



## WEEK FOUR: 1 Peter 2:4-10

### Eastertide The Resurrection Life: A Brief Introduction

In the church calendar, Easter (or Eastertide) continues until Pentecost (seven weeks after Easter, May 24). It is a period in which Christians are encouraged to reflect on the joy, transformation, and celebration of the resurrection.

During this series we will be following the lectionary readings (The lectionary is a three-year cycle of readings with four readings assigned to each Sunday; one from the gospels, one from the epistles, one from the psalms, and, usually, one from another part of the Old Testament.). The preachers each week will choose one or more of the texts as the basis of the reflections on the resurrection life.

The lectionary readings for this series are in the table below. If you would like more information you can use the following link to learn more: <https://uniting.church/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/2025-6-YearA-UCA-Lectionary.pdf>

Date	First Reading	Psalm	Second Reading	Gospel
April 12	Acts 2:14a, 22-32	Psalm 16	1 Peter 1:3-9	John 20:19-31
April 19	Acts 2:14a, 36-41	Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19	1 Peter 1:17-23	Luke 24:13-35
April 26	Acts 2:42-47	Psalm 23	1 Peter 2:19-25	John 10:1-10
May 3	Acts 7:55-60	Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16	1 Peter 2:1-10	John 14:1-14
May 10	Acts 17:22-31	Psalm 66:8-20	1 Peter 3:13-22	John 14:15-21
May 17	Acts 1:6-14	Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35	1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11	John 17:1-11
May 24	Acts 2:1-21 OR Numbers 11:24-30	Psalm 104:24-34, 35b	1 Corinthians 12:3b-13 OR Acts 2:1-21	John 20:19-23 OR 7:37-39

## Sermon Outline:

### A Brief Overview of This Week's Sermon

#### Key Text(s): 1 Peter 2:4-10

The selected reading for this week is from the apostle Peter's letter to believers in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey). The important thing about these churches is that they were primarily Gentile converts who were experiencing hardship for their faith. In antiquity, public displays of piety – religious practice and observance – was a critical part of one's public life. To ignore or reject these social expectations was frowned upon; no one wanted to have anything to do with a person who was perceived as impious. One central aspect of social piety in Asia Minor was participation in what was known as the imperial cult. This was the recognition of Caesar as Lord and as the source of the good life. For the first generation of Christians who believed that Jesus was Lord and the source of the good life, their faith had obvious social implications. It is likely that they were ostracised for their perceived impiety and this would have had financial consequences: loss of business, sidelined in quoting for work, poor reviews based on their impious beliefs. It has never been easy to follow Jesus!

Peter is writing to encourage them to persevere in the faith rather than compromise and one of his primary strategies is to assure them of their status as believers. This passage is chock-full of identity language. Peter applies a series of Old Testament images to the believers in Asia Minor that reflect not only who they are, but what they have been called to do in the plans and purposes of God.

The first image Peter uses is that of living stones. Stone was a common building material in Asia Minor, being easily procured. The believers might be ordinary, but by faith they share a status with Jesus, the living stone (a reminder of his resurrection)! And this identity is tied to the plans of God to make a new temple.

Again, temples would have been a common sight to the believers – their cities often had several temples dedicated to several deities (or the emperor) – but unlike pagan temples, there was only one temple to the God of Israel. One of Jesus' most controversial declarations about himself was that he would replace the temple (see Mark 13:1-31; 14:55-59). Having come to Jesus, Peter's readers are being built into a temple – a place (or, rather, a people) where people could come to God and receive his blessing. This is a high calling. Too high to walk away from regardless of the hardship that accompanied it.

Besides, Jesus himself – the cornerstone upon which the whole temple of God's people was built – had been rejected. However, the fact that others stumble over Jesus is not a sign that the believers have gotten it wrong. Instead, it indicates their favoured status as those who have placed their faith in Jesus.

But wait, there's more! Peter alludes to Exodus 19:4-6 – applying a paradigmatic text for the people of Israel to Gentiles. The original text is God's statement to Israel about their purpose in the world – the purpose for which he rescued them out of Egypt in fulfillment of his promises to Abraham. The people of God, chosen by him, were to be a royal priesthood – representing God in the world, teaching the world to obey the Lord, and being a conduit of blessing – they were to be a holy nation – not just morally pure, but set apart from God's use in the world – and they were to be his special possession – God's crown jewels so to speak; the representation of his reign and rule in the world. This special role is now applied to the Gentile believers!

All of this was to encourage the (primarily) Gentile believers to persevere in their faith without compromising or giving up because of suffering and hardship. It was also to encourage them to continue to live faithfully together. They were, together, being built into a spiritual house. This is a corporate message, not an individual one.

It is here that the application rests for us. We too are not isolated stones, but are, together, being incorporated into the temple of God. This is identity and role and Peter's encouragement echoes to us – live out your identity as God's chosen people together even as we come to Jesus in faith. This is the resurrection life!

## Questions to Ask

1. The believers in Asia Minor faced social and economic consequences for their faith. Where do you see similar (even if subtler) pressures today to compromise your allegiance to Jesus? How do you typically respond?

2. Peter describes believers as living stones being built into a spiritual house. What does this image suggest about the importance of community in the Christian life? In what ways can we unintentionally live more like “individual stones” than a connected building?
3. How does it encourage you to know that Jesus himself was rejected? How might this reshape the way we interpret rejection or misunderstanding because of our faith?
4. If God’s presence is now found in a people rather than a place, what implications does that have for how we view church, worship, and mission in everyday life?
5. Peter applies Israel’s calling to these Gentile believers. What do you think it looks like, practically, for us to live as a “royal priesthood” and a “holy nation” in our context today?
6. How does understanding our identity (chosen, set apart, God’s possession) help us endure hardship or stay faithful when following Jesus is costly? Which aspect of this identity do you most need to remember right now?

### A Prayer to Pray

Pray for body of Christ – the living stones – that we might live up to God’s purposes in the world.

### A Practice to Try

Select one of the things you identified in Question 5 above to intentionally practice this week.

### Readings to Read This Week

Read the remaining texts from the lectionary and reflect on how they interact with each other on the themes of the resurrection life (see the Table above).

### A Mission Commitment to Reflect on

As we enter into May Mission Month we have an opportunity to be Big-Hearted in our financial support of our projects. In uncertain times we can easily allow fear and anxiety to constrict our generosity. This year my prayer is that we will demonstrate our trust in the God who provides as we courageously respond to God’s invitation to participate with him in the work he is doing through our partners.

### A GBC Initiative to Promote/Celebrate

Each week we will provide you with a key aspect of our community news that we would encourage you to remind your Life Group about.

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This coming Sunday, May 10, we continue May Mission Month. This is an opportunity to financially support the work of God around the world. We encourage people to participate in this appeal – our target this year is a little over \$200,000 – and to give over and above other financial giving. Please encourage your group to begin to prayerfully consider how God may be inviting them to participate in His work around the world.