

# Not of the World

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Preacher: Philip Nation

[ 0 : 0 0 ] We will go ahead and dismiss our children to children's church, age of kindergarten through second grade. They'll meet you in the foyer and then lead you down to children's church.

We have a guest speaker with us this morning. And instead of our usual sermon video, introduction video, I'm going to tell you just a little bit about our guest speaker. His name is Phillip Nation.

He is a friend of mine, has been for the last few years. And they stayed in our house last night because we have that guest bedroom on the side. And they got our special wake-up call around 7 o'clock this morning when Finley, our big Irish wolfhound slash doodle, decided to go open their door because he can do that.

And he's used to, you know, maybe my parents staying in there or something like that. And they'll, you know, anyway, it just, that was not expected. I apologize for that. But fun nonetheless.

There you go. So, but we had a great time of fellowship last night. And Phillip is the publisher for Thomas Nelson Bibles. He's a vice president with HarperCollins. And he has been a church planner.

[ 1 : 0 8 ] He's been a pastor. He was an executive at Lifeway, the Southern Baptist publication arm for many years. And he's had a lot of ministry experience. He's going to bless you this morning.

So, Phillip, without any further ado, you come and share what God's laying in your heart. Thank you so much. Appreciate that. Well, thank you, Sam. All right. So, let's make sure that this is, oh, there we are.

There we are. Well, good morning, everybody. I have my phone here for a reason. And it is to start a timer. But all of you know what it means when a Southern Baptist pastor starts a timer.

Nothing. So, well, I want you to turn in your Bibles or turn on your Bibles, depending upon what generation you're from, and find your way over to the book of 1 Peter in the New Testament.

If you get to the book of Hebrews, you haven't gone far enough. If you get to the book of Revelation, you've gone too far. So, it's in between those two books of the New Testament. And we're going to look at a passage in chapter 2 this morning, specifically verses 4 through 10 in just a moment.

[ 2 : 1 5 ] As I was thinking about getting ready for this passage to share this with you, I thought about the idea of have you ever felt like you did not fit in?

You know, maybe you reach all the way back to childhood, and you remember some moment on the playground where you felt like you didn't fit in, or maybe it's been some social situation that it was like just super awkward.

Everybody else was, you know, cheering for one team, but you were a fan of another team. Or there's any number of reasons for why you wouldn't feel like you fit in.

Well, as Peter, this early leader of the church, is writing to these believers in the Roman Empire, this is very much the theme of his two letters, is that we as a people don't feel like we fit in, and there's a good reason.

We don't. And that's a good reason. It's a very positive thing for us to think about why it is that we don't fit in, why there is a certain amount of earthly awkwardness to Christian faithfulness.

[ 3 : 26 ] Because you are very much the old metaphor of the, you know, you're the fish swimming against the current. You are the person who is standing out because you're the peculiar one in the situation.

And that's okay. The early church, they felt this. They felt this culturally. They felt this amongst their families oftentimes, always socially, very often politically, when it came to the empire, when it came to other religions, when it came to just the business practices of the day.

They didn't feel like they fit in. And that's a good thing. And so Peter writes to them in this kind of manner. In fact, if I can just ask you to look not at chapter 2 of 1 Peter, but go ahead and look at chapter 1, and see how it is that he opens up this passage, opens up this letter.

He says, Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ to the pilgrims of the dispersion. And then he names all of these other places. I mean, he launches with this idea that we're all pilgrims in a foreign land.

And then the verse, I'm going to read in just a second verses 4 through 10. But look there in chapter 2, verse 11, and he says, Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, essentially as people that are foreigners.

[ 4 : 55 ] And you'll remember that the Apostle Paul, in some of his writings in the New Testament, he tells us that we are ambassadors for Christ. It is, you're not, you don't belong here any longer.

Your citizenship is with another kingdom. You're from another place now. You belong to something else and something greater. And so, yes, we're going to feel like we're out of place.

And again, that's the good thing. Because as the world continues to reject the Lord, we can continue to shine the light of why they should come back in.

They should come into the kingdom. So look with me, if you will, here in 1 Peter chapter 4. I'm going to begin at verse 4, or chapter 2.

I'm going to begin at verse 4 and read through verse 10. Coming to him as to a living stone. The him there is referring to Jesus.

[ 5 : 55 ] Coming to him as to a living stone. Rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious. You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house.

A holy priesthood. To offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is also contained in the scripture.

Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone. Elect, precious, and he who believes on him will by no means be put to shame.

Therefore, to you who believe, he is precious. But to those who are disobedient, the stone which the builders rejected, he's become the chief cornerstone.

And a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. They stumble being disobedient to the word to which they were also appointed. And then verse 9 is where I'm going to ask you to focus in in just a few moments.

[ 6 : 58 ] And I want to try to give some greater explanation here to verse 9. 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.

Who once were not a people, but are now the people of God. Who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

What an incredible passage. You know, I say that every time I preach. Sam, you probably think the same thing. You get finished reading a passage of scripture and you think in your mind.

And we as pastors, preachers, teachers, we say out loud. What an incredible passage. Those of you that are Sunday school teachers, Bible study leaders, you probably do the same thing.

[ 7 : 55 ] You get to the end of every passage and you say, what an incredible passage. Knowing that every passage you could read in scripture is incredible. And so I think it is always appropriate after we've read the scripture.

Let's pause for a moment. Let me guide us in just another moment of prayer and ask God to help us to hear clearly from his spirit. As to what he wants to teach and to move in our hearts.

How he wants to move in each one of us today. Pray with me. Father, we come to you humbly. Because we know that you don't have any rivals or equals on the earth or in heaven or in the spiritual realm.

That you alone are God. You alone are worthy of praise and adoration and worship. We pray that what we have already done this morning collectively as a people. To study your word.

To sing your praises. To hear the testimonies of how you are moving in our midst and in our city. That you would bless us with a knowledge of who Christ is.

[ 8 : 56 ] That you would allow us to hear clearly how the spirit wants us to respond to you this morning from your word. And so God, I would pray that what we do not know you will teach us.

That what we're not ready for yet, that you'll equip us. And how it is that we have not conformed our lives to Christ yet. That you would mold us.

So that we would be obedient, holy followers of our Lord. For it's in the name of Christ we pray. Amen. Peter in this passage describes this Christ that we follow.

And makes it very clear that the world, that many people are going to reject him. And he leans back into the Old Testament. Quoting from the Old Testament. He uses this metaphor of a stone, of a chief cornerstone.

Now, I'm not a builder. I'm not handy. I am not mechanically inclined. In fact, you would have to call me mechanically declined. I am not a person who should be around power tools.

[ 10 : 07 ] If you need something fixed at your house, you call me and I'll get you in touch with somebody who can help you. But if you need to break something at your house, I'm your guy. And so, like, this kind of imagery, sometimes I have to dig a little deeper to get to it.

But I got to it of understanding that in this old, ancient world, the idea of a key stone is critical for the construction of an entire building.

It is the one piece of foundation that they make sure is plumb, that they make sure is straight on all sides, that is going to set the foundation.

It's going to set the stage so that everything is level and everything is secure. And without the key cornerstone, without that foundational stone, nothing else matters.

The structure is not going to happen. And the same is true for us as an individual, as a believer. And it's also true of us as congregations. That if we don't have that key cornerstone of Christ as our foundational rock, nothing else matters.

[ 11 : 14 ] If it's our religious fervor, doesn't matter. If it's our traditions, doesn't matter. If we're going to build it on our own faithfulness, doesn't matter. Everything's going to get very shaky.

Everything is going to fall apart. But if we will utilize Christ as that key cornerstone, and we keep going back to the idea of, this is the stone that the rest of the world has rejected.

Therefore, look at how the world is falling apart. Look at the shakiness. Look at the unsettled nature of the world. It's because they've not chosen Christ as the foundational cornerstone.

They're trying to build on all sorts of other things. Financial security, moral superiority, immoral superiority. They're trying to base it on their own wit, their own wisdom, their own decision making.

But boy, we've got to turn a mirror on ourselves as individuals and as groups and as congregations of, well, what are we doing? Are we ensuring day after day after day, year after year after year, are we willing to come under, I'll just say, a ruthless kind of observation of our own lives?

[ 12 : 24 ] That we would be willing to have that kind of assessment of what am I building my life on? And you know what? Oftentimes, there's a really easy way for you to go through that kind of assessment of your life, and that is look at your bank account and your calendar.

And I don't just mean like a work calendar. I mean, really think about what is it that I spend all of my resources on, and what is it I spend all my time on? And if you look through all of that and Christ is missing, or Christ is so far removed from a priority, then we're not building our lives on Christ as the cornerstone.

And Peter gives this great warning that the people, not only is Jesus not their cornerstone, but he has become an offense, and he is something that they're just stumbling over.

And you and I need to come under that question of, what is it that I'm building my life on? But then he's able to pivot and say, but you know what? There is some really good news.

There is some really good news about the people that Peter is writing this letter to, and I hope that you'll take comfort in this. I hope that you'll find yourself in this. If you don't find yourself in this, that's what we want to be able to help you with today, is to bring you to Christ, the one who loves so dearly, the one who cares so completely, the one who has died in our place for our sins on the cross of Calvary, is dead, is buried, and is resurrected three days later, so that you and I, if we will just put our simple faith in him and repent of our sins, that he says, I'll give you eternal life, which he says in John chapter 17, verse 3, that eternal life is knowing him and is knowing the God in heaven and the one that he has sent.

[ 14 : 18 ] And yes, eternal life is also about gates of pearl and streets of gold and walls of precious jewels. And yes, you know, each of us, like the old hymn says, I've got a mansion just over the hilltop in that bright land where I'll never grow old, but there's so much more than just that destination.

Christ promises this relationship with us if we will make him that chief cornerstone. And so I want you to think about these descriptions that Peter gives to us as to whether or not your relationship with God is relational or it's transactional.

Is it that you have decided, I'm just going to be, I'm going to do favors for God and I'm expecting him to do favors for me. I'm going to be a good guy, and I'm going to expect him to do nice things to me.

I'm going to be nice to my neighbors. I expect God to do good things for me. Or have you come under a surrendering relationship with God where you have said, Jesus, I'm yours.

Because that's what we're about to see explained in 1 Peter chapter 2. He gives to us four descriptions of who you and I are if we come into a relationship with Jesus there in verse 9.

[ 15 : 29 ] First he says, but you are a chosen generation. Some of your translations of scripture may say you're a chosen race.

But you're a chosen generation. There is this amazing call that God puts out to us into the world where he says, if you will come to me, I will make you mine.

I want to choose all of you. I'm the one doing the calling. I, from eternity past through eternity present, God is calling out through the annals of history.

And he is calling in this moment. He's calling you. Maybe you responded to that call like me. I responded to that call to become a believer when I was very young.

Some of you responded to that call when you were in adulthood. Some as teenagers. Some of you are still thinking about that call. But just know that right now God is calling your neighbor and your co-worker and your cousin and that guy down the street that never keeps his lawn up and that other gal down the street that always shows off because her lawn is immaculate and nobody else's is.

[ 16 : 46 ] He's calling all of us. But he says, You are this chosen generation that you can join with him and with the great chorus of the church globally and locally to be a showpiece of the grace of God.

It is such a mistake for us to think that somehow we would have figured out this whole thing on our own. This is a testimony of God's goodness.

Now, oftentimes I missed when I would read the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, about what the highlight of the beginning of the ministry of Jesus really was because the very, chronologically, the very first message that Jesus delivered was the simple message, repent for the kingdom of God is near.

And for so long, I saw that and kind of shrugged up a little bit because I wanted always God to be the God of grace, the God of love, the God that was the soft father in heaven and not feeling like it was the hard-edged judge of the universe in eternity.

But as I've grown up and as I've matured and as I've tried to read the whole of Scripture and understand it, I've come to this conviction that when God makes this universal call to us and He says, repent, that that is the great kindness of God.

[ 18 : 27 ] Think about what it is that He is trying to call you out of, the self-destruction that we heap upon ourselves that sin does to us, the self-imposed damage of our sinful choices of what we do in the dark and sometimes that we put on display for the whole world to see that I'm allowed to get angry because I got a reason to be angry or I'm allowed to be bitter because I got a good reason to be bitter or I'm allowed to fill in the blank with whatever sinful behavior.

I'm allowed to be mad at this person or to get back at that other person or to act this way and God is calling us. He wants you to know He chose you and He wants you and He is calling for you to come out of that so that He can make you one of His own.

You're a chosen generation. Secondly, He doesn't just say, okay, I just need you to get in the threshold of the door. I just want you to kind of graduate from this life, summa cum, skin of your teeth into heaven, but instead, you're chosen.

But then secondly there in verse 9, He says, not only are you a chosen generation, you're a royal priesthood. Now that sounds insane. Like, I got up this morning and I saw myself in the mirror.

I don't feel like a member of the royal priesthood of the kingdom of God very often. Like, I know me. Like, I know what I'm capable of. And yet God says, not only are you going to come into the family as part of the chosen generation, I'm going to make you a member of the royal family and I'm going to make you one of the people on the earth that you get to serve as bringing the offerings of praise to the God of the universe, that you're one of the people who puts that on display for all of the world to see, that you're one of the people that is the go-between between heaven and earth, but you are not just like a little minion, but instead you're part of the royal family.

[ 20 : 37 ] One of my favorite stories of the Old Testament. is found, it's almost like a footnote in the story of King David.

King David became really close friends with Jonathan, the son of King Saul, when David was still waiting to be king and Saul was mad all the time that God had removed his spirit and that there was going to be another king that was going to come behind him because Saul had been immoral and had not followed after the Lord.

And yet David, as a young man, becomes really close friends with Saul's son, Jonathan, and one day they make a private promise to one another. They say, if anything happens to the other one of us, we'll take care of each other's families.

David says, if anything happens to you, Jonathan, I'll take care of your family. Jonathan says, David, if anything happens to you, I'll take care of your family. Well, you fast forward, civil war breaks out.

Eventually, Saul is off the throne and gone. Jonathan is killed in battle. David becomes king. And David sends one of his servants out and he says, go and find out if there's anybody left of the house of Jonathan.

[ 21 : 56 ] And they go and they do a search and they discover there's one guy left and his name is Mephibosheth. Now, I went to seminary so I could learn how to pronounce that. His name is Mephibosheth.

And Mephibosheth, when he was a baby, during all of the civil war, some soldiers came to attack the home and a nursemaid picked up Mephibosheth and went to run out of the house.

And when she did, she dropped him and it broke both of his legs and he was a crippled man for the rest of his life. And so they bring Mephibosheth now as a grown man into the court of King David.

Mephibosheth is part of the family of Saul. He's the grandson of Saul. And so David says to him, are you Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul?

And Mephibosheth's response is, I am. What does the king want with a dead dog like me? That's what he says, a dead dog like me. And King David says, you're adopted, you're a part of the royal family, you will live in my house and you will eat at the king's table for the rest of your life.

[ 23 : 08 ] And that's the picture of what happens to you and I. It doesn't matter the condition of our life, it doesn't matter what the world has said about us, you and I get adopted into the royal family of God where we get to be a showcase of God's grace.

We're the people now who get to display, who get to sing, who get to talk, who get to witness, who get to tell about the goodness of God. He says, you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, and then he says, you are a holy nation.

Holiness is a weird word. In our modern parlance, we often think about people that are holy as those who just make really good moral decisions. And I want to encourage you that that is part of holiness.

But the biblical idea built out from Genesis to Revelation of what does it mean to be holy is not just that you've made morally superior decisions to your neighbors and your co-workers and all of your friends, but rather the biblical concept of holiness is that you have a life that is set apart for the will and the ways of God.

Think about it that way. Set apart for the will and the ways of God. And so it does include all of those ethical decisions that you make, but it's the idea that we are now a separate nation.

[ 24 : 33 ] We are a group of people unified under the banner of Christ where our lives are set apart. Now, Sam, in your very kind introduction, talked about how I had been previously.

I've been a pastor and now I'm in a season of life where I am a Bible publisher. I mean, that is a cool gig. Can you imagine waking up every day that it's my job to publish Bibles, to get more Bibles into the world?

That is so awesome. But let me just tell you, every day, what I actually do is swim in a sea of Excel spreadsheets. I do inventory management, I do production meetings, I talk to our marketing team.

Now, I do get to do the cool stuff of like, hey, let's come up with a new typesetting, let's come up with a new study Bible edition, let's figure out how we can put cross-references in that'll help people like navigate through the scriptures.

I do get to do that fun part, but most of what I do is I run a business unit within a big publishing company. And there are some days that I feel very disjointed.

[ 25 : 41 ] There are some days that I get sideways, and I feel disconnected. There are some days to put in a phrasing of one of my very close friends, his name's Michael, that he's a great writer and great thinker.

He talks about how sometimes we self-amputate from the body of Christ, how we decide that we're gonna take a step back because we didn't like something, we didn't like somebody, because we got selfish, because, you know, I just don't wanna participate right now, I wanna go over here and kinda stew in my own juices about something, or I've chosen a certain sin that I just think is more important than my own spiritual growth right now, or I'm, you know, or I just get lazy or apathetic about my spiritual life.

And here, Peter is reminding us as believers, you, God called you, he adopted you into the family so that you could be a part of this royal priesthood, and you're a holy nation.

Your life is gonna look different from everybody else, but not just your life. I'm from Alabama, so I would say y'all's life, so there'd be two apostrophes, Y apostrophe, A-L apostrophe-S, or Ewan's, you know, it's y'all of us are now a holy group of people.

And I kid a little bit when I say this, but I kinda mean it too. The city of Henrietta, Texas ought to look at the family of First Baptist Henrietta, and there ought to be a part of them where they go, those people are a little different from us.

[ 27 : 25 ] That ought to be actually the case where they say those people are a little bit different from us because if you look at the next and the fourth description, he says, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, his own special people.

There's some translations that say a peculiar people, a people of his own possession. When you take those last two descriptions, a holy nation, a holy nation, and a people, his own special people, it is that, yeah, we're gonna stand out.

We're gonna be a little bit different. We're gonna love when other people don't. We're gonna show grace when other people don't. We're gonna stand up for the truth when other people don't.

We're gonna call you to Christ when other people say, no, no, no, you can continue to be exactly who you are. We are gonna be a little bit different and that's the good thing.

That is who we are and there is a sense at which we love our rugged individualism. We love being who we are. This is how I was born.

[ 28 : 32 ] This is how I was bred. This is how I'm gonna be. You know, the preacher joke that I heard growing up as it was, you know, I was Southern Baptist born.

I was Southern Baptist bred and when I die, I'll be Southern Baptist dead. You know, and so that's some of how we operate no matter where it is that whether it's your fan base of whatever team you root for or whatever it is that is that, you know, the special thing in your life.

But he says that you have been acquired. That idea there of his own special people, the language behind that is that you've actually been acquired by Christ.

You've been acquired by God. He made the payment with his blood. You are now his. And how freeing is that? That now you know who you are.

Now you'll know what to do. I mean, as a pastor, maybe the most common question that people ever came to talk with me about is, Lord, I've asked the Lord, I've asked the Lord, I've asked the Lord.

[ 29 : 41 ] I don't know what I'm supposed to do next. And I've learned over the years of traversing that question in my own life, not perfect yet, got a long way to go.

But if you want to know what you're supposed to do next, figure out who you are right now. Know who you are so that you'll know what to do.

Because if you've decided that you are your own man, you are your own woman, I will make my own decisions, then you're going to be going in a million different directions. But if you know whose you are, that Christ has acquired you by the cost of blood, that you are a holy nation, you're a group of people set apart for the will and the ways of God, that you are a royal priesthood, you've been adopted into the family of God, that you are a chosen generation where God is the one who called you out of death and into life, then suddenly knowing what to do next, that becomes easy.

And we saw a testimony of that this morning. As I was watching that video, I had to ask Pastor Sam for a pen because Emberlin, I don't know who Emberlin is, but Emberlin said, and part of her testimony that we saw in the video, she had one of the longer ones, so I couldn't write it all down, so Emberlin, if you're in here, sorry about that.

But basically, she said, now I know what to do with my life so that when people ask me, why are you so kind, I can tell them because I have the love of Jesus.

[ 31 : 18 ] I mean, one of your own GAs put on display exactly what this passage is all about, that why are you so kind? Why is it that you're so calm?

Why can you be so steady in the midst of all of this? Why is it that you can get along with everybody? Why is it that you can set your wants, your wishes, your preferences aside so that we can serve Christ in the community?

Why can you do that? Easy. Because I have the love of Jesus. Because this passage ends with saying that you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, his own special people, so that you can proclaim the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light who once were not a people but are now the people of God who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

Great theologian from another generation and another continent once said, there's no other church than the church sent into the world, there's no other mission than that of the church of Christ.

In a generation after him, another theologian said, you know what, the church exists by mission just as fire exists by burning. I mean, it is part and parcel of who we are.

[ 32 : 47 ] Without the mission of Christ, without knowing who we are and being out on mission, we are not the people of God. It is moving from the orange ping pong balls to the white ones.

It is the prayer for the lost neighbor. It is the prayer for the lost grandchild. It is the prayer for the wayward son of God. It is the prayer for the neighbor who doesn't know the gospel yet or who knows it but has rejected it.

It is, I am chosen. I am part of the priesthood. I am part of the holy nation. I am the people of God's own possession so that I can declare the praises of the God who calls us out of darkness and into his marvelous light.

And I want you to be a part of that great family of God. And so today, no matter how long you've been a church, attender, member, Sunday school attendee, volunteer, all of those things, you can put all of that aside if there's not been a moment in time in your life where you have surrendered your life to Christ, you have repented of your sins, you have put your faith in Jesus Christ, the resurrected Lord of all things, today is the day of your salvation.

But I also want to say that if you've done that and you have found yourself hesitant, you have found yourself at a loss, you have found yourself as a I don't know how to get to this person, I love to share the gospel with them, I want you to call upon the name of the Lord today.

[ 34 : 13 ] I want you to beg the Spirit today that He would give you an entrance into that person's life, into that conversation, that He would give you boldness of heart not to just go and to bludgeon them with the gospel, but to be able to lovingly enter into the conversation so that you can share the gospel with a neighbor, so that you can go and love someone who is unlovable, so that you can go and be a part of the Spirit's work here in your community, and to respond to the call of God, so that you can be a part of the so that generation, that God has made me one of His so that I can call more people to be one of His.

I want to pray for you, and after I pray, then Pastor Sam's going to come and close out the service, but let me pray for you, and you just, let's bow our heads, enter into a moment of prayer, and just come along with me as I guide us in this moment.

Father, you are good, you are so good to us, and I pray that you would forgive us where we have faltered, where we have fallen short, where we have not been your faithful stewards of the gospel, because it happens to all of us, and none of us are immune, but God, this is a moment where we want to, once again, come before you and surrender.

So God, I pray for the man, the woman, the teenager, the kid in this congregation today, whether they're in the room, or out with the kids in children's ministry.

Lord, if there is one here today that has not yet surrendered their life, no matter how baptistic they've been, no matter how religious they've been, or how wayward they've been, God, would you fulfill your word and come and heal our rebelliousness, and love us, and make us your own?

[ 36 : 10 ] God, I pray that you would help the one who has not yet surrendered to Christ, that right now in this moment, they will call upon you as Lord and Savior, repent of their sin, and say, I trust in Christ that he's risen from the dead.

I pray that that would be the case. Allow them to hear clearly from your spirit, that they would respond to you in faith for their salvation. And Lord, for the many members of this church that are looking for a way to share their faith, looking for a way to be faithful to you.

I pray that they would just lift that name of that co-worker, that family member, that friend, that neighbor before you right now.

Friends, let's just do that right now. Let's take those names of the people that we love so much, that we know so closely. Let's lift them before the Father in heaven. God, these friends of ours, these people in our families, these people at our workplaces, would you give us a way to share the gospel with them?

Lord, help us to be on the long-term journey of friendship with them, but God, we want to see them saved. We want to see an awakening spiritually. We want to see a revival in our city.

[ 37 : 28 ] God, would you bring that about? Would you use us in it? God, would you use me in his life? God, would you use me in her life?

God, we know that you love these friends of ours so much more than we can fathom. So will you make us faithful in your kingdom and give us understanding and courage to speak when you open the door?

Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for your goodness. Lord, we're ready to be on your mission continuously day after day. For it's in the name of Christ we pray.

Amen. Folks, let's go ahead and keep our seats. We have just a minute or two before we dismiss, but before we do that, would you go ahead and bow your heads with me and remain in a moment of prayer?

I'm going to ask some follow-up questions from what our speaker was talking to us about this morning. I'm grateful for him bringing the word. You heard a very clear call that reminds us who we are in Christ.

[ 38 : 39 ] And I'm going to ask this question. I don't for a moment believe that everyone in this room has had that moment of conversion, that moment of giving your heart to Jesus.

So I want to invite you to do that today. If that's you and you say, I need to make today the day that once and for all I give my life to Jesus.

We just had three boys do it at camp. We've had adults do it this year. We've had teenagers, people of every age group choose to make the commitment and say, I'm giving my life to Jesus.

If that's you this morning, would you slip your hand up right now? You have privacy in this room. I'd like to see you and like to pray for you. Let me give you a moment.

How many of you would say I have someone on my mind right now? Maybe while Phillip was praying. How many of you say I have someone on my mind right now that I'm going to pray for them to give their lives to Jesus and I'm going to see what God would have me to do to speak to them and share the gospel.

[ 39 : 48 ] Would you slip your hand up real quick all across the room? Thank you. I know many of those people that are on your minds right now are represented in these ping pong balls. We're praying for them. We've seen two turn to faith in Christ.

We've got reports. There's another one. God, right now, I just ask that you would use your people in this room. Give us boldness, God.

Give us opportunity and give us boldness. Give us clarity of mind. Help us to do the hard work behind the scenes of preparing, of diving into the gospel, making it so real and fresh in our minds that we can't help but share it when you give us those chances.

And God, work on the hearts of those who need to hear. Remind us who we are. We are your chosen people. We are your peculiar, special people.

But God, you have us here for this high and holy purpose. Help us to not miss it. Thank you, Thank you.