

Intro

Poem

Scripture Reading:

1 Peter 2:2-10 New International Version (NIV)

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

The Living Stone and a Chosen People

4 As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— 5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house[a] to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 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.”[b]

7 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,”[c]

8 and,
“A stone that causes people to stumble
and a rock that makes them fall.”[d]

They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

9 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.

10 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.

Message: An Ode to the Red, Black and Green

My color for this week is green and I appreciate being given my favorite color in the entire world. I remember at the age of 16 having a birthday party themed around emerald city from the Wiz. The Wiz is the black expression of the wizard of oz. Released in 1978 with stars like Diana Ross, Lena Horne, Richard Pryor and a star studded cast of others, the Wiz lives on as a highlight of the black aesthetic. Prolific!

See the colors in this film were outstanding and truly brought to life the brilliance of the colors of the rainbow but as I sit and think about colors, I don't just think about the green of life, abundance and growth. I also think about red for the blood that has been shed and black for the skin of a people that have been hurt the most by western, patriarchal, sexist, heteronormative, unjust and unfair systems, practices and structures.

The scripture in verse 4 says, As you come to him the living stone, rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him, you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house. In the midst of this pandemic we are sitting with, the question comes to mind...how isolation has kept some people out of the spiritual house that was original built for all people.

If we are building a home where people are insulated versus isolated, it doesn't mean we are inviting them to a table where the call for reconciliation and restoration are masked with a lies, smiles and false notions of christian community. If we are to be about creating space for authenticity and intersections. How do black and brown folks show up in wholeness in spaces that either accept their ethnicity/background but do not accept their sexuality or gender identity. Are we inviting people to lay down in green pastures, warm cozy fire places even at our insulated spiritual homes or are we welcoming folks to a burning building. A building that those who did the inviting are outside now looking at the home collapse, while those they welcomed inside burn spiritually with church hurt, frustration, anger and pain. The freedom to be and become only enters our reality when transformation occurs. Do we have as a spiritual home have the courage to be in process, ever evolving, ever reaching towards reimagining, rebirth and re-creation.

I sit with the lessons of my ancestors and their call to show up as young gifted and black. If we are talking colors, when do we start acknowledging the white supremacist culture evident in our spiritual homes. When do we recognize our queer youth are grief-ridden, depressed and suicidal because our homes are not expressions of lovingkindness. When do we recognize that arbitrary borders and boundaries keeping us from building spiritual homes that reflect the glory and wonder of our global village.

This thing isn't just about the green. It is also about the blood that was shed. As we think about our cultural heroes. As we think about our heroes that fought for LGBTQ+ rights. As we think about those that have died for diversity and inclusion (in a very real way.) I'm talking about the red the black and the green.

See there's something about green that is nourishing, that is life giving that is freeing. It allows me to acknowledge myself as one of those sitting at the meeting point of intersections. While I wrestle with the blood that was shed for me by Jesus as a revolutionary, speaking against a corrupt system. A corrupt system, much like one that does not speak to the least, the last the lost, the elders, the disabled, the grieving, the queer.

In these moments, I challenge you to ease on down the road, to that green glorious emerald city until you make it home. Take your brain with you to think critically about how you're showing up on the journey. Take your heart with you so that your compassion stretches beyond your privilege. Take courage with you so words are accompanied with action even behind closed doors. Without these three things, your brain, your heart, your courage, we will never build safer and braver spiritual homes.

No matter your race, no matter your sexuality, no matter your socio-economic status, no matter your title or position, no matter your feelings of worthiness and strength.

Verse 9 reminds us, You are a chosen people, a loyal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession- that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of the darkness into God's wonderful light. This an ode to the red, the black and the green. The blood has been shed for racial equity. The blood has been shed for the LGBTQ+ community. The blood has been shed for all of us. The black, a reminder of black and brown bodies that have had to leave spiritual tables. Green...life-giving, abundance, growth. That is where we must remain.

Closing Prayer