

**Sunday, May 14, 2017 – Fifth Sunday of Easter/Mother’s Day
“It’s Alive!”**

1 Peter 2: 4-10

Rev. Derek S. Klemm, Mountain View Lutheran Church, Las Vegas, NV
Central Image – Single Focus

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen. And For all the ladies, whether you’re a mom, grandma, aunt, godmother, mentor or positive female example in the life of another person, a blessed Mother’s Day to you all.

Mary Shelley’s landmark novel “Frankenstein” has been adapted into countless movies, stage productions and parodies since it was written 200 years ago – Dr. Frankenstein and his assistant Fritz piece together body parts of the dead to build a person from scratch and pump electricity into their assemblage. The line spoken at the moment of success that has penetrated pop culture and is known by practically everyone, when this dead, inanimate stuff became a living being – “It’s alive!” No doubt you know the surprise and excitement from discovering something you thought was inanimate and dead to be alive – a well-camouflaged animal suddenly moves and surprises you. A street performer you thought was just a statue startles you. And then there’s us – every one of us had to be conceived to be here. Genetic material from two different people come together and something that didn’t exist before suddenly exists. A lady feels suspicious something’s up and takes a pregnancy test and there’s that kick of adrenaline – “It’s alive!”

Add Jesus to that list! Dead, as in doornail. He is no assemblage of hodgepodge parts run through with an electric current. He does it all on His own. He has the authority to lay it down and he has the authority to take it up again.

And then, there’s living stones. That’d be some building. I’d be afraid to hang picture frames on the wall. I’ve heard of sediment that builds up and turns to stone, with some dead plant and animal matter mixed in. I’ve heard of fossils. Those are dead things that turn into stone. I’ve heard of volcanic rock. I’ve heard of meteorites. Those are inanimate things, they’re just not alive. But I’ve never seen a living stone. If you’re waiting for a building to go bounding down the block don’t worry, Peter is just talking in metaphor here, but make no mistake – just because it’s a metaphor doesn’t mean it isn’t real!

Let’s start with verse 4 in our text – the living Stone, rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him. The guy who was dead but now, He’s alive! Peter says we’re being built into a spiritual house, held up by the living Stone, Jesus. And something funny happens when

you're with Jesus – He makes you into something new. “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.” I think we could add, “Once you were just an inanimate hunk of rock, dead as a doornail. Now you're a living stone, part of a spiritual house, alive in Jesus.”

When? When were you an inanimate hunk of rock, dead as a doornail? Right before our text today at the end of 1 Peter 1, Peter quotes from the prophet Isaiah, “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, 25 but the word of the Lord remains forever.’ And this word is the good news that was preached to you.” Without Jesus, who lays down His life and takes it back up again, we're that withering grass, that dead rock, that “once you were not a people” people.

There are a lot of people today thinking about both life and death. It's Mother's Day! Many are celebrating. For me, a couple years in a row now I've been able to see my Mom on Mother's Day because she's here, and we'll enjoy a nice afternoon, and we'll celebrate her and I'll thank God for the life He brought to me through not only being born but knowing Jesus through her. I thank God I can have that today. A lot of you can relate. But there's an elephant in the room – it won't always be quite that way, pure celebration. In fact for many people this is one of the hardest days of the year, and people who feel that way feel like they don't belong and have no voice. It's a diverse group that includes kids who are grieving the loss of a mother, moms grieving the loss of their kids, by untimely death, by stillbirth, by regretted abortions, by “what-ifs” about the children they bravely gave life through adoption. Some moms and kids don't get along, or are even estranged. Other couples have struggled with infertility, and some ladies want kids but haven't met the right guy and they feel the clock is ticking and some choosing not to start families are wrongly shamed. I could go on and on.

Being built into a spiritual house, being a living stone doesn't require you to be alive at the start. Remember, you're the withering grass, the ones not a people who are a people. If Mother's Day for you is a day of death instead of life, if your spirit is downtrodden, if you feel alone or misunderstood or just plain indifferent and uninspired and wonder if you can soak up life from this living Stone, then hear some more words Peter quotes from God out of the book of

Isaiah the prophet, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

Dead? Depressed? Deflated? Done? "It's alive!" What "it?" **You** "it," that's what! Whether it looks like it, feels like it, it's there. It's alive! No doubt it probably comes a shock, because it usually is a shock to realize something you thought was dead and lifeless is alive. But when you're baptized in Christ, you who were not a people are a people. And that means you become a living stone, or a living brick, or a living DOORNAIL for that matter, a living piece from a hodgepodge assemblage of dead stuff animated by a Jesus current running through these lifeless stones.

No matter how dead you feel, with Jesus we can say, "It's alive!" Now you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

Once you were not a people, but now you are a people. Once you had no voice, now you do. That's what a priest is – a person who has a voice, who gets to speak directly to God and handle "holy stuff." What holy stuff? Look around you. These walls, supporting this building, will one day fail. Yet there's eternal stuff in this room. The souls surrounding you, the living stones to your right and left, in front and behind, bathed in and animated by that God-current in baptism – we priests deal in holy stuff speaking to God when we pray for each other, love and serve each other, sharing His excellencies with all the other "not yet a peoples" out there. Look around – Jesus is here. "It's alive!" In Jesus' name, Amen.