

Chosen to be His Witnesses and Worshipers

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[0:00] If you would take your Bibles and go to 1 Peter chapter 2, 1 Peter chapter 2, if you're visiting with us, you go to the chair in front of you, there's a black Bible there.

You can pull out that black Bible and go towards the back and find page 181, 181 to find 1 Peter 2. We're going to study verses 4 through 10 this morning. 1 Peter 1, Peter chapter 2, verses 4 through 10. I'll read the passage and then we'll begin our study.

Chapter 2, verse 4. And coming to him, a living stone, rejected by men, but chosen, honored from God.

You also, as living stones, a spiritual house, are being built up unto a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices pleasing to God through Jesus Christ.

[1:36] For it is contained in Scripture, behold, I lay in Zion a stone, chosen, an honored cornerstone. And the one who believes in him shall never be disgraced.

Therefore, to you, the one to believe is honor. For those who disbelieve, the stone which the builders rejected, this became the very cornerstone.

And a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. For they stumbled because they are disobedient to the word. And to this, they were also appointed. Verse 9.

But you are a chosen race. A royal priesthood. A holy nation. A people for his possession. That you may proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. For you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God. You have not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. A priest.

[2:51] Priests existed from the earliest days of human history. Recorded as far back as 5500 BC. Coming down to the Sumerian and the Akkadian cultures.

Of course, sacrifices were done first by God himself in Genesis chapter 3. And then in Genesis 4. And then Genesis chapter 8 and 9 with Noah. But no actual priests are mentioned until Genesis chapter 14 with Melchizedek.

When Israel became a nation, they also had priests like the other nations around them. And the priests would serve as mediators between God and the nation.

But there was a difference though. That Israel had from all the other nations. The other nations did not have this. But Israel did. Yes, they had priests at sacrifice.

I'm not saying that they didn't have that. They did. But what the Lord told the people, the nation of Israel as a whole, is that the people themselves were priests.

[4:05] This was different. In other words, Israel itself would serve as a representation of God to the whole world. Israel would serve as a priest.

So they would look to their priest. The priest would be the mediator between them and God. And the Lord said, You, Israel as a nation, you are priest.

You mediate me to the whole world. Israel would both worship the Lord, but also witness to the world that God was gracious and merciful.

Same concept now. And yet in a greater form is seen in the church. So as we look at Peter, Peter's theme is because, or on the basis of God's grace, be wise, winsome weirdos in this wicked world. Today we'll see in our passage, mercifully chosen to be his worshippers and witnesses. We have been mercifully chosen, honored, to be God's worshippers and his witnesses.

[5:30] Oh, it's interesting. I just noticed, lots of W words. Wise, winsome, weirdos, wicked, worshippers, witnesses. Wow, that's really weird. Get it?

Willie? No, okay. Just make sure nobody's sleeping yet. Statements for you. God graciously chose to give us his mercy by making us his holy, chosen worshippers in the world and witnesses to the world who would consider us to be crazy weirdos, wackos.

That's how they would think of us. That's how they think of you. As the Lord Jesus was chosen and honored by God, so God has chosen and honored us, his people, by giving us his gracious mercy so that we will believe in his chosen, honored son.

The responsibility of the priesthood is to worship and witness. To offer spiritual sacrifices and declare God's praises.

That's what we're going to see. And this great privilege involves great responsibility. It's a privilege that we have this.

[7:04] But our responsibility is offering sacrifices to Jesus, through Jesus to God, and being witnesses or representing his mercy to the world.

That's our responsibility. The privilege that we have this. The privilege is being chosen and elects. The responsibility is us offering to God spiritual sacrifices and displaying his mercy to the world. So that in the midst of disaster, or what may look like disaster, we triumph, especially for us who may suffer for the cause of Christ.

Though we may be humiliated and distressed, we have such exhilarating joy because of our honored, privileged status as God's elect people.

What a privilege to have this status. And yet what a great responsibility we have. The reality is that we possess all the blessings of Old Testament Israel, and yet in so much greater measure.

[8:17] Now, I'm not saying we're the new Israel. I don't believe that. No, we're called the church. Jews and Gentiles have become one. But as God has dealt with Israel in the Old Testament, now he's dealing with the church in the New Testament.

But there's not two peoples of God. There's one people of God. We are the people of God. It's one. Look, whatever the world thinks of Jesus, he is honored by God.

God's honored chosen servant. And look, whatever the world thinks of us, we are God's honored chosen servants called to represent him to the world.

You can be encouraged by that statement. We offer spiritual sacrifices. We represent his mercy to the world as his chosen, honored, holy priesthood.

We are most privileged. Most privileged. That's by way of introduction.

[9:27] And you can already see there's two main points, worshipers and witnesses. So we're going to look at how we are worshipers, and we're going to look at how we are witnesses. And then right in the middle of that, you're going to see those who, who are not worshipers, who are not witnesses, who do not believe.

What say God about them? We'll look at that in a moment. First, let's start out in verses four through seven. Holy, chosen, honored, worshipers in the world.

By the way, chosen and honored, those two words are used, what I have, at least three different times in our text, and it's implied two other times, so a total of almost five times within the passage, verses four through ten.

I think Peter's trying to make a point. What do you think? We are a holy, chosen, honored priesthood that offers sacrifices to God.

Starting in verse four, and coming to him, a living stone. To him goes back to verse three, when he says, since you've tasted that, the Lord is good, the Lord, that's the one you're coming to.

[10:51] As you come to him, and then notice he calls him living stone. It's an oxymoron. When's the last time you called a stone living?

Well, that's weird. Another W word. That's creepy. Why would he call that? Well, notice, chapter one, verse three, we have a living hope.

Chapter one, verse twenty-three, the living word, bless you, and now he's the living stone. Jesus is the one who's alive, resurrected, and he gives life, a living stone, as opposed to a dead one.

Notice, rejected by men. Now that phrase, he's going to take, he's going to unpack that more later on. But the idea is, here's the living stone, rejected by men.

And the idea of rejection is just not, oh, blowing off Jesus. It was, through critical examination and testing, they purposely opposed him. That's important.

[12:02] Because that will be the same thing that people will do with us, as Christians. They will purposely oppose you. By critical examination, you will be rejected, as Jesus has been rejected.

Peter's going to make that correlation with us, to Jesus. So though, people rejecting him, notice, he says, now you have, in your American standard, choice, and precious, and the sight of God.

A better word besides precious is honored. That's a better word to translate. So, honored, chosen from God.

Literally. Or, chosen and highly respected. As Jesus was rejected, by men, by God he was honored.

By God he was elect. By God he was chosen. Highly respected. We, as his people, in the same way, we will be rejected by men, but honored by God, for believing in his son.

[13:17] He's going to make that correlation. The one, rejected by people, was honored by God. This is the one, to whom we come.

A great privilege, that was reserved, only for Old Testament priests, to come to God. But now we can come without shame. And with Jesus, we share in God's electing love.

So he says, coming to him, a living stone, rejected by men, chosen and honored, from God. Verse 5, you also, as living stones, a spiritual house, are being built up.

You as living stones, we are living stones, part of a living place, where God dwells. Not dead stones, from a physical building.

It's not about a physical building, we become part of the building, of which Jesus, is going to be called, the cornerstone.

[14:26] So this building is alive. And like Jesus, we have become living stones, honored by God. Notice the correlation he's making.

Jesus, living stone, you also are living stones. Jesus is a living stone, you are living stones. And notice the idea he's going to place, into our minds, is the idea, and the place, is the temple.

The temple was, a place where God was, right? God's presence was there. He communicated, with his people.

He received their gifts, sacrifices, and prayers. His presence, made it holy. God's people, they were called, to be holy as well.

They were to approach, God with awe, and with wonder, and fear. And remember, only the, the high priest, could come into the most holy place.

[15:33] So that's the temple. Well now, Peter's trying to take that, and say, there's no longer, about this temple. Now there's a spiritual temple, a spiritual house.

You are being built, as living stones, a spiritual house. As living stones, we are a spiritual house, under the power, influence of the spirit.

And what's the result? What does he say? For a holy priesthood. We're distinct. We're separate now. So we are, the place where God dwells, with humanity.

A great privilege, has been given to us, as Christians. How do you see God, primarily, at work, in this world? How will some, of your unsaved friends, might say that?

Let's say, well, you look at the mountains, right? You look at, creation. Peter's saying, you look at the church.

[16:44] And a church, he's not talking about a building. He's talking about people. We're all living stones. People.

Interesting, too, when we came, to faith in Jesus, the living stone, we were incorporated, into God's building, by God himself, built into the walls, into the spiritual walls.

And not only, are we stones, that compose, of the building, but we're also, priests, who minister, because notice, what he says, to offer up, spiritual sacrifices, pleasing to God, through Jesus Christ.

So, as a, holy priesthood, our purpose, and function, is to offer, spiritual sacrifices. We're a part, of the building, and we're also, ministering, in the building.

And remember, don't, it's not, physical, it's a spiritual building, he's talking about. No longer, do we offer, sacrifices of blood.

[17:56] Why? Well, because Jesus, was the blood sacrifice, once for all. You don't need, to do that anymore. Jesus, is the sufficient sacrifice, right? We'll see later, in just a moment, actually, we not only offer, spiritual sacrifices, but we are also, mediators, to God, for the world, to the world.

As such, priests were, consecrated to God, separated from others, offering, spiritual sacrifices, spiritual sacrifices. They pertain to life, in the spirit, spiritual, in that they pertain, to life, in the spirit, which includes, praise, thanksgiving, good moral conduct, broken, and contrite hearts, lives, lives of justice, and compassion, doing what's right.

We offer, our very lives, to God, because of the redemptive, work of Jesus Christ. Spiritual, in the sense, that they pertain, to life, in the spirit.

By the way, this is for free, when somebody says, they're spiritual, it's like, they steal that word. When the Bible, talks about something, that's spiritual, it means something, pertaining to the Holy Spirit.

People have hijacked, that word, to make it some, mystical type of meaning. Spiritual means, it's pertaining to things, of the Holy Spirit. Okay. And he says, these types of sacrifices, that we've listed off here, that pleases God.

[19 : 34] I think the versions, have acceptable, that's bad. The word, stronger, it means, pleasing, pleasant, like a good, cup of coffee, in the morning, when you smell it.

Oh, right? And then you put some, chocolate in it. I have to get chocolate, in there somewhere. It's pleasing, it's pleasant to God, through Jesus Christ.

Jesus, who's the mediator. Jesus, who's the foundational, cornerstone, of this spiritual temple.

These are pleasing, to God, these sacrifices, they're pleasing to God, because of our dependence, upon Christ.

Our dependence, upon Jesus Christ, and his work. So, sets this up for us. The premise, holy, chosen, honored, this is who we are.

Holy, chosen, honored, worshipers. verse 6, verse 6, for, here's the basis, for what he's just said.

For it is contained, in scripture, and he quotes Isaiah 28, 16.

[21 : 01] Behold, I lay in Zion, a stone, a cornerstone, chosen, honored, servant. And the one, who believes, in him, shall not be disgraced.

Let's unpack that. In the passage, of Isaiah 28, the thought is, a chosen, honored, cornerstone, was what God, had chosen, to be the sure, foundation, for Israel.

As opposed, to rebellious leaders. To trust, in this solid, foundation, will bring, a firm standing. So that, the one who believes, in him, or it, meaning the stone, now, so Peter's making, the connection, the stone he's talking about, is Jesus.

That's the living stone, right? Peter gives the true intent, and meaning, of Isaiah's prophecy. The one who believes, in this one, this cornerstone, and I think our versions, have disappointed, which seems kind of, nonchalant.

It's like, eh, disappointed. It's stronger, than that, friends. It's the exact, opposite to honored.

Someone, who's not honored, is disgraced.

[22 : 17] Someone, who's not honored, is shamed. So the nuance, of the word, is that, when you, believe, in Christ, you, will never, be shamed.

You, will never, be, and, ume, in the Greek, means never. Never, never, be disgraced, never, be, shamed. One letter, says this, quote, to believe in Jesus, may entail, rejection, and disgrace, in the eyes, of pagan society, but never, in the sight of God, end quote.

Friends, they may reject you, but God, will never reject you. Never. Ume, in Greek, ume, never.

I'll never reject you. He will never reject you. And, and, notice what he does. Closing off, this point, in verse 7, New American Standard, has this precious value, then, is for you who believe.

From the Greek, it's this, to you, therefore, the ones who believe, is honor. I think the ESV, has it like this, to you who believe, is honor, or the honor, is for you who believe.

[23 : 43] That's a perfect way, to translate this. That's Peter's point. You believe, you've embraced, the living stone. He's honored, and chosen.

You are honored, and chosen. Our culture, will shame you, for believing in Jesus.

For, quote unquote, discouraging people, not to believe, in their own God. Remember that? On the contrary, God will honor, and exalt us, when we believe, in Jesus Christ.

Christ. How much, will he exalt you? Well, that's simple. The very same way, he exalted his son.

Because you're connected, to his son. You're in union, with his son, because you've embraced, this son. You see how much, God loves his people. So, he closes this off, holy, chosen, honored, worshippers, sacrificing to God.

[24 : 54] And then, he's going to go into us, being witnesses. But then, he does something here. Disbelieving, disobeying, rejecters, from the world.

In verses 7 and 8. Disbelieving, disobeying, rejecters, from the world. In verses 7 and 8. In other words, sandwiched, in the middle of God's, gracious mercy, toward us, is a result of those, who have not received, his mercy, and thus, are disobedient, to the word, stumbling over, and rejecting

Jesus.

But for those, who disbelieve, who refuse, to believe, who rejected, this cornerstone. And then, Peter quotes, Psalm 18, excuse me, Psalm 118.

The stone, which the builders, rejected, this one, became the very cornerstone. Jesus is, the head cornerstone. A stone, set in the foundation, of this building.

Jesus, applied this prophecy, to himself. Matthew chapter 21. Peter preached on this, in Acts chapter 4, this very passage, saying the same thing. Those, who rejected, Jesus Christ, are totally wrong, because God, honored, and exalted him, in the highest place.

[26:22] He's the head's, cornerstone. I mean, in, in spite of the attitude, of the Jewish leaders, Jesus was vindicated, by God, when he raised him, from the dead.

In spite of those, to reject us, God will also, vindicate us. God is for us. I will not fear. What can man do to me? Because we are, in union with Christ, we share Christ's, status and privilege.

But they've rejected him. They've, dis-honored him. And yet God, the only way God, shows mercy, is because we're, united to his son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's the only way, you're going to be, shown mercy. Not when you, reject Christ, but when you, honor Christ. God will honor you, when you're dependent, upon Christ. If you're here this morning, you're not a follower, of Jesus, that message is for you.

God will honor you, if you depend, upon Jesus Christ. Who lived, who died, who rose, repents, and put your trust, in Jesus alone.

[27:32] That's the gospel. Then notice, what else, what he does, verse 8. And, a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.

Now he quotes Isaiah, chapter 8, verse 14. As a living, cornerstone, Jesus causes people, to stumble, and a rock, that gives offense.

People are offended, at the gospel word. It offends them, that you say, Jesus is the only way. It offends them, that you say, you must put your trust, in Jesus Christ, and not create, your own God. It offends them, that you must repent, and trust in Jesus. It offends them, the gospel word. Either put your trust, in this foundation, or you're going to, stumble over him.

People don't like it, when you say that. Is this not, a powerful way? Here is a powerful way, to encourage, any persecuted, community of Christians, who face the onslaught, of the world, because of, living their lives, by living, the living, abiding word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[28:50] This is great encouragement, because Peter knows, exactly how you feel. He says, ending in verse 8, for they stumble, because they're disobedient, to the word.

Why do they stumble? Because they're disobedient, to the gospel. Notice, the word, he says. This takes us back, to chapter 2, verse 3, the pure, spiritual milk, which takes us back, to chapter 1, verse 23, through verse 25.

This is the word, that was gospel, to you. This is the word, that they've rejected. Look, it's clear, the gospel message, demands, individual obedience.

It does. They had active, and entrenched, or entrenched, opposition, of God's, gospel word. People reject, the gospel word, and yet, that's the very message, that demands, individual obedience.

It does. And then he closes off, verse 8, like this, and to this, they were also appointed, unto which also, they were appointed.

[30:05] What does he mean by this? Some see this, that it means, predestined to damnation. And we need to remember something.

We need to remember that, this, damnation, is the destination of all of us, without God's grace and mercy, right? God justly leaves people, in the rebellion, not to experience his mercy.

Let me give you an illustration of this. And I don't say this to be flippant, and I'm not trying to be disrespectful, in any way. This is just by way of illustration. Paper plates, are made to be thrown away.

Right? I mean, sometimes you've got some, person who says, hey, let's wash those, and let's use them again. Sure, we'll do that.

I'm feeling really nauseous, right now. You know, so, you don't normally do stuff like that. At least I hope. Paper plates are made to be thrown away.

[31:16] Now, they've got some paper plates, and you can kind of reuse them. But the thought is, paper plates are made to be thrown away. You don't say, oh, don't throw those paper plates away, we're going to reuse them.

People look at you like you're crazy. What do we mean then? Disobedience, Jesus rejecting people, should be condemned.

Look, if God is not obligated to us at all, and we are totally obligated to Him, in anything and everything, and if God says to embrace His Son, and we refuse to do so, then He has every right to judge us.

So, it's not that God is just being a jerk. If paper plates are made to be thrown away, and we are going exactly to where we should go, because we've rejected His Son.

That's what He's saying. The destiny of those who are disobedient, is damnation. It is what those who are disobedient, justly and rightly deserve.

[32 : 33] Disobedient don't want to be persuaded by God's Word, and disobedient, or should justly be condemned. And this is why the truth, the glorious doctrine of election, makes it so unbelievably, amazingly dumbfounding.

This is why election, which is based upon God's free choice, not our choice, not our more foreseen faith.

This is why election is so unbelievably amazing. He should condemn us all, but election means that God decided to save some people, by His mercy.

And He didn't have to. Because He's not obligated to us, you see. He's not obligated to give us anything. Why?

Does He just do this arbitrarily? No. God chooses the exact number of individuals, which consist of millions and millions of people.

[33 : 46] He chooses the exact number of individuals, that would perfectly display, that He is a merciful, compassionate God, who's slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving thousands, showing mercy.

That's why. The perfect amount of individuals, perfectly displays His mercy. That's election.

So He says, we're holy, chosen, honored worshipers, in this world.

He talked to us about, what of those who disbelieve. Now He moves, into this second main point. Holy, chosen, honor, witnesses, to, the world.

That's in verses 9 and 10. Holy, chosen, honored, witnesses, to, the world.

[34 : 53] Worshippers, in the world. Witnesses, to, the world. Or, to put in the statement for you, we are a chosen, honored, holy priesthood, that represents God, to the world.

Notice how He begins, but you. The strong contrast, but you. A ginormous contrast, but you.

As opposed to those, rejecting the living stone, but you. As opposed to those, receiving what they justly deserve, but you. And He's going to quote, from Exodus chapter 19, verse 5, Hosea chapter 2, verse 25, Isaiah chapter 43, verses 20 to 21.

He's going to highlight, our privilege, status. He's going to highlight, our merciful status. Who are you, Christian?

Christian? Who are you, in God's sight, Christian? What is your position, before God, Christian?

[36 : 12] Are you depressed? Christian, are you in despair? Christian, are you, questioning God's love for you? Is sin, weighing you down, Christian?

Have trials, been weighing you down? Do you feel far away, from God? You are, a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people, unto possession.

we're significant, significant to God. We belong to Him. We are objects, the objects, of His special care.

Not because, we're inherently, lovely and significant. He is. You're not special. He's special. He is special. No. No.

It's because, He decides, to make us, the objects, of His special care. Are you, enamored, and flooded, by God's mercy, towards you?

[37 : 26] You should be, elected, or chosen race. Chosen like Jesus.

We, we, are a part, of a whole new race, of humanity. There's only one race, that's the human race. What, now there's two.

We're part of this, new humanity, the new humanity, with Christ, as our head. With Christ, as our king. With Christ, as our leader.

Father, because Jesus, was chosen, by God, we are chosen, by God. Chosen race, a royal, priesthood.

Not simply, that all Christians, are priests. That's true, but that's secondary. But more so, to be understood, as an ambassadorial role.

[38 : 29] He's quoting here, Exodus chapter 19, when the Lord said to Israel, you will be a kingdom, of priests to me. You will represent me, to the world.

How is the world, going to see God? Primarily. Through us, his people. How are they going to see, the mercy of God?

Through us, his people. We, we mediate, God's presence, to the world. Just like Israel did. Just like the priest, did to the people of Israel. And just like, Israel was called, to be for the whole world. That's who we are. Chosen race, royal priesthood, a holy nation, separate from the nations, of the world.

God has set us, apart, to represent him, to the world. Just like Israel, in the Old Testament, were holy. But then he says, nation. So this new humanity, is not based on ethnicity, not based if you're, from Mexico, Romania, from Ecuador, Chile, from Uzbekistan, or Russia.

[39 : 49] No! It's Christ, it's Christ, as our king. It's based on our allegiance, to Jesus Christ, as the monarch. That's the nation, we are a part of.

And then he says, a people for possession. We're God's possession, purchased by the blood of Christ. Remember he talked about that, in chapter one, you've been born again, with precious blood, as of a lamb.

Spotless, and blameless. Because Jesus, paid the ransom, we belong to God. In other words, we're God's, prized, special, possession.

When he, should just, let us go, to the place we deserve. He says, I'm going to take you, you belong to me.

And I want you, to reflect me, to the world. Because notice, what he says. The next part, of verse nine. So that, you may proclaim, the excellencies, of him, who has called you, out of darkness, into his marvelous light.

[41 : 07] What's our purpose? It's a mission's endeavor. We mediate God, and his mercy, to the world, because of what he's done, for us, in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace, and mercy. Our function, is to proclaim, the saving, merciful, gracious acts, of God. That's what he means, by that.

When he says, excellencies, it means all, that God has done, in and through, Jesus Christ, for us. And the fact that, other sinners, where we used to be, ourselves, they can also, experience it in Christ.

They can also, experience God's, undeserved grace, love, compassion, and mercy. And notice, God didn't do this, primarily for us.

The focus, is not on you. The focus, is on Christ. The focus, is on God. The focus, is to glorify, God, and his mercy.

[42 : 16] That's the focus. Excellencies, all that God, has done, in and through, Jesus Christ, for us. And he does this, for others too.

So that, what we're thinking, is that we're not, oh, I'm so awesome, type status. But what we're thinking, is what mercy, God has shown to us. That's what we're, thinking about.

At least, what we should be. It's all, God centered. So it behooves us, it behooves us, to speak, and live, God's deeds, power, grace, wisdom, mercy, love, holiness, and compassion.

Notice, to this, dark world. you are light, they are in darkness. They need us, to witness to them. They need the mercy, proclaimed to them. And they need to see us, as a church, showing each other mercy.

[43 : 23] mercy. And notice how he rounds it off. For, you once were not a people, but now, the people of God.

you have not received mercy, but now, you have received mercy. Previous status, present status. Who we were, who we are. We were at a place, of lostness, and no mercy, but now, you're his people. But now, you've received mercy.

God's great, amazing mercy, and election, is totally unmerited. You didn't do anything, to deserve this.

Not foreseeing faith. Not because you chose. God simply decided, to choose you, and show you mercy.

[44 : 27] His choice. I mean, what comfort, this gives us, as we suffer, in this life, or we face rejection, from this world.

Suffering, or rejection, that from Peter's perspective, it's only temporary. It's only temporary. As they've rejected, and they killed Jesus, and yet God vindicated him, so they will reject, and eventually, possibly, even to the point of, killing you.

But God will vindicate you. We are holy, chosen, honored, worshipers, in the world.

And we are holy, chosen, honored, witnesses, to the world. We are God's, most treasured possession. Unbelievable.

Father, thank you. we are just, in, dumbfounding, all that you would show us, such mercy.

[45 : 44] And so, in a few moments, we will offer to you, as meager as it is from us, our time of giving, our voices to sing, hearts praying together, and then words, and actions, that minister to each other, not just today, but this week.

We will offer to you, spiritual sacrifices, and let us be your witnesses. take a few moments, if you would, and ponder, what we have seen, in God's word.

Let's have a few moments, of silence, for you to think, and to ponder, and to see, what we have, what we have understood, from God's word, this morning.

And after a few moments, we will do our time, of giving. We will sing, we will sing, our last two songs, and have our closing prayer.

Let's sit, think, and ponder. We will sing,