornerstone. God gathers His people into a spiritual house and sends them to proclaim His goodness, serve one another, and bear witness to reconciliation through Christ.

Prepare and gather

Prepare worksheet and Scripture-reader copies, pens, and a place to record observations. Read the guide in advance. Invite participation without requiring personal disclosures.

Class readings: 1 Peter 2:4–10; 2 Corinthians 5:17–21; Romans 12:3–13.

50-minute flow: Welcome and opening prayer, 5 minutes; Scripture and teaching, 25 minutes; discussion, 10 minutes; weekly response, 5 minutes; closing prayer, 5 minutes.

Learning aims

- Explain the living stones image in relation to Christ.
- Distinguish God’s work of reconciliation from the service entrusted to believers.
- Identify a gift or practical action that serves a real need.

Opening conversation

Recall the movement from creation and broken relationship to Christ and life in the Spirit. Ask: “What does a healthy community make possible that one person cannot accomplish alone?”

Teach and explore

Built together on Christ

Read: 1 Peter 2:4–10.

Peter calls Christ a living stone, rejected by people but chosen and precious to God. Those who come to Him are living stones being built into a spiritual house. Their shared life depends on the cornerstone rather than individual status or reputation.

Peter’s descriptions of a chosen generation, royal priesthood, holy nation, and people of God lead into a purpose: showing forth the praises of the One who called them from darkness into light. Receiving mercy becomes the basis of their witness and service.

Ask: How does the image challenge the idea that faith is only a private possession?

God reconciles through Christ

Read: 2 Corinthians 5:17–21.

Paul describes new creation in Christ and declares that reconciliation is from God, who reconciles through Jesus Christ. The ministry and word of reconciliation are entrusted to His servants. They appeal to others on Christ’s behalf.

Our conduct should support that message through truthfulness, repentance, and the willingness to make repair. Yet we do not accomplish Christ’s saving work by our efforts. Nor should reconciliation be used to pressure someone into a relationship that remains unsafe or deceptive. Honest repair requires attention to what has happened.

Ask: What has God done, and what response has He entrusted to His servants?

Lesson 11 • Teaching and response

Gifts serve the whole body

Read: Romans 12:3–13.

Paul calls for sober judgment and compares the community to a body with many members. Gifts differ, but each belongs within mutual service. Teaching, exhortation, giving, leadership, and mercy are opportunities for faithful contribution.

The passage moves into sincere love, honoring one another, diligence, hope, patience, prayer, hospitality, and meeting the needs of the saints. A gift becomes fruitful when it meets people with humility and care. Class members need not have the same abilities to belong or contribute.

Ask: Which ordinary forms of service are easy to overlook?

The Lord teaches service by serving

Read: John 13:3–17; James 2:14–18.

Jesus washes His disciples' feet and explains that His action is an example for them. His authority is expressed in humble care. The disciples are called to put the lesson into practice, not merely admire it.

James asks what good a profession of faith does when a brother or sister lacks clothing and daily food and receives only words. Living faith becomes visible in action. Service is a response to God's grace and a real benefit to the neighbor; it is not a purchase price for grace.

Ask: What would turn a well-meaning wish into useful help?

Discussion guide

1. Who holds the spiritual house together? — Possible response: Christ, the chosen cornerstone; believers are built together in relation to Him.
2. Who initiates reconciliation in Second Corinthians? — Possible response: God reconciles through Christ and entrusts the message to His servants.
3. How does Romans 12 connect gifts with character? — Possible response: Different gifts are exercised with humility, sincere love, diligence, and care for others.
4. What does Jesus' footwashing teach about leadership? — Possible response: Those who follow Him should use responsibility to serve, including humble practical tasks.

This week's response: Plan one modest act of service that can be completed before the next gathering. Identify the need, obtain the recipient's agreement, choose volunteers and a date, and decide how to check that the help was useful. Leave room for people to contribute time, skills, prayer, or resources according to their circumstances.

Closing prayer: God of mercy, thank You for bringing us near through Jesus Christ. Build us together on Him. Help us use our gifts with humility, carry the word of reconciliation faithfully, and serve our neighbors with patient love. Amen.

Continue the journey: The final lesson considers resurrection, the restoration of creation, and the hope that sustains present service.

Lesson 11 • Scripture reader

King James Version (KJV) • Complete assigned passages

Word help: Lively stones means living stones; peculiar people means a people belonging especially to God, not strange behavior; soberly means with sound judgment; exhort means encourage or urge; dissimulation means insincerity.

Class readings

1 Peter 2:4–10 • KJV

4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

2 Corinthians 5:17–21 • KJV

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Romans 12:3–13 • KJV

3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching;

8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

9 Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

Supporting readings

John 13:3-17 • KJV

3 Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

4 He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

5 After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

14 If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

James 2:14-18 • KJV

14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

Before Lesson Twelve

1 Corinthians 15:20-28 • KJV

20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.

28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

1 Corinthians 15:42-58 • KJV

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:

44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.

47 The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.

48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Revelation 21:1-5 • KJV

1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

Revelation 22:1-5 • KJV

1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.