

MESSAGE OUTLINE

November 17, 2024

Called: Living as Children of the Light

10. A Peculiar People

Mark Labberton

1 Peter 2:4–10 (NRSV)

⁴ Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and ⁵ like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For it stands in scripture:

'See, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious;
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.'

⁷ To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe,

'The stone that the builders rejected
has become the very head of the corner',

⁸ and

'A stone that makes them stumble,
and a rock that makes them fall.'

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

¹⁰ Once you were not a people,
but now you are God's people;
once you had not received mercy,
but now you have received mercy.

You and I are called to be the tangible evidence of God's intent for and pursuit of the world today. You and I. Together. The church. This is our calling as followers of Jesus. –*Called*

The people of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, are meant to be the hope of the world, the model for all humanity, and the apologetic--the living defense of the faith--that God is present and that God's loving purposes will come to pass. –*Called*

Our failure to love God and our neighbor means we can cultivate passivity toward injustice. We begin with the loves we have at hand, loves far smaller, far more manageable and far more prejudiced when we are defining reality our way rather than God's. We foster the well-being of ourselves and those we love, and we let go of the rest.

–*The Dangerous Act of Loving Your Neighbor*

Mark Labberton is the Clifford L. Penner Presidential Chair Emeritus and Professor Emeritus of Preaching at Fuller Seminary. He served as Fuller's fifth president from 2013 through 2022. A Washington State native, Labberton embraced a personal relationship with Jesus Christ on the threshold of his undergraduate years at Whitman College. After earning his bachelor's degree, he came to Fuller for his MDiv, a time he calls "a tremendously influential season" in his life. He was ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA) and began what was to become three decades of pastoral ministry—along the way, meeting and marrying his life partner, Janet Morrison Labberton. He served for 16 years as senior pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley, California, when he joined Fuller's faculty in 2009

as professor of preaching. Mark earned his PhD from Cambridge University, co-founded the Christian International Scholarship (now ScholarLeaders) to help fund the advanced theological education of global leaders, and served on the board for 17 years, and was chair and board member of Langham Partnership (previously John Stott Ministries) which provides scholarships, books, publishing, preaching seminars, and more for majority-world scholars and pastors. He also serves on the board of International Justice Mission and is Senior Fellow of The Trinity Forum. Mark is author of *Called: The Crisis and Promise of Following Jesus Today*, *The Dangerous Act of Loving Your Neighbor: Seeing Others Through the Eyes of Jesus*, and *The Dangerous Act of Worship: Living God's Call to Justice* and host of the podcast *Conversing with Mark Labberton* at fullerstudio.fuller.edu.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

As needed, refer to the Order of Worship and Resources at solanabeach.church for sermon video, message outline, and small group questions print version.

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

Begin with an open-ended question for sharing. Use one of the icebreaker questions from the Small Group Resources folder or choose your own.

CONNECT WITH GOD (Use one of the below practices or choose a practice from a previous week.)

- **Breath Prayer**

Breath Prayer is an ancient practice that invites us to slow down and awaken ourselves—even our breath—to the presence of God. Using our breath to help us pray includes our whole selves - heart, mind and body. We will use a portion of Acts 17:28, “**in him we live and move and have our being,**” as the text of our breath prayer. Have one person in your group facilitate the practice by slowly reading the directions below.

Facilitator Reads:

- Close your eyes, taking a few deep, slow breaths to allow your mind and heart to still. (pause)
- On your inhale pray: “In Him” (pause for an inbreath)
- On your exhale pray: “we live and move and have our being” (pause for an outbreath)
- On your inhale pray: “In Him” (pause for an inbreath)
- On your exhale pray: “we live and move and have our being” (pause for an outbreath)
- Now in a comfortable breathing rhythm, repeat this breath prayer cycle 5 times (The leader can pray using their own breath for five breath cycles)
- Giving a few more moments of quiet, end by saying aloud: “**Lord, in you we live and move and have our being. Amen.**”

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

- **Alone:** Read **1 Peter 2:4-10**. Allow for a few minutes of quiet reflection and response. **Then, consider the prompt below.**
 - Journal: Reflect on your identity. What makes up your identity?
 - Which values, family history, groups or jobs play a role in how you see yourself?
 - Who are you as God’s child?
- **Together:** In pairs or as a whole group, read the passage again. Then, share with one another your reflections from the prompt above. As a practice of attentiveness, give everyone space to speak before any dialogue begins.

CONNECT WITH SCRIPTURE

Select the best questions or customize the questions for your group.

- Review the main points from the sermon outline.
- How were you surprised during the message?
- What new ideas or images came up for you during the message?
- What does it mean to be a “peculiar people?”
- How does 1 Peter 2:4-10 connect to our message series and Ephesians?
- Which phrase or theme is most impactful for you? Why?
- What does this passage say about our communal calling as the people of God?
- What questions or challenges remain about this passage?

ENGAGE AND EXPLORE

Together: Reflect on the below quote. Are there any ways it connects or expands your understanding of our message series?

“The people of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, are meant to be the hope of the world, the model for all humanity, and the apologetic--the living defense of the faith--that God is present and that God’s loving purposes will come to pass.” – Called Mark Labberton

PRAYER

As you finish the fall small group session, check in with one another as a whole group. How might you be praying for each other through the holidays? Spend time in prayer together. Close with this concluding prayer (the bold is read in unison).

Son of God, we ask you to hear us.

Son of God, we ask you to hear us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.