

The Scarlet Letter “A”

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[0 : 00] The scripture readings today come from the book of Galatians chapter 3 and Romans chapter 8.

Please follow along as we read these passages printed in your bulletin. By the law then, it was added because of transgressions, having been ordained for angels by the agency of every mediator, until the seed would come to rule the promise that he knew.

Now a mediator is not a long party only, whereas God is only one. Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be. For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would have indeed been based on the law.

But the scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which is later to be revealed.

Therefore, the law has become an attunitive to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer unread to them. For you are all sons of God, through faith in Christ Jesus.

[1 : 19] For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither slave nor free man. There is neither male nor female.

For you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to the promise. And from the book of Romans we find this.

Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he is not different at all from a slave, although he is the owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers who tell the date sent by his father. So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental days of the world. But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under the law, so that he might redeem those who are under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. Because you are sons, God has sent forth the spirit of his son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father, be here. Therefore, there is no one who is a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir from God.

[2 : 29] However, at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over the world.

For you have not received a spirit of slavery needing to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons, by which we cry out, Abba, Father. The spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and the children of heirs also, heirs of God, and fellow heirs with Christ. If indeed we suffer with him, so that we may also be glorified with him. This is the reading of God's word. This is the reading of God's word. Thank you. Thank you. Exactly.

Oh. OK. So until next time, when I get up here, I say, how are you doing, I need to give a clarifying Okay, someone told me next time I get up here and I say, how you doing?

I need to give a clarifying theme to work afterwards. So on a scale of one to five, how you guys doing? You good?

[3 : 58] Four? Three? Yeah, that's pretty good. Four for you. Three, I'll work on that. Hey, we are going to attempt something that I've been kind of praying about and thinking about for eight years now.

One of the things that is exciting to me about being a pastor is I get to be a part of everyone's journey. Whether you know or not, to me, one of the most exciting things for me is just to hear your stories and hear God step into your stories and see the struggles, even though I know that isn't a fun thing, to see how God is faithful in the struggles and how he brings you through things in life.

To me, that is amazing. And I realize even as I hear your stories and you share these things, I see where God's taking you on this journey of life, that you get to hear our stories as a family, as a Miller family.

And one of our commitments, and many of you know, Christina or I, for any period of time, you know that one of our commitments is to be as real as possible in front of the congregation. This is the community.

It's the family. So we say this is our family also. And in our family, we value realness and authenticity more than almost anything. And so I think that you probably maybe receive too much realness from us sometimes.

[5 : 14] But as I think about that, you know, our hope is that you see that we are on a journey also and that we are broken and we desperately need Christ.

We desperately need the gospel. We desperately need grace. And so as we go on this journey as a family with you guys, as our family, we share parts of that journey with you. And an interesting part of that journey, I think one of the most exciting parts of that journey, happened on May 5, 2003. in our life as a family. And so I'm going to, we're going to talk about that really briefly. So I'm going to get my date here. And so, Becca, can you introduce yourself to the one of the people that I'm going to do?

What's your name? I'm in Montana. I'm in New 12 and I'm in 100. Born in Hong Kong. Montana. Montana is a very interesting name for a person born in Hong Kong.

Right? Where did that Montana come from? Here's my name. Montana. She's the first person. You're a Christian. Okay. So, Becca, as we talk about this adoption today, and people probably know that you're adopted because you look different than me, right?

[6 : 43] A little. You're much more nice than me than I am. Would you share with the church family, the church family, how you came to be a woman?

My parents wanted to adopt me. So they liked to call me Joe. I came to get me and I was in the house. We heard that in China, the most beautiful girls are in Hong Kong.

That's the best thing to do. So, if you want to get a beautiful wife and go to Hong Kong, if you want to learn Mandarin really well, you go to Hong Kong. There's a mixture of Beijing, Yon.

We can't really get you there. Can you share, I mean, I don't want to put you on the spot, but what is your favorite thing about being a Miller besides your cool dad? I don't know because there's so many things.

What would it be? What would you, what would be something that you enjoyed when you're proud of that? I have a fun family. You have a fun family. That's a good one. Yeah. How would you find?

[7 : 50] I'm asking her many more questions than we talked about. She's going to beat me up later. Do you know that your dad is crazy about you?

How do you know that? He's a Nazi. Okay, so one last question. If you could share anything about yourself to the one of our family, what would you like to share?

I'm awesome. We're going to do the pride talk. So let me ask you a question after that.

Are you more awesome than Kim? So we'll deal with that later. I love you so much. Thanks for coming up to be here for this.

And can I pray for you? And I'm going to pray for Rebecca and pray for all the other kids in our church. And if you don't like Rebecca. Well, I thank you for this day. I thank you for Rebecca and how you brought her into our family and how she's in your life.

[9 : 06] And she just makes our family so much better. And every way that you give to her and give to her. And so I stand for her. I pray that she would always know love and acceptance.

And she would do mighty things when she would do. And I pray that all the other children out there in Hong Kong are not adopted yet.

or are not adopted. I pray what you do. Your spirit be upon them. Your word says that you have a special place in your heart. For children, orphans, and readers. So we pray for the Lord.

We pray as a church. And you continue to teach us what that means for us. As we love the kingdom of Jesus. Father, we come before you realizing as we just sang. That we actually all are adopted. So we love you. And pray the saints for something to say. Amen. Amen. Amen. Okay. So that is a, she's going to get her microphone off here really quickly.

[10 : 06] You know, as Becca is going, and the rest of my kids get to go and leave, because they have other things to do. We could just ask, if she can get the microphone out of her hair.

We would just ask, you know, it's interesting being a pastor. Your kids are always under the microscope, right? So sometimes you grab them and say, you shouldn't do that because you're a pastor's kid. You should know better than having that things. And so we would just ask that you just treat our kids just like every other kid in the church.

And treat them normal and don't have higher expectations for them than you have for your own kids. Because they are sinful. And also, to be honest, it's interesting. We took Rebecca.

When we first, God gave us Rebecca, we went back to America. And, you know, sometimes places in the South, they just don't. That's why we love Hong Kong, because they would see Rebecca and they'd go, well, bless your little heart, a little Asian girl.

You said that? God gave, told me, yeah, a little Asian girl. Bless her, Mark. She's so cute. She's like a little girl. She's probably from Jay Pan or something like that. No, she's not from Jay Pan.

[11:13] But I think that's one of the things we are excited, you know, living in Hong Kong, because we're used to just many cultures and things like that. And so treat our kids normal and point them to Christ, please.

Okay. To be really honest, this whole journey of adoption for me has been a long process. I've struggled with it for a long time. I've thought about it.

I've prayed about it for many years. I've read the Bible. I've searched the Bible. Some people would probably say I was ignorant about the idea, what it looked like. And as I started reading the Bible, I realized that there was this common thread that runs throughout all of Scripture with this idea of adoption.

I mean, it's throughout the whole Bible. And you can't pick up a place in the Bible without reading about adoption. And I realized, even as I share today, that there are people in here who have very many, many different views on what adoption is, what it means.

Some of you are coming from a cultural standpoint. Some of you are coming from personal experience. Some of you are coming from struggles. And so I want to be sensitive to that as we pray about this and think about this.

[12:27] But the Bible just says that we are all on this journey. And the Bible says that we're all orphans.

That we're all lost. And when you read the Bible, it's amazing how many people who are adopted stick up and pop them into the Bible. There's some amazing, powerful, and important people.

Esther. She entered a beauty contest, and she ended up being the queen of Persia. And God used her to save her people, the people of God, from annihilation. Moses.

Moses was taken from a river, and he saved God's people from bondage and slavery in Egypt.

Jesus. Jesus. All on the cross.

And we're told there in Scripture that God was so good. For us. And because of his orphanage, or being orphaned at that time, his death and separation brings us to God.

[13:37] One day as I was studying and reading, I realized that I was adopted at the age of 10. And in the summer of 1973, I was adopted into a new family.

I continued to live with my biological family until I went off to college, but I was adopted. And the passage today in Galatians is a very interesting passage.

And there's many of them on adoption. Paul wrote the book of Galatians around 48 AD. He wrote it to a group of people who were adopted. But these people had other men come into their congregation and start telling them things like, You're really not adopted.

You're really not adopted yet. There are some things you still need to do. There are some things you still need to experience. There are some things you still need to allow happen to you before you can truly be adopted.

And when you read the scripture, you realize that from the very beginning to the very end, that there are actually only two families in the Bible.

[14:46] When you read the scripture from the very beginning to the very end, you realize that there are only two fathers, two types of sons in the world, two types of heritages.

And these men came into the church in Galatians. They were called Judaizers. And they told the people of God who were adopted that you're not really adopted because there are certain things you need to do to finalize your adoption.

You're kind of like half adopted. You're not fully adopted. And the people began to worry and struggle. And they didn't know what to do. They didn't know what to do.

And they were starting to go back to their old family, their old life, the family that they were in before they were adopted. And Paul wrote some of the book of Galatians and he says, No! No! No! And once you're adopted, you are adopted.

There's no such thing as being half adopted. It's like being half pregnant. You're either pregnant or you're not pregnant. You're either adopted or you're adopted. And so Paul writes this book of Galatians, which is a powerful book, in one of his earliest books to tell us what it means to truly be adopted.

[15:53] And actually what Paul says in Galatians is, You're adopted. Why aren't you acting like it? You're adopted.

You're in a new family. How come you don't look like your dad? Because you should. I have a couple pictures here. This is the first picture.

We can put up the slide. This is Rebecca. This is Rebecca like five minutes before she came into our family. So this time Rebecca was in another family.

And it was a long journey for us living in Nanjing and trying to adopt Rebecca in the middle of SARS. It seemed like every obstacle got thrown in front of our way.

And there was a time I almost just wanted to give up. But there's something in me that drove me and says, We need this kid. We need to bring them into our family. We need to redeem them.

[16:51] Later date, I'll share some of our journeys, Christina and I, as we came about this together at different stages of life. But we both got put upon our heart to adopt. The next picture is, just really quickly, This is the article.

This is one of the articles that we received, but we adopted her. It was stamped, and also we got this article, and it said, This is the other documents that she's ours now. That she's coming to our family, and she has a new identity, and a new person.

She has new parents. The next picture is that moment after we adopted her. Now she's a Miller. And we were incredibly proud. Last night, we were watching home videos. So we got out the home videos last night. Every kid watched their birth video. Every kid watched the adoption video. And we stayed up past their bedtime, because the kids want to watch their birth video, or Rebecca's adoption video.

And in the hotel, we're running around, waiting for her. And when she comes in, all the kids are screaming. There's two of them, Kip and Rachel. And they're screaming. And we had just been waiting for her for so long.

[17:58] We gave everything to get her. The next picture is just a document that says that she's ours.

It was a legal document. You and I are never going to see the original. The original one is sealed away. Some place saved, hopefully. That document says that she's ours now.

She's officially ours. The next picture is a picture of our name. You know, we cannot even imagine what it would like to be like without having Rebecca in our name.

I mean, I can't even fathom what that would be like. Because she is just us. Who we are. And she's fully adopted.

And she's a killer. I want to look at the passage today really quickly. And I want to look at four things in this passage. I think the passage in Galatians and Romans tells us four things about ourselves. It tells us our finalization.

[19:01] It tells us we have a father. It tells us we have a family. It tells us we have a future. And the first thing that sticks in there is that Paul shares with us as adopted children that we are final.

That there is no but you're half adopted. There's a finalization. If you look at verses 25 through 27, Paul shares in Galatians 3 and 4 that you are sons of God.

You are the sons of God. You have clothed yourself with Christ. You are in the family. You used to be in the family of Adam. A family that was separated from God. That walked in darkness. That was under the law.

That was in bondage. That didn't care about Christ. But now you are. You're with Christ. That there's nothing that can take you from God. It's finished.

You have been adopted into God's family. Now the Roman culture was a very interesting culture because they held adoption very highly. And there were a lot of rules in the Roman culture about adoption. And it was a very intense legal process.

[20 : 03] But the rules were strict in Roman adoption. And the rules said that once you adopted a child, it was final. You could not unadopt a child. And once you stood before the judge in a Roman court of law and you said, this is my child.

And you've made a defense of why this kid should be yours. That they are yours forever. And Paul tries to use this imagery to the Galatians and to assure them and to affirm them.

There's nothing they can do to lose their salvation. There's nothing they can do to be unadopted. Stop worrying. Because the words that say are, all, have, they all tell us that we have a new identity. When Christina and I adopted Rebecca, I had a fear. And my fear was that I didn't do all the right things, all the right paperwork. And there was a lot of paperwork.

One country just wanted a lot of money. And one country just wanted a lot of paperwork. And there was a lot of paperwork. I won't say which is which. But I just had this fear that I didn't turn in the right paper.

[21 : 07] I didn't get the right thing done. We didn't get time. There's some times that everything got erased and we had to start all over because of these new rules that happened. And I slept in this panic. It's like after you graduated from college for three years and all of a sudden you wake up and you go, I missed my exam.

Well, you've graduated. And I was just waiting and waiting and waiting for that final paper that said, she is ours. And there were times afterwards I woke up in the middle of the night thinking I forgot to do something.

When did they come and take her away? It's the scripture says and Paul says to the people of God that that will never, ever happen because you are in Christ.

You have a new identity. You've been clothed. The crisis in everything. Okay. Finalization. Paul shows us in this passage that as adopted children we have a father. We've talked about fathers before and I know that it's a very difficult topic for some of us.

[22 : 09] I've shared my journey with my dad. But he uses the words in here which are very powerful in verses 26 and 27. Not only does he say all are, he says sons of God.

And this sons of God has nothing to do with gender. Sometimes as pastors we read this and we think, well, I've got to add in there sons and daughters of God. And that's cool. But that's not what it means at all.

What it means is a term of intimacy. It means that you have a personal relationship with God. Now this is very powerful because no one in the Old Testament would say this.

And when Jesus came forward and he said, you are sons of God. I mean, no other religion would say this, that we have a personal relationship with God. That we have this potential to be intimate to him.

And the men came into the church and they were saying to the people, hey, you're still under the law. And he can do this, this, this, and this. You guys aren't performing just right.

[23 : 06] You've done 340 of those laws, but you haven't done 346 of those laws. And you're not really adopted. But Paul says, no, you're sons of God.

That word Abba is the first word that a baby earns in Arabic and Jewish culture. It's very, very intimate. It's only used three times. It's used in this passage and used in the Romans passage. And it's used when Jesus is praying to God. And it's this idea that God is there and he can hear and he understands and he will do everything for you.

It's just like if Rebecca was there and Rebecca were to ask me something. Can you do this for me? There's almost nothing that I would not do for her. And this Galatians passage tells us that God is a God who loves you, who is your new father, and he will do everything for you.

In the Roman court, you would go up in front of it and the minute that you were adopted, four things happened. And one of those things I've already shared. But the second thing would happen is that your whole old mind was taken away. That everything about you in your past was taken away.

[24 : 23] That if you were adopted and you tried to go back to your old company or your old business or your old family, you would have no say there. That all your debt was taken away.

Some of you are thinking, I'm not myself. But everything was taken away. All your debt, all your penalties, all those things were taken away and you received a new father.

Romans 8, 16 here says the spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God. In 15, we cry out, Abba, Father.

And it's this imagery again that God, when we came into his family, he gives us his spirit. And the spirit continually inside of us tells us we are children of God. In the Roman court, once he finished adoption, the dad signs off, seven men would stand up.

And they would testify to everyone around that this new child is now in this new family. It's the same imagery that Paul uses here that when we come into the family, the Holy Spirit testifies to us.

[25 : 32] The Holy Spirit testifies to everyone that we're now in there. It's always there speaking to us.

It's always there talking to us. And you guys, you've got to understand this because in Jesus' world, who your dad was, was everything. I mean, who you were and what you did was determined by who your dad was.

I mean, who your daddy is, is everything. You just read Matthew, so-and-so begot so-and-so, so-and-so. Genesis, so-and-so begot so-and-so. James and John, the sons of Zebedee, the sons of Thunder.

Joshua, the son of Nun. Jesus, the son of God. Think about that when you wake up tomorrow. You're in the baby of God. You look in the mirror. You say, Chris. John, the son of Nun. John, the son of Nun.

[26 : 42] Susan, the son of Nun. What would that be, Jim? I mean, I read the newspapers today, and there's a lot of fighting over inheritance and who belongs to who.

And we're always struggling over these things. We hear this passage tells us that we belong to God. He's our dad.

That means everything. I don't know if it's a Western thing, but when I grew up, we always got in fights in the playground. And we usually got in fights over who her daddy was.

Now, you can say anything about a person's dad, but you can say something about their mama. They didn't fight. But usually, you know, little kids get together and say, well, my dad, my dad's a pilot. My dad's a soldier.

My dad's a doctor. My dad's a banker. No one ever say banker. My dad's a banker. It's a joke. But you and me have a fight over that. Because who your dad was meant everything.

[27 : 50] You can imagine standing in a playground and saying, my dad is a man. That kind of trumps everything, doesn't it?

What do you say after that? You know that's true? As you're walking through life and things are getting hit, hit you, and hit you, and hit you, you think, I think that's not.

As you're in work and you're being tempted to do unethical things, and things are a lot of pressure, I think that's not. As you feel troubled and tempted and hurt, that no one is on your side.

I think that's not. In the Roman culture, who your daddy was, was everything.

And Paul says, as God's children, you and I, we're daddy's mom. Paul goes on and he tells us that as adopted children of God, we have a new family.

[29 : 09] That we've been transferred from the old family, where we were called enemies and indifferent to God, and where we were slaves. Verse 7 and 8 and 9 tells us over and over again that we were slaves. We were slaves to elemental things.

That the word in Hebrew actually means demons. But before we knew God, that we were enslaved to demonic forces.

And things that were simple and tried to draw us away from the family that we're supposed to be into, into our old family. Paul says over and over again that you have a new family, you have a new community.

The Bible says that to us over and over as adopted children. In the Roman culture, the dad goes before the judge. He makes this legal case to justify why he should have this kid. The judge hits his hammer and he says, vindication.

That's where we get vindicated from. It means from now on, this kid is vindicated. That all things about them, all the old things, all the terrible things, all the things they did, all the mistakes, all those things are vindicated, they're done with.

[30 : 17] When I look at them, they do. They have a new family. They don't have the old debts.

They don't have the old obligations. They don't have the legal ramifications in their lives. They don't have things they had to do. The sin that so easily entangled them, they don't have to do that anymore because they're vindicated.

God gave them a new family. A new creation. It was amazing to see Rebecca when we brought her into our house. We brought her into our house and she just sat there.

She didn't know what to do. She had been in a playpen for almost a year. She couldn't crawl. She could stand up and be held her.

But she was so used to her old surroundings and who she was that in the new house, she didn't know even how to act. And she just sat there sometimes. Paul is sharing to us, he's sharing to the Galatians that as we enter into this new family, we have a new relationship with all those around us and we don't have to wonder, well, how do I act?

[31 : 32] I used to act this way. What is it applied now? And the Spirit of God tells us that. That we have a new family that we don't have to worry anymore.

It's interesting in this old Roman adoption process, the price to pay the dad paid was incredibly high. When the dad wanted to adopt the kid, he paid an amazingly high price.

And everyone knew that. And that was transferred to that kid as their word. When we look at these scriptures, you realize that as we were orphans, God indicates us.

The price he paid to do that is amazingly high. It was his son. Paul shows us as adopted children that we have an amazing future in him.

Verses 24, verses 7. It says that you're heirs. That you're Abraham's descendants that you admitted you to come into the family of Christ.

[32 : 51] That you're descendants of God. That you're heirs, you're co-heirs of Jesus Christ. Do you understand what that means? Do you understand what it means to be an heir of God?

It means that everything that God has is yours. Do you understand what it means to be a co-heir of Jesus Christ?

It means that Jesus is your brother. Do you understand what it means to be a co-heir of Jesus Christ? With everything your brother has. The Roman law was really strict.

When you got adopted into that family, you were a child of that family. You had equal rights to all the inheritance. Sometimes you had more rights to the inheritance than the biological kids did.

Because your father went so far out of the way to grab you and to get you and to bring you into the family that you were even treated as even more special. Paul tells the people here, you don't need to worry about your future because everything that God has, you have.

[34 : 04] Everything that he has is at your disposal. You're heirs of Abraham. You're descendants of his. Abraham was given the promise of everything. You're heirs of God. You have a future. You can cry out to God and you don't need to worry about your inheritance.

In the Old Testament, inheritance is everything. That's why it's so difficult for Abraham to leave his family. To leave his future and his flock and everything, the land that was given to him.

He left it all. That's why his faith is so amazing because in that culture, no one would ever do that. But he left it all to go to a new inheritance. And in this passage, Paul is telling the church of Galatians, he's telling us, hey, you have a new inheritance.

You're adopted. And this inheritance is eternal. Have you ever thought about that? Take Rebecca. Take her out of the crib. We love her. And then one more day, she goes, I want to go back to the crib. I want to go back to the old church.

[35 : 14] What do you think? He is a man. It's pretty obvious. That kid doesn't understand just what's happening to him. The new family, they didn't get it.

They didn't have the whole family. You know, the scripture says that same thing is true. We live life today on this earth.

And this life on this earth is our crib. We try to add things in our crib and buy things and do things and get things and I'm just as guilty as you guys are, everybody. And God looks at us and goes, hmm, I'm about to give you heaven.

I'm about to give you a galaxy. I'm about to give you planets. I'm about to give you things I've created you haven't even seen yet.

We go, I'm going to go back to the crib. Because this place right here, this is my home. I'm about to give you a baby.

[36 : 26] I'm about to give you a baby. I'm about to give you a baby. I'm about to give you a baby. Because your inheritance is everything.

But God is going to give you a baby. God can give you this world. Look at how this world pays for the person. Because you share ■■■■.

You're mainly because your body is not so great. That's soft. I wonder why I spent so much effort buying and building and getting things in.

This is why I have to make my life comfortable right now. And what Galatians tells us, what God tells us is that this inheritance that you're about to get fails.

The new body that you're about to get, the one that's dying right now of cancer, it fails in comparison to what you're about to get.

[37 : 47] That 13-month bonus, the new house you're going to buy, the new car, new watch, whatever it is, that fails in comparison to the inheritance God's going to give.

The car complained. Watch the galaxy. The people of Paul's day forgot that.

And sometimes we as adopted people forget that also. Some final thoughts, and we're going to close here. One final thought is, as I've been thinking of, is that we don't adopt ourselves.

We don't write out the terms for our adoption. Our adoption is through God's choice, through God's love, through God's mercy, through God's grace, through God's extreme sacrifice. Rebecca had no idea that we were adopting her.

She probably still didn't even know it after the first year. Well, she understands it now, what it means to be in this new family. But the scripture says that God is behind the scenes. He's working. He's changing. He's doing.

[38 : 54] And he's working in your life right now. And you don't even realize it. Because his desire, his number one desire, is to adopt you and bring you into this family. Second thought is, we have a choice.

As God's people, we always have this choice. Our choices, are we going to walk with our new adopted father? Or are we going to walk in our old life? It's what Paul was writing to the Galatians about.

He's saying, hey, be careful. Make sure that you look like your dad. Make sure that you act like your dad. Make sure you talk like your dad. Because this is your heritage. I mean, even as I share this right now, I realize that there are some of us in here, probably, who accepted Christ a while back in our lives.

But, you know, we never really actually would have meant to be adopted. We look and act just like our old family. We don't take on the characteristics of our new family.

God's family. We depend on the elemental things to give us meaning and purpose and happiness and wealth and goodness. And Paul tells the church, he tells us that if we do that, we become slaves.

[40 : 10] And if we do that as God's children, if we go back to the playpen, we become slaves. And if we become slaves, we miss out on God's purpose and plan for our own.

If we become slaves, it becomes tiring. Because we try so hard to live in both worlds. Too much energy. Too much energy. Too hard. We become slaves. And if we become slaves, we miss out everything that God has in store for us.

And if you're one of those people today that have invited Christ into your life, that if someone would look at you and say, I can't tell what baby we're doing.

Never let your dad. My prayer for you and for me is that we would understand for the first time just how much God gave for us.

That we would understand what Christ did when he adopted us. That we would come before the Lord and we would just confess our sin and ask him to change us.

[41 : 23] That we'd get involved in a community group. That we'd start praying. That we'd start reading God's word. That we'd start acting and looking like children of God. And that we'd be careful of the elemental things.

Now I'm not saying those things are bad. What I'm saying is if you put your hope in those things, then you become an idol that's going to leave your soul. If you're here and you haven't been adopted yet, you're still asking questions about what it means to be a Christian, my prayer for you is exactly the same thing.

Is that you would ask your friends. You would come talk to me and the other staff. You would examine Jesus' claims. You would understand who he is and you would understand the great price and sacrifice he takes for you to your life and to the family.

Then you would understand how much he wants to adopt you and bring you to his family. And you would do that to me. Will you put your faith and your trust in Christ and allow you to change and

bring you to his family?

Are you okay? I realize as I talk, I've been made fun of because sometimes I make up new words.
[42 : 37] I realize as I talk that I'm not very PC sometimes. I don't know all the politically correct terms about adoption. To be honest, they change very frequently.

Sometimes you can say this, sometimes you can't say that. You get messed up sometimes. I don't know all those things. I'm sure that I offended somebody in here. If I did, I apologize.

I want you to know how much I love her. What I did is bring her into our family.

How I'm so happy that she came from me. I want you to know that what God did for you right now, that God's love, that God's pursuit of you fails, it's embarrassing.

I want you to know that I love you. God, I love you so much.

[43 : 43] I want you to understand that you're in the family. I want you to walk like that. Christ, I want you to know that I love you.

I want you to know that I love you. I want you to know that I love you. Christ, I want you to know that I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you. Christ, home on the cross, he was forsaken by God. He cried out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

He was orphaned so that us as orphans could come into his family. That's how much God loses. Father, we just thank you for this day.

We thank you for your mercy and your grace in our life. I pray for every one of us in here that we would just begin to understand a little more about adoption and what it means.

Father, I pray that we would begin to understand just a little bit more about how crazy you are for us and how you waited eternity. We waited three years for Rebecca and you waited eternity past.

[45 : 08] For us. Father, help us to understand that. Help us to see your love and your sacrifice. Help us to see as your children that we are fully adopted.

We're not partially adopted. That we have a finalization. We have a father who loves us. We have a family that cares for us. And we have a future inheritance which we can't even imagine right now.

As we walk with you, Lord, the only thing I'm going to say and do is we pray you. We thank you that you didn't give up on us. That you pursued us and pursued us and pursued us.

Even when we ran away. We might come into your families and be children. We call the sons of God. We thank you. Lord, we love you.

We thank you for the research. Thank you. Thank you.