

Placed by God

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Preacher: Wayne Thiessen

[0 : 00] Good morning. Welcome to the service this morning as we enjoy a beautiful, beautiful summer day.

It feels strange not to have Sunday school, but it also was a little more relaxed this morning getting ready. So we do enjoy the break as well, but I trust as we've gathered here this morning, again, the Lord will speak to us, will bless us as we fellowship together.

Last weekend, we had our gathering at the church campout at Bear Lake, and it was really hands down the best campout ever, if I can say it that way.

Not only were there lots of people, but good teaching from the guys doing devotionals, good fellowship, good food, and good facilities.

And so all around, we were thoroughly blessed. And so thank you for each one that took part and that helped and so on. So this morning, we have a special service for membership for Igor and Shanda.

[1 : 29] And because of that, I decided not to continue in Revelations this morning, simply because of, to do a shorter message on top of the testimonies, it doesn't do justice to go dig into Revelations.

And so I'll save it for next Sunday, Lord willing, and we'll continue there with the last judgments. But this morning, we'll talk about the body of Christ and how God has placed each one into the body.

I've entitled the message, Placed by God. Placed by God. A few questions to start.

How many of us have shared our testimony up front here? There's quite a few hands that go up.

How many would like to? There's a few. Good. And so I believe that is a good thing.

[2 : 47] And we want to focus on that this morning. Because a testimony is revealing publicly what God has done in my life.

And that's one way where we connect, where we identify with each other, as brothers and sisters in the Lord, is to share our testimonies.

Now, second question. How many of us are scared to share their testimony? Some hands that go up. And that's okay.

We don't need to be ashamed to say that I get the jitters to think of going up front and to share. That is something that all of us face when we have the opportunity or when we feel the call of God to do that.

And I always think it's good to be jittery before the Lord. And for me, it happens every Sunday morning. And so it's a sign that we are not confident in ourselves, but relying on God.

[4 : 03] So it's good to be nervous. And so if you're feeling that, and if that's stopping you, talk to God about that.

To see if He has the ability to give you courage to share. And we all know from Scriptures that He does have that strength.

But are we willing to submit to that? Third question. I'm full of questions this morning.
For how many of you adults, 18 and up, is Mountview the first church that you've attended? I'll say that again.

For how many of us adults, is this church, Mountview, the first church that we've ever attended? Or that we've been part of? It's interesting.

[5 : 08] There's not one hand that went up. None. So that means we've all come from elsewhere. Or, if we're local, I think few of us are actually native to Grand Prairie.

How many of us have grown up in the Peace River region, the Grand Prairie area? We have about five hands that went up. And so most of us have come in from elsewhere.

And thus, we've changed churches. And as we've done that, various churches practice different aspects of membership or of belonging or fellowshiping.

And all of us have had maybe a different experience where we come from or different experiences if there's multiple churches behind us.

And so some of us have been disappointed, maybe hurt. Maybe we're disillusioned.

[6 : 25] And we're scared to commit again. You know, most church hurts are due to human failure. Is that right? Most hurts in church are due to human failures. Brothers and sisters hurting one another.

And often, it involves leadership as well. And we need to recognize that.

That is why we stress godly leadership and that we have qualified leadership according to the Scriptures.

That's also why we practice that we are to be accountable one to another.

[7 : 33] And that when someone does, has behavior that's not Christ-like, that there can be correction. Even in leadership.

It's very, very important. It's very, very important. Because when that is not the case, then it's a setup for hurts.

Now, God has called the body in unity. And we are to work together.

And when there are issues, instead of running, we are to be together as a body to work through it.

And to solve them. And to solve them. And I want to focus on that a bit this morning as we work through this passage.

[8 : 33] Now, the background in Corinth, the whole letter of Corinth, Paul is addressing issues in the church. Big time. And disunity is probably number one.

And in chapter 3 and chapter 2, we talk about their following different human leaders. And Paul says, you know, who is Apollos and who is Paul and who is Cephas and so on.

We are to follow our head. And our head is Christ. And if you make a church leader or a pastor your head, you are headed for trouble.

For that is unbiblical. Because sooner or later, a human leader will disappoint you.

Our head is Jesus Christ. Our relationship is with Him. And we have human relationships and we need them.

[9 : 49] I'm not saying that. But first and foremost, my relationship is with my Lord and Savior. He is the one on the pedestal.

Lifted up in glory. Not human leaders. Human leaders are instruments that God is using in preaching to expound on the Word.

To show leadership. And yet our head spiritually is Christ. And so we need to be reminded of that.

So when I am healthy in my walk with Jesus, and there's issues in the body, my walk should not be shaken.

It needs to be stable in my Savior. Even though there are individuals that cause ruffles.

[10 : 56] But as we keep focused on our Lord and His call to unity, we will work through issues.

And that's the solution to that. The opposite of that is, and maybe many of us have experienced that, that when there is an issue, that we tend to take sides.

Sides always cause splits and divisions. Whereas our Savior calls us to take truth as our side and not human sides.

We're to work through it in truth to resolve. In unity. To bring together, not to push apart.

Now we need to recognize that as John, in 1 John, he acknowledges that there are people in church that when conflict happens will leave.

[12 : 19] And he says they will leave because they were never of us. And they are in church without being born again.

And sometimes they're imposters, meaning counterfeits, put in place by Satan. And so occasionally, when there are issues, it is caused, because Satan has his people, to create havoc and chaos.

But when the people of God stand united in truth, these individuals will leave. They have no foot to stand on when we don't take sides.

But when we're all pursuing truth. And so this is the crux of what Paul is bringing out here. The church in Corinth was struggling.

And in chapter 12, they were wrestling with this concept of spiritual gifts in the church. And they were elevating one above the other and saying, I have this gift, and I am better than you.

[13 : 44] And I have the gift of tongues. I am more qualified than you. And so there was disunity through what the Holy Spirit had given.

And Paul is writing to correct. And so there's two principles here this morning that I want to use to focus on.

The first one is in verse 6 and 7, in chapter 12 of 1 Corinthians. And he says, So God has manifested a spiritual gift to each believer.

And why has he done that? For the profit or benefit of all. So the whole church can be blessed.

Now, on the heels of that, does that include you? Does that include you? Are we willing to acknowledge?

[15 : 23] That includes me. If we profess the Lord Jesus as our personal Savior from sin, and that we have the Holy Spirit, then we are included in this.

Am I willing to acknowledge that? That God has given me a spiritual gift for the profit of all. And this morning, we don't have time to go into spiritual gifts, but there's, I think I've counted 20-some listed in Scripture.

different spiritual gifts where we can encourage one another, build up.

And I think all gifts are given for the purpose of edifying, building up the body of Christ. And so the question is, where do I fit in?

The second principle is that that it is God who has put you here.

[16 : 45] And I want to reread what what Kevin read for us in verse 12 and 13. verse 12.

For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body being many are one body, so also is Christ.

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

And can we all say amen to that? God has placed us into the body of Christ by His Spirit.

And we know He has given us the Holy Spirit to who indwells us. we become temples for the Lord. One body, whether in their culture, Jew or Greek, slave or free, that defined the groups out there.

[18 : 07] Today, it's whether we are whatever, Mennonite or different background or native or whatever we are.

In Christ, we've been placed into the body baptized by the Spirit. And we've been placed there by God.

And if we jump down to verse 18, and God, now God has set the members, each one of them in the body just as He pleased.

has God placed you in a body? In the greater context, this is the body of Christ worldwide.

That's in the greatest context. the secondary context of this is God always operates through a local church, as He did in Corinth.

[19 : 19] And every letter written in Scripture was addressed to a local church. And so, hence, we draw from that that God places His people in local churches.

just as He pleased. Do we believe that? So, God has placed me here, and He has given me a gift for the purpose, or the benefit of all.

Those are the two principles that we are recognizing this morning. Now, another concept I want to bring into the equation, is the church an organism or an organization?

Those are two big words. Organism? What's an organism?

organism? One body having a head. An organism is defined as a creature that has life from within.

[20 : 48] It has life from within. It's not dependent on outside forces. it has life from within. And, as we become born again, we have life from within, as we have the Holy Spirit.

And we have eternal life, everlasting life. And so, we are an organism in that aspect, that's alive, it's alive, from within.

And, secondly, this organism, this body, has a head. And the head controls the body.

And the head says, I've placed each member of the body as I pleased. Christ. This is how God works.

How He's decided to, the church would be like. You know, the, the church itself, the word for church is iglesia.

[22 : 12] and the word iglesia means to be called out of. We meet as the church, as a living body, and we're called out of.

Out of what? What have we been called out of? The world. The world system.

The anti-God system. Or, yeah, that's, that, the God of this world is Satan, and, or the God of this age, and so, we've been called out of that to follow Jesus Christ.

And so, that, that is our calling. So, with that, we are an organism, and yet, God is a God of order, and so, we have some organization to us.

In fact, we had arranged that for the summer months, we would meet at 1030. That's called being organized. So, the organism is organizing.

- [23 : 30] And, but let's not reverse the two, because an organization is not, does not have life in itself, but the organism does.
- The church does, and yet, we need to be in order. And so, there has to be order in church, as, as, as we are called to unity.
- When there's not order, there's disunity. And, and so, just to recognize that aspect. Now, we can be organized to death.
- That there's no life in us. And, uh, that too is wrong. Remember, as a child of God, where do I take my marching orders from?
- From my head. Spiritual life, I am connected to my Lord Jesus Christ. Christ. This is the chain.
- [24 : 37] Each one of us. And yet, that same Lord has given us these principles that we're going through this morning.
- And, and the same Lord has gifted us for the purpose of the whole. people. So, uh, um, with that, this church has decided in, in time past to practice membership.
- And I just, it's not a topic I like to harp on, but to, to bring out why. And why we've chosen that, because there is no, there's no verse that says, specifically, you shall become members of a local church.
- But there's principles. And, and one of them is that God has placed you as He pleased. And so, a few, a few things that, that membership does that I want to, uh, to just bring out.
- It, uh, number one, it is an opportunity to share your testimony to the glory of God. We'll go back to that, right?
- [26 : 11] Is that, anybody feeling jitters? It is an opportunity to glorify God for what He has done in your life.
- See, He is my head. It's not about me, it's about Him. Secondly, it is an opportunity to show commitment to God and saying, I recognize you have gifted me and placed me here, here I am.
- I'm willing to be here to commit and to serve. There's that principle of that as well.
- and, uh, you know, we had some weddings here a month ago, or just slightly more, and, you know, there's no direct command in Scripture, thou shalt have a wedding day.
- There isn't. but it's understood and agreed upon, it is right to get married. And we do that by having a ceremony.
- [27 : 33] Because God said, for this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. And so we respect that by having a wedding, a ceremony where we recognize that.
- And, uh, it's not that, it's not that the two people weren't in love already. That happened already. The start of love, but, but it's a formal way of recognizing that love and saying, we're going to do this publicly.
- And so for us, for us to, to commit and say, I recognize God is placing me here. I'm willing to, to publicly say that.
- To commit and say, I know this is where God wants me to serve and to be part of. Now, there, there may be a fine line in your thinking about this.
- I'm, I'm okay with that. God. And yet, we have made that decision as a church, this is the way we would like to, to function.
- [28 : 55] And so we, we put this forth in, in that, knowing that it's not a wrong thing. And so, uh, um, for leadership, leadership, it blesses our hearts when we see commitment.

And I know many of you have been committed in serving, uh, in, in many ways, and I'm not, I'm not belittling that. And yet, um, it blesses our hearts when we see people's, people coming forward and saying, we want, we want to be part.

We want to share our testimony. We want others to know how I came to the Lord, that I am truly one of you. And to say, here I am.

And above all, it blesses God's heart. As, as, as we do that. verse 18, but now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as he pleased.

So that is the, uh, the, the crux of, of this morning's, uh, message. Um, to recognize that there's a purpose for me.

[30 : 43] Some of us come from backgrounds where our parents have moved a lot back and forth. How does that fit into this?

to say, Lord, here I am. I know you placed me here. Now we need to wrestle through these things.

Various cultures coming together as, as we do these things. And yet as we submit one to another, as we submit one to another, there's harmony.

I am, I am very grateful and blessed in the ten years that we've been here at the harmony, the unity that's been here.

It's been extremely blessed, uh, rewarding for us as well. And I trust for all of us. Uh, however many years you've been here.

[31 : 56] But, uh, let's keep going on that course and, and, uh, but I would, I would dearly love for each one of us to come up at some point and say, I'm willing, I want to share my testimony.

And, and maybe that's a goal we should make, you know, the remainder of this year, to have a testimony or two every morning. To, to share them.

Just to hear each other. Um, for many, many of you, I've never heard your testimony either. And so it's a, it's to the glory of God. Uh, Romans 10 says, you know, by faith we believe, but by the mouth we make confession.

We bring out what God has done. And, and so that's, that's a very, very powerful thing. So I would, uh, with that, I'm going to close, just as an encouragement, um, I, I did not bring this message to condemn or to, to belittle, because we have many, many of you serving.

And, and we want to, uh, express our appreciation for that. And, uh, even, even this week, uh, George had on the men's chat, the, you're making up a new cleaning list, an opportunity, uh, where we just pull together and, and here am I, Lord, you've placed me in this body.

[33 : 28] I want to be part of this. With that, we're going to have Igor and Shanna come up and share, uh, their testimonies. But, uh, let's just bow in prayer before we do that.

Father, we, again, thank you for your Holy Spirit. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for being our head, for dying for us.

Lord, thank you for gifting us. And, and, and, Father, as we, as we look at that, and, and we recognize that, God, that you have left no one out.

Each one has a spiritual gift or gifts. And that they're for the benefit of, of the whole. Father, may you speak to us in regard to using that gift.

In regards to, to being part of a local church and letting that gift shine. We want to do this for your honor and your glory.

[34 : 39] As Igor and Shanna come up, Father, may you grant them boldness and courage to share and, and, um, as they reveal how they've met you on their road as well.

We thank you, Lord Jesus, in your name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, good morning.

Pastor Wayne said it's good to be nervous before the Lord, and I'm good and nervous right now. So, I thank you for the prayers that were already prayed for us. Um, I'm just going to jump in, um, with my testimony here. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God. 1 John 3.1. I want to share today a testimony. It's not really my testimony.

[35 : 53] It's a testimony of the goodness of God. So I was born into a Christian family here in Beaver Lodge, Alberta. From a young age, I desired to follow God. And I remember a specific moment when a desire stirred within me to repent, and I asked my mom, when will God call me? She told me I would know.

That moment came soon after. We had our usual family devotions before bed one night, and the topic came up of heaven and hell. I went to bed, and conviction was on my heart. I was 10 years old at the time, and I knew without a doubt that I needed to repent. I prayed and asked Jesus into my heart that night, and then later my dad came and prayed with me as well. And what joy, what peace I felt at that moment.

I remember waking up the next morning feeling light and free, and I was excited to tell my family that I had made the decision to be a Christian. Later, I called my grandparents to share the news with them as well. That's when I became a baby believer. It's now 20 years later, and God has been faithful.

Many times he's shown me weak spots in my life, and I'm grateful that he loves me enough to bring them to my realization and help me grow. I was baptized into the Haldeman Mennonite Church at the age of 12.

At the age of 14, we made the big decision to move to Ukraine. I had two siblings adopted from there, and my parents. My dad had a desire for adventure, and I and three younger siblings. Leaving behind my three older brothers, we moved to Ukraine. I fully embraced this new adventure, but with time, it also came with its own set of hardships. Loneliness, cultural and language barriers, stress between my parents caused me to seek God more than ever. My heart was set on starting a youth group and church in our village, and I passionately prayed for the local people there. We started a small outreach with Sunday services, and at first held it in our home, and then later in the cultural center in the center of our village. The Haldeman missionaries who were serving a couple hours drive from us, they would come and join us for church every other Sunday. There was a lot of opportunity to help those who were needy in our village. Alcoholism was rampant, and our home soon became a refuge for whatever child needed a safe place. We had some child or another at our place any given day, and us children soon learned a rather village style of speaking, way of speaking Ukrainian. I remember walking one day through the garbage that was piled beside a path at the back of the village. Glancing into the rubble, I was shocked to see a person down among the rubbish. I looked closer and recognized her to be an invalid that we had at times tried to help or would go and sing to her. She had no legs, and even though Christian Aid Ministries had given her a wheelchair, she preferred to crawl around on her hands.

[39 : 04] Alcohol had this poor soul in its vice. I was moved as I saw her there, and I stopped to ask her how she was doing. I sat down there with her in the dump, and I asked if I could pray for her. She was very willing, and moments like these were God moments, growing moments for me as a believer. That stretched me out of my comfort zone.

Another villager who left an imprint on my heart was Luba, a precious shut-in with cancer. She laid in pain as her body wasted away. Her drunkard husband at the time, at times forgetting to feed her. By this time, we had a crowd of village youth who attended weekly Wednesdays, youth meetings, and a group of us girls would try to regularly visit Luba.

We'd sing to her, and those of us who could stomach the stench in her house would go in, and one of the Ukrainian girls would read to her from the Bible. She loved it, and one day after talking to her about Jesus, we asked if she would like to repent. She could barely talk because she was in so much pain, but she gave a profound nod of her head, and one of us girls helped her pray, and all of us saw those dim eyes suddenly clear as she smiled a toothless grin at us. She died a few years later, and I hope that one day I'll see her in heaven.

Time would not permit to tell of the joys of teaching the village children Sunday School and showing the village youth what wholesome fun could look like. It was in this setting that I got more acquainted with Igor, my wonderful husband, as he came to translate most of our youth meetings as well as some of our Sunday services.

I also attended some of his church's youth camps and youth meetings. Igor proposed to me five years into our Ukraine adventure. I was barely 19, and knew a lot of the language, but still wasn't completely confident in speaking it. I felt God's strong leading that this was the path for me, even though I knew that saying yes to Igor would be grounds for me to be expelled from my home church here in Haith.

[41 : 11] The Holdemans have the one true church doctrine which prohibits marriage to anyone outside of their church fellowship, and God really came through for me during this time and gave me much confidence.

It was a hard time and a hard decision. It wasn't really a hard decision, because I had the confidence, right, but there was a lot that went into that decision. I chose to be re-baptized through immersion to experience what I felt was the way it had been done in the Bible times, because I had received pouring the first time. I took membership in Igor's church, and shortly after that we were happily married.

Even though I had gotten used to being a Canadian in a Ukrainian village, it was a whole new level of cultural immersion after we got married. Igor and I continued the small village outreach in our village Stavii for a time, and our Sundays consisted of Sunday morning church at the big church, and then home for a quick lunch, off to afternoon service at our village outreach, and then straight to evening church after that.

For quite a while that's what our life looked like on Sundays. We did that for a while, but then my parents, and even after my parents, had went back to Canada, and another Canadian family that had been there, they also went back to Canada.

And so eventually we just started taking who we could from our village to the bigger church that was 20 minutes away. And we always had a full vehicle, and sometimes there was two layers of people, and more people than seat belts for sure, and we had a lot of grandmas that would ride with us. They're very dear, very dear souls.

[42 : 52] These experiences were all part of my spiritual journey, and I'm still continually learning that I need Jesus. At times, looking back, I could have avoided many discouragements and conflicts had I only surrendered my pride and held tighter to Him.

Life has ups and downs, unexpected twists and turns, war, just things that you don't expect to come, right? A big trial for me as a woman was four years of infertility before God blessed us with children.

And I'm just so thankful that when this life is unstable, that our God is unchanging. Second Timothy 1.12 says, For I know that whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him until that day.

And it's also my desire to be a part of this local church, and you have all been a blessing to us already. Thank you.

Well, my name is Igor Makarov, and I think I'll be a little bit shorter.

[44 : 09] We do have very different backgrounds. I was born in 1989 in the far east of Russia, probably as far as you can think.

And I have one older sister and one younger brother, and my brother now lives here in Grand Prairie, but the rest of my direct family are in Ukraine.

So growing up, we did not hear about God. We did not have any exposure to any religion whatsoever.

It was like my growing up years were in Siberia. It was like early 90s. It was like right after Soviet Union. Pretty much everyone was atheist at that point.

Nobody talked about God. We didn't hear anything. However, our parents, they managed to give us solid upbringing and good, solid standards.

[45 : 15] When I was still little, we moved to Ukraine and back several times. To be honest, I don't know how many until I was 10 years old when we moved to Ukraine for the last time.

I think many of you could relate to that situation. And it was right during 90s. And the times were really hard.

Like for everyone in Ukraine or Russia. Nobody had any money.

And even if you had money, you couldn't buy anything in the store because there wasn't much. And right then, it was really hard. And I learned to work hard.

And make living when I was still little. And the last time we went to Ukraine for good, it was 2001.

[46 : 21] And since then, things kind of were stabilizing with my family and everything. And a few years later, in 2005, or actually maybe in 2004, we made friends with lots of believer people.

And they invited us to church. And we started attending church services. And we started hearing the gospel for the first time.

It was my mom and my older sister that were converted and joined the church first. And a year later, I also made that decision.

I was 16 years old at that point. I clearly knew the way of salvation at that point. For me, it was a bit of an understanding process.

And in the first time, I realized that this whole time there was God that actually looked after us.

[47 : 31] And I made that decision to repent and change my life. And so the next church service, I went out to the front.

And I asked the pastor that I want to repent. And we prayed together. And that was my experience. The local church that I joined, at that point, it was a very well-established organism.

It had over 120 years of documented history. And it was a priceless experience to learn the gospel, to learn the word of God, and to take over lots of that experience from friends that I made and personal acquaintances, from people that actually lived through persecution times that spent many years in prison for printing Bibles and just organizing church services.

And our church actually had a secret part of printing too. And they were doing binding for the books. It was Bibles and song books.

And lots of church members didn't even know about its existence until later years. So, if anything, it gave me a good experience and a good desire to do what's right, to follow God.

[49 : 13] And when I joined church, I was still in school. It was like you had to make that strong decision to join the church because, like, at that time still, like, you would be like, you would actually, like, everyone would kind of, um, pick on you and, like, notice that, okay, well, this guy is now a churchgoer.

And because everyone else isn't. So, um, you had to become that center of attention. But ever since I repented, I never had any doubts and never looked back.

I always wanted to, uh, to serve God, to do what's right. And, um, now I guess we're, we found ourselves here and, uh, we, we want to join the local church here and, um, to become members here.

And I think we have to thank our ■'s republic.

Well, thank you for sharing. And every testimony is different as we see God calling in this situation from very different parts of the world.

[51 : 02] And so we praise God for that. So thank you for sharing. We have the five questions that we ask in regards to membership.

And so we're going to walk through them one by one. And for each one, you can answer in turn. And then after that, we're going to sign the membership agreement. So the first question is, do you believe with all your heart that Jesus Christ is your Savior and Lord and that he's brought you out of darkness into his holy light?

Yes, I do. I believe. Number two, have you sufficiently acquainted yourself with the teachings and practices of this church?

And have you prayerfully sought God's will regarding becoming a member of this church?

Yes, I have. I have. Number three, are you willing with God's help to share the blessings and shoulder the responsibilities that fall to members of the church?

Yes. Yes. And fourthly, do you promise as much as lies in you to live in unity, peace, and love, and in obedience to God and the church, to uphold the church with your prayers, your gifts, and your services?

[52 : 23] Yes. Yes, I promise. And lastly, are you willing to accept reproof from your spiritual brethren if they are aware of sin in your life?

And are you willing to give reproof if you are aware of sin in your life? Yes. Yes, I am. Okay, thank you.

So at this point we're going to... So these same questions are reflected on the covenant here.

So I'll get you to sign here, Igor. Igor. Igor. Igor. Igor. Igor. Igor. Igor.

Igor. Igor. Igor. Igor. Igor. Igor. Igor. Igor. Igor.

[53 : 17] Igor. Okay, at this time I'd like to call up Henry and Tammy and Ben and Annie, just as our ministerial, to give them the hand of welcome. And Sadie as well.

Go ahead. Welcome.

Welcome. Welcome. And at this point, I would just like to have our congregation stand in showing their approval as well.

Thank you for that. You may be seated. 1 Peter 2, verse 9, just as we close, says, But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, his own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

And so that's what God says about us. We are chosen. We are royal. Royalty. We're kings and priests before God.

[55 : 19] And his own special people, that we may proclaim the praises of him who called us out of darkness. And so a beautiful verse of purpose for the church as we realize that's why we are here.

So thank you. With that, we're going to have a closing song. Thank you. All right. Well,