



## 'Worship at home' Sunday May 10 2020

*As you come to him, the living Stone—  
rejected by humans but chosen by God and  
precious to him— 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.*

*1 Peter 2:4-5 New International Version*

Before you make yourself comfortable, find a **small stone** to bring to worship. Hold it in your hand as you read and pray through this worship at home.



Once again, we gather separately to worship.

We look forward to a time when we can come together in praise and song and prayer, but for now we are thankful for this opportunity to spend time with God, knowing that many others are worshipping with us, in their own homes, too.

On this Mother's Day, we remember prayerfully those who are unable to meet for family gatherings, just as we are as yet unable to meet for worship, and we think of our mothers and the other people in our lives who have been special or significant.

As you come before God in prayer, **light a candle** to remind you of the continuing presence of Christ, and place it in a safe place.

Lord, as your people, we come to worship.

We come to take refuge in your strength,  
for you are our rock and our fortress.

We come to commit ourselves once again,  
grounding our lives in you as you lead us and guide us.  
We are like living stones, being shaped and formed by  
you, and together we are your chosen people, a holy  
priesthood, called by you out of darkness and into light.

You are a faithful God: in you we place our trust,  
and find mercy and unfailing love.

Lord, as your people, we come to worship.



## **Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16**

*In you, LORD, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; deliver me in your righteousness. Turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue; be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me. Since you are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of your name lead and guide me. Keep me free from*

*the trap that is set for me, for you are my refuge. Into your hands I commit my spirit; deliver me, LORD, my faithful God. My times are in your hands; deliver me from the hands of my enemies, from those who pursue me. Let your face shine on your servant; save me in your unfailing love.*

*New International Version*

***Hold your stone in your palm as you reflect on this psalm.  
How might you experience God as a rock of refuge?***

Psalm 31 is a psalm of lament, and a prayer for help. There is a sense of trust and hope in the Lord who is firm and secure in the midst of trouble and turmoil. It seems, in Australia, that the worst of our health crisis has passed, for the moment at least. However, the future remains uncertain.

- When and how will the social restrictions be lifted?
- Will this coronavirus spread again?
- What might it mean for workplaces, schools, leisure activities?
- How do we rebuild our economy?
- What lasting effects will this have on our society?
- And what about the rest of the world, where the effects of this coronavirus continue to devastate?

In all these concerns, we find trust and hope in God who is firm and secure. God is faithful in all things, and to God we entrust our lives and our future. Our times are indeed in God's hands, and we find strength and security in God's love.



## 1 Peter 2:4-10

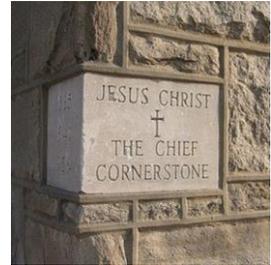
*As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”*

*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,” 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. 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. 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.*

*New International Version*

**Reflect** once more on the stone in your palm. Stones and rocks can be found as interesting natural formations. They can have many uses – building houses, making roads, decorating gardens, constructing fences and walls. Many old buildings and churches have a cornerstone which determines the position of the whole structure. All other stones are set in reference to this foundation stone.



This text calls us to be living stones, basing our lives on Christ as our cornerstone, and making him our reference point on which our lives are structured. At this time, with our church buildings empty, we are reminded once again that the church consists not of the building but the people. The stones and bricks and structures which make up our properties lay silent and empty. However, we are the living stones, being the church, in the community. We are the people of God, wherever we are, witnessing God’s love and grace to others.



***Take a look at the stone in your palm.  
It is probably hundreds of thousands of years  
old. Imagine its story: Where has it come from?  
How has it been shaped over the years?***

As living stones, God shapes us. As we are tossed around in the events of life, we are weathered by wind and rain and sun. We are formed to become who God is calling us to be. By the spirit of the risen Christ continually at work in our midst, we are fashioned alongside each other into a holy priesthood. We are not random rocks scattered across the landscape, but unique and precious individuals belonging to a dynamic and life-giving structure, built on Christ. Once we were not a people, but now we become the people of God, living in the fullness of God's mercy and God's love.

***How might these current experiences continue to shape  
you over the coming weeks and months?  
How might your current practices  
become cornerstones for new practices?***

On this **Mother's Day**, we give thanks for mothers and other special people in our lives who have nurtured and loved us, helping us become who we are called to be.

***Who have been the special people in your life  
who have nurtured and shaped you?  
Give thanks to God for these people.***



**Pray for** \* families who are unable to be together  
on this day \* workers in healthcare, aged care,  
retail, transport \* wise decisions around  
employment and activities \* countries whose health  
and social systems are overwhelmed

**Closing:** We are God's church, scattered, yet united. Go to shine the light of Jesus and show love and grace wherever we are.