

## “The centre of your life” 1 Peter 2:4-10; Hebrews 4:14-16

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Sermon text and audio can be downloaded from [www.waitara.anglican.asn.au](http://www.waitara.anglican.asn.au)

- **III** – Have you ever lost something important? What was it?...

We usually notice when we lose a child in the shopping centre, or when we lose money, or jewellery, or our keys. This week, I lost a tooth ... and I definitely noticed that! But there are some things we might not notice that we lose.

Have you ever lost your direction in life? Are there times when you forget what life is really all about? I think that often happens when we forget what's at the centre of our life. And that's what I want us to consider today.

- **1. “What is the centre of your life?”**

**III** – let's imagine your life is like an onion. There are layers and layers of things in your life. Peel away those layers. All the different parts of your life. From the way you look, your career, your home, your possessions, your money – peel them all away. Your friends, family, children, grandchildren, parents... just peel all those layers away – and what's at the centre? What's left?

What's at the centre of everything? What gives you direction in life? What gives you hope? What gives you meaning? What gives you purpose? What guides your decisions? What makes you get up in the morning?

- [Verses 4a, 6b, 7c – “As you come to him, the living stone”, “a chosen and precious cornerstone”, has become the capstone”]

The Bible passage we read today says that Jesus is “the living stone”, the “cornerstone” and the “capstone”. God **offers** Jesus as a “centre” for our life. Someone who can be at the middle of everything. Someone who gives direction and guidance and wisdom. Someone who is completely dependable and trustworthy – who gives hope, meaning, purpose and a reason for our existence.

As a Christian, I often struggle to centre my life. Jesus **is** at the centre of my life. He **does** give my life purpose and meaning. He **is** at the centre of my family, my work, and every part of my life. But there are some times when He is **not** guiding my decisions. Sometimes other things take over – career, family, finances... and sometimes even just the daily routine of life.

How many times do you get to the end of a week and think: “What happened this week?” What did I achieve? What was the purpose of this week? How many times do you feel like you're just getting through another week? How many times do we stop thinking about life just to get through the next day or week or month?

That's why I find it really helpful just to stop and peel back the layers and ask myself: What is at the centre of my life? What is really directing my life? **Who** am I trusting to help me with my decisions? Who am I listening to for guidance? Where am I headed and why? The decisions I'm making now – where are they leading me?

For me, it comes back to God. But why? Why God? Why would we want to have Jesus at the centre of all the things in our life? Here's my answer – and it's from that passage we read today. “Belonging”.

- **2. Where do you belong in life?**

Do you have a place where you belong?

- Verse 9 from our reading today says: “you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God...”

It’s interesting isn’t it? God doesn’t just say: I love you. Or, like the kids learned this week at HAWK, “God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son so that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” God doesn’t just say: I love you and I sent my son to die for you to give you eternal life.”

God says: “Your HOME is with me. You belong with me.”

The other more technical word the Bible uses is “holy”. And the word “**holy**” simply means “**set apart**”. God says we can be at home with Him, because he made us to be “set apart” for him. So what does that look like? What does it mean to be set apart for God?

**III** – I have five pairs of shoes. First, there are the old shoes for mowing the lawn or gardening. Then there are my shoes for running, and my shoes for everyday walking. I have my dress shoes, which I’m wearing now. And my thongs for the beach. Different shoes **set apart** for different things. Each pair is set apart for a purpose. If I wore my gardening shoes to church, you would appreciate why I leave them in the garden! That’s where they belong! That’s what they’re set for.

We all have places we belong. And places we feel we don’t belong. I wonder if you can think of some of those places now. Home. Work. Out with friends. With your spouse. But with God, belonging is much more than just feeling comfortable. With God, belonging is not like “a monkey belongs in a tree” or “a wheel belongs on a car”. Our belonging with God is about creation being with the creator.

- “Belonging” is, literally, a “longing to be” who we are meant to be. To be with the one we were always meant to be with. Set apart for him.

But why? For what purpose? Let’s say we put Jesus at the centre. And we find our deepest sense of belonging with him. Then what? How does that change our life? What is our purpose if Jesus is at the centre of our life?

- **3. What is your purpose?**
- **III**: I want you to imagine that you’re playing a game of Trivial Pursuit. (or Monopoly or some other board game). And you roll the dice and move your piece around the board, but you don’t do anything else – except roll the dice and move around the board.

Sometimes I think we may live our life like this – just going around the board. Just rolling the dice and moving from one square to the next. Just moving along. Around and around. And sometimes life doesn’t go the way we expect it to go and we end up somewhere completely different than where we planned to be. Has that ever happened to you? With your family plans, career plans, financial plans, holiday plans... sometimes we just move around the board and end up somewhere unexpected.

But being God’s people means being set apart for God. That means we’re not living for ourselves or our own purposes or our own plans. We’re living for something bigger. Something longer lasting. Our life isn’t just about “going around the board”. It’s not about “playing a game”. It’s about this – verse 9 of 1 Peter 2:

- ***<sup>9</sup>But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, **that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*****

It’s about living a life that praises God because he’s given us eternal life. It’s about living a life that wants to share with the world what we’ve been given because of our relationship with God. It’s about living a life that about more than just “us”.

**III:** Let me tell you a story about a Christian man who decided one day that he wanted to LIVE his Christian life. He didn't just want to "go around the board" – he wanted to LIVE his faith. He wanted to show others that Jesus was the centre of his life, that he had a bigger purpose. So he prayed that God would help him to do that. So he heads off to work, and he's running late for his train. As he arrives at the station, his train is pulling in. He runs towards it and on the way he runs into a young boy carrying a jigsaw puzzle. He knocks the puzzle box out of the boy's hands and the puzzle goes flying in every direction. The man is just about to run off to his train, but remembers – he wants to LIVE his faith. So he stops. He turns around, and he starts picking up the puzzle one piece at a time and putting it back in the puzzle box. His train pulls away from the station and he's still there, picking up the pieces, one at a time. The little boy is in shock. And he looks the man in the eyes and says to him: "Are you Jesus?"

It's a funny thing to say, but the little boy saw Jesus in what that man did. He saw a person who wasn't just rolling the dice and going around the board. He saw a person who was different. A person who cared. A person who was involved in the world around him. Not just to be seen as a nice guy. But to show people that Jesus was in his life and that his life wasn't just about "him" – it was about Jesus. This man had a picture of life that was **bigger** than himself. Bigger than his career or his family or his own plans. What about your life. is it bigger than you and your plans?

The philosopher Socrates once said: *"The unexamined life is not worth living"*.

In our culture today, we are so time poor. We are so busy in everything we do. Many of us probably think that we hardly have time to stop and think about the really important things in life.

Wherever you're at in your life today, let me encourage you just to go away today and at least think about something bigger. Is your purpose in life bigger than just you? Peel back the layers and ask yourself the questions:

- What is at the centre of my life?
- Where do I belong?
- What is my purpose?

Let's pray (confession)