

## **“Now We are the People of God”**

Meditation Preached by The Rev. Jennifer Cameron

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### **Scripture Text: 1 Peter 2:2-10**

<sup>2</sup> Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, <sup>3</sup> now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

<sup>4</sup> As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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.”

<sup>7</sup> 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,”

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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.

### **John 14:1-14**

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup> My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. <sup>4</sup> You know the way to the place where I am going.”

<sup>5</sup> Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

<sup>6</sup> Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup> If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

<sup>8</sup> Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

<sup>9</sup> Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? <sup>10</sup> Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. <sup>11</sup> Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. <sup>12</sup> Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. <sup>13</sup> And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

## **Meditation**

Over the past week I have been thinking about the number of roles I play. I am:

A mom;

A wife;

A daughter;

A daughter-in-law;

A niece;

A sister-in-law;

A Minister;

A friend;

A colleague;

A music student;

A puppy-parent!

That’s a lot of hats to wear!

Each of us has a variety of roles in our lives. This means we also have a variety of relationships, and the role we play in each one makes an impact on those with whom we share these relationships.

As a mom, I leave a mark on my kids;

As a spouse, I have a deep connection to my husband;

As a daughter, I have an impact on my dad, and so on.

I really appreciate these relationships, and I hope those with whom I share them can say the same. Relationships are not always perfect, which goes without saying, but they

makes our lives what they are. They give us the resources we need to feel loved, find help, laugh, cry and express frustration at being isolated from each other! Thank goodness for phone calls and video technology!

Today our society is recognizing Mother's Day, when we give thanks for our moms – whether still living or they have gone on before us to eternal life. We give thanks for those who have been and are like mothers for us. We are grateful for those women in our lives that have made a difference for us along the journey.

It's hard to believe my own mother has been gone for over 2 years. I miss her, and I am forever grateful for the impact her life made on mine. It certainly was an imperfect relationship, there's no arguing that point, but it was one that helped to shape and define who I am now, and how I fulfill the roles God has given me. At the heart of that relationship is the fact that mom made sure I was raised within the family of the church. Little did she know how that would turn out, and I'm very thankful that she could be a part of my life as a Minister of Word and Sacrament.

I have no idea what role my boys will play throughout life's journey. I just hope their having been raised within the family of the church will help to anchor and sustain them throughout their adult lives. For the family of the church is anchored in Christ, and sustained by his Spirit, and we are given a good foundation when we are a part of the body of Christ.

We have shared 2 scripture readings today that speak to our being a part of the family of the church. Each reading addresses what this means for us from a different perspective, and they are connected by the common ground of faith in Jesus. 1 Peter talks about what are now. John talks about what we know now, and what is still to come. They are readings that remind us about the fullness of life as disciples of Jesus who believe in and connect with God the Father through the risen Son.

1 Peter speaks of what and who we are.

We are those who are precious to God as his special children.

We are the people who hold Jesus in our hearts as a precious gemstone, irreplaceable, unparalleled in value. He is also the cornerstone of our lives and we are grateful for the solid foundation that is built on him.

We are the church, a people who yearns to draw closer to God through Christ, to know Jesus better and love him more deeply.

We, the body of Christ, are being built into a spiritual house, a holy dwelling place for the Spirit of God.

We are the church as a whole, and we are individually members of it.

We are each a part of something far greater than ourselves, and yet each of us is a valuable and necessary part of that greater thing.

We are those who continue the ministry of those who encountered the risen Christ and were blessed by him with his Spirit.

We, as this New Testament reading quotes the prophets, are those who trust God and therefore we will not be put to shame. We may be dismissed or ignored or ridiculed by those who do not believe, but we will not be shamed. This is the promise of God, that we are his chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation. We have a responsibility to model and teach his way in word and in work, and in doing so we are blessed by the Holy Spirit that continues to fill and sustain us with what we need to worship and serve. We are blessed with a craving for deeper knowledge of God through Christ, for more Godly wisdom, for more nurturing of the Spirit as we grow and mature in our discipleship. It is one thing to say we believe in Jesus. It is even more to “grow up” within his truth and his way.

In the beloved passage from John’s Gospel today, we are reminded of the promise of a home with God in his eternal kingdom. We are assured of the security of our relationship with God through Christ. That security is not only for the future, but for the home we have in Christ now. An eternal home is being prepared for us. For the moment, we live within Christ, in his body, and his Spirit lives in us. If we know Christ, we know God, for they are one. If we know Christ, we know God, and we know the Spirit, for they are one. If we know, love and trust the holy three-in-one, we live within the fold of faith, within a spiritual home that cannot be built with human hands, but is only built by the Holy Spirit in whom we place our confidence. Because we are God’s chosen, precious children, we are more than what we see and know now.

We are the family of God.

As I was looking through some resources for this week’s message, I read a humorous story about being a mother that, I think, speaks to this state in which we live, a state of being more than what we see, more than we can understand, and more precious than we know. The author is unknown, and I found the story on a website that provides resources for preaching and worship. It is written from a first-person perspective.

*A few months ago, when I was picking up the children at school, another mother I knew well, rushed up to me. Emily was fuming with indignation.*

*"Do you know what you and I are?" she demanded.*

*Before I could answer - and I didn't really have one handy - she blurted out the reason for her question. It seemed she had just returned from renewing her driver's license at the County Clerk's office.*

*Asked by the woman recorder to state her "occupation," Emily had hesitated, uncertain how to classify herself.*

*What I mean is," explained the recorder, "Do you have a job, or are you just a .....?"*

*"Of course I have a job," snapped Emily. "I'm a mother."*

*"We don't list "mother" as an occupation..."housewife" covers it," said the recorder emphatically.*

*I forgot all about her story until one day I found myself in the same situation, this time at our own Town Hall. The Clerk was obviously a career woman, poised, efficient, and possessed of a high-sounding title, like "Official Interrogator" or "Town Registrar."*

*"And what is your occupation?" she probed. What made me say it, I do not know. The words simply popped out. "I'm....a Research Associate in the field of Child Development and Human Relations."*

*The clerk paused, ball-point pen frozen in mid-air, and looked up as though she had not heard right. I repeated the title slowly, emphasizing the most significant words. Then I stared with wonder as my pompous pronouncement was written in bold, black ink on the official questionnaire.*

*"Might I ask," said the clerk with new interest, "just what you do in your field?"*

*Coolly, without any trace of fluster in my voice, I heard myself reply, "I have a continuing program of research (what mother doesn't) in the laboratory and in the field (normally I would have said indoors and out).*

*I'm working for my Masters (the whole darned family) and already have four credits (all daughters).*

*Of course, the job is one of the most demanding in the humanities (any mother care to disagree?) and I often work 14 hours a day (24 is more like it). But the job is more challenging than most run-of-the-mill careers and the rewards are in satisfaction rather than just money."*

*There was an increasing note of respect in the clerk's voice as she completed the form, stood up, and personally ushered me to the door.*

*As I drove into our driveway buoyed up by my glamorous new career, I was greeted by my lab assistants---age 13, 7, and 3. And upstairs, I could hear our new experimental model (six months) in the child-development program, testing out a new vocal pattern. I felt triumphant. I had scored a beat on bureaucracy. And I had gone down on the official records as someone more distinguished and indispensable to humankind than "just another....."*

We are more valuable than we know. Each of us is blessed with a title that defies description, although we can tell others what it feels like to be a child of God. We are not "just another..." parent, child, employee, or church member. Each of us is someone that cannot be replaced, someone that makes a difference to someone else.

Corporately, we are not “just another” congregation.  
We are a branch of the family of God;  
Ministers in the name of Christ;  
Disciples of Jesus in everything we say and do.  
*We are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession.*  
We are the people of God, and that is a remarkably special identity.  
We are promised life in the future.  
We are blessed with life now as precious creatures that belong to the Creator who loves  
and cherishes us.  
We are not “just another” anything.  
We are God’s children, and that identity is just what we need to fulfill all of the roles we  
play in the relationships we cherish within the family of God. Amen.