

Gospel Orthodoxy - Reconciliation: From Enemies to Children of God

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[0 : 00] This reading comes from Romans chapter 5 and 8. Please follow along on the screen, the bulletin, or your own Bible. In Romans 5 verse 8 we read, God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more now that we are reconciled shall we be saved by his life.

More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, for whom we have now received reconciliation. Then in chapter 8 verse 14 we read, For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

This is the word of God. Amen. Great. Thank you so much, Justin, and good morning, everybody. It is wonderful to be back with you this morning.

[1 : 40] If you don't know me, my name is Kevin, one of the leaders here, and it really is a joy to be able to speak to us this morning, to bring us God's word. I am very excited for what we're going to be looking at this morning.

I have been praying for us all week. As Angie said, we prayed for us as a church this morning, and I really am full of excitement and anticipation as we look at God's word today.

I wonder if you would just join me as we pray for a few minutes. Let's come before our Father. We don't need to hear my words or opinion. We want to hear God speaking to us, and let's ask him to speak to us from his word.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father. Heavenly Father. Thank you, God, that you, the creator of the universe, you're the one who billions of years ago brought the universe into being, who hung the stars in space, God, the one who knows infinitely more about our universe and our galaxies, the way the cosmos works than we ever will.

And yet, God, you come to us this morning, and you invite us to call you Father. God, we pray to you this morning. We so need you. Every one of us, God, needs you in a variety of ways.

[2 : 52] We need you to minister to us, to speak to us, to encourage us, to remind us of your love, to build us up, to bring us back to you. God, we come before you this morning because we need you.

We don't come to hear a prep talk. We don't come to hear a motivational speech. We don't come to listen, to go through a religious motion or activity. We've come to encounter the living God and to have you speak to us from your word.

And so, God, I pray, won't you send the Spirit of Jesus into our hearts today. Won't you fill us and flood us with the love of God the Father, Christ the Son, Holy Spirit.

Won't you open our eyes to see you and to see ourselves in you. God, for those of us that don't know you this morning, won't you draw us to yourself. God, with so much going on in our world, in our city, so much uncertainty, this morning we come and we find our rest in you.

As Angie said earlier, God, won't you arrest any sort of orphan mentality in our hearts and bring us back into the heart of the Father, we pray.

[4 : 02] God, come and have your way this morning. We pray this in your wonderful and your gracious name. Amen. Amen. Now, we are going through the series, Gospel Orthodoxy, and we are using the imagery of the human body, just as the human body needs a skeleton or framework in order to bring strength and mobility and ability to it.

In the same way, for those of us that are followers of Jesus, we need a theological framework, a skeleton, a backbone that is strong, in order for us to be spiritually healthy and vibrant.

A human body that has a brittle skeleton or backbone is one that is not going to be very mobile or healthy in the long term. And in the same way, when we neglect or are not strong in understanding the Gospel and who we are in God, what Christ has done for us on the cross, it can lead to a spiritual superficiality.

And so we're going through this series because we want to be those that are rooted and anchored and are spiritually healthy for decades to come. Now, as we start off, I want to ask us just two questions.

For those of us maybe that are not followers of Jesus, maybe you consider yourself a spiritual seeker or a skeptic, maybe you're still exploring the claims of Christ, I want to ask you this question. What do you think Christianity is all about?

[5 : 27] If someone says, Christianity, what comes to your mind? Maybe for those of us that are followers of Jesus, because I want to ask you this question. How do you think God feels about you right now?

We'll come back to those questions in a bit. Two weeks ago, Chris spoke to us about the great doctrine of justification, which says that for those of us that have come to Christ in faith and repentance, that's the key.

God, we are no longer in the category of sinners. We are in the category of the righteous. We are no longer in the category of guilty or condemned. We are under God's grace and we are righteous because Christ's righteousness has been given to us, credited to us.

God accepts us not on the basis of our spiritual or moral performance, but on the basis of Christ's perfect performance, which he accomplished for us on the cross. And then last week, we looked at the great teaching of redemption.

The fact that we are no longer under slavery or bondage, either to the penalty of sin or to the power of sin in our life, either our own sin or those that have sinned against us, but we have been set free and how Christ is going to return one day to set us free, even from the very presence of all that is broken and defective in our hearts, in our souls, in our bodies, even in this world.

[6 : 43] Christ has redeemed us. And as we sang earlier, the curse of sin has been broken because Jesus died on the cross for us. And this morning, we're going to look at this teaching, the Bible's teaching regarding reconciliation and adoption.

So let's look again at our passage in Romans chapter 5. And this is what Paul writes. He says, God shows his love for us in this, that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Since therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

More than that, we rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. This morning, we're going to look at the Bible's teaching regarding reconciliation.

And the Bible teaches us this, that prior to coming to Christ in faith and repentance, the condition of natural mankind, men and women, our natural condition, apart from justification, apart from redemption, is not one of neutrality, but actually one of hostility, one of enmity between us and God.

[8 : 08] Now that may come as a surprise to us, because we live in a time and an age when we consider belief in God to be a very personal matter, a very private matter, something that is applicable to me if I want it, but if I'm not interested in me, then it has no relevance in my life.

It's completely irrelevant. It's something that is maybe true for you, but it's not universally irrelevant or applicable to others. We may often hear people saying, well, if you want to be religious, that's fine for you, but that's got nothing to do with me.

In other words, we tend to think that our lives are fairly neutral, and that if you want to practice faith or have belief in God, well, that's an add and extra that you want to add onto your life to the extent that it benefits you.

And so we think, you know, some people do yoga, some people go hiking, some people eat yum cha, some people go to church on Sundays. That's kind of our version of extracurricular activities.

In other words, we live in a time when we view life apart from relationship with Christ as neutral, and faith in God is a kind of extracurricular activity, something that we add onto our lives to the extent that it benefits us.

[9 : 17] But that's not what the scriptures say. Jesus would teach us actually the natural state of man and woman outside of relationship from him is rebellion against God and his authority.

We've rejected God's rule. We've rejected his reign in our lives, and we are now at enmity with God. God is the creator of the whole universe, the sovereign God, and as such, he has created rights over his universe, created rights over our lives.

And he's made us to be in relationship with him, to know him and to love him. But as human beings, as sinners, we've rejected his rule. We've rejected his authority. We've said, I don't want you to tell me what to do, how to believe, how to behave.

I want to be my own authority. I want to have my own way in life. And so we've rebelled against his authority. In a sense, we've committed mutiny, and we've said, I will be my own God.

I will determine who I am, what I want to do, how I want to behave. You, God, take a back seat. I don't want you in my life. I want to be my own God. And the result is, not just in neutrality, there's an enmity.

[10 : 23] There's a hostility in the relationship. Look at verse 10. Paul writes, he says, wow, we were enemies at enmity with God. But that's not the way that God has designed us.

That's not the way that God wills for things to happen. God designed us to know him and to love him, to be in deep and meaningful relationship with him, to flourish and to be alive in him, to experience his love and to be satisfied in him.

And so the great message of the gospel, the whole point of the Bible is that God so loved the world that he sent his one and only son to reconcile us to him.

Look at how Colossians says it. Paul writes this and says, and you, me, us, we who were once alienated and hostile towards God. He has now reconciled us in his body by his dead in order to present us holy and blameless and above reproach before him.

Paul writes it in 2 Corinthians. He says this, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come. All this is from God who through Christ has reconciled us to himself.

[11 : 35] That is, in Christ, God is reconciling the world to himself, not counting our trespasses against us. And when we go back to our Romans 5 passage, we see the same thing.

Paul almost assumes that the readers understand that this is what Christianity is all about. This is why Jesus came to reconcile people to God.

He says in verse 10, since while we were enemies of God, we were reconciled to him by the death of his son. Now, much more, much more now that we are reconciled, we will be saved by his life.

Verse 11, and we rejoice, we delight in God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have received reconciliation. Prince, notice who took the initiative in this reconciling relationship.

I remember a few years ago, I was talking to someone in a church and two people were not getting along and I said to the one person, why don't you go and have coffee or lunch with the other person and talk things through?

[12 : 41] And this person said to me, I've got no problem, I'll talk through things with them, but they need to come to me first. If they take the initiative, I'll sit down with them. Friends, in this hostile relationship with God, who took the initiative?

Well, look at what Paul says here. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. While we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son.

Friends, while we were shaking our fists at God and pushing him away, God sent his son to die on the cross to receive us and to welcome us as reconciled children.

of God. Friends, this is the great message of the gospel. This is what the Bible is about. This is what Jesus has come to do. Friends, the great point of our justification, Jesus has removed our guilt.

The point of the doctrine of redemption that Christ has liberated us from the bondage of slavery to sin is so that we can be reconciled, that our enmity can be done away with, that we can be reunited with God.

[13 : 47] This is the gospel. This is the great hope of the gospel. Now, as a side note, it's important to see this is why Christians practice reconciliation within our own relationships.

Certainly, as followers of Jesus, there's times when there's misunderstanding, there's miscommunication, there's hurt, there's offense. Friends, sometimes we experience relationships that are strained or even broken.

But as Christians, we pursue reconciliation. And the reason we do that is because this is the very foundation of the gospel. This is the foundation of our identity in God, that God has reconciled himself to us.

And so Ephesians 4 says this, Just as God in Christ forgave you, so forgive one another. This is why we practice reconciliation. Now, as wonderful as this is, in many ways, this is only half the story.

The good news, as good as this is, is that this is only a small part of what the Bible says about our relationship with God now. Because two people who previously were at enmity with one another, where there was once hostility, can be reconciled, they can apologize and say sorry, but that doesn't say much for the state of their relationship now.

[15 : 06] What is the state of that relationship? Well, look at what the New Testament says. The New Testament has very clear language to describe the state of this reconciled relationship. Look at what he says.

Look at what the Apostle John says in John chapter 1. He says, God so loved the world that He sent His Son to reconcile us to God. John says, To all who received the Son, Jesus Christ, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.

Paul writes in Romans, he says, Romans chapter 8, for you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. God is not a taskmaster or a judge or a boss cracking the whip over us.

No, you have received the spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry, Abba, Father. The spirit Himself bears witness to our spirit that we are children of God.

The word Abba is the Aramaic word for Daddy, Dad. Sometimes when I come home in the evenings after work and get home at 6.30 or so and as I open the front door my two daughters can hear that I'm home and from time to time they'll run from the other side of the apartment crying, Daddy!

[16 : 23] And they'll run and jump into my arms. That's what this word is. Daddy! Abba! Dad is home. God has given us the Holy Spirit confirming that we are not just reconciled, not just neutral, we are sons and daughters of God.

We now get to call Him Father. Galatians says the same thing when the fullness of time came, Jeremy read this to us a few minutes ago, God sent forth His Son to redeem those who are under the law so that we might receive adoption as sons.

And because you are His sons and His daughters, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts that we may cry out, Dad! Abba! Father!

Friends, justification says that we are no longer under guilt but under grace. If redemption says we are no longer subject to slavery but we are free, reconciliation says we are no longer at enmity with God but have been welcomed into His family as sons and daughters, into His family as children.

Friends, the good news of the Gospel is that it's not just that in Christ God has forgiven us of our sins, as wonderful as that is, that my sin which was as vast and as deep as the ocean has been enveloped by God's profound love for me in His forgiveness and His mercy.

[17 : 45] The great declaration of the Gospel is true as all that is is that despite my hostility to God, despite my enmity with God, I who once was at enmity with God have been welcomed into His family as a beloved son and now I get to call Him Father.

And friends, if you are in Christ that is true for you as well. John writes this in 1 John chapter 3. He says this incredible verse, See what kind of love the Father has given us that we should be called children of God and this is what we are.

Friends, this is one of the great points in Jesus' parable of the prodigal son. He tells this amazing story of a son that doesn't have much regard for his father.

He's at enmity with his father and he thinks to himself, Actually, it would be better if my father were dead because then I would inherit some money and I could go off and live my own life, do things that I want.

Well, I'm under my father's roof. He tells me what to do. He tells me how to behave. Actually, I wish he were dead. I could get the money. I can go and be free. And so one day he eventually says, Listen, Dad, you and I know that I hate you.

[19 : 02] Our relationship sucks. Actually, you are dead to me. It would be better for me if you were dead then I could get the money and go and do my own thing. Why don't you just give me my inheritance so I can go off my own way, live my own life?

The father, for some reason, says, Okay, I guess if that's your heart, I can't change you. Here, take your inheritance. And so the son takes this inheritance and skips off into the country to go live free, to go do what he wants to do.

And he's living it up and he's partying it up and he's buying friends and all sorts of things. But eventually, he realizes that the father was actually right and he gets to the end of himself and he's begging for bread on the street.

He can't get a job anywhere. He's come to the very end of himself and he thinks to himself, Well, I'm no longer a son. I told my father that he's dead to me.

But at least I know that on that farm, if anyone comes looking for work, my father will never turn them away. Let me go back and sell myself as a slave. And so he goes and he makes his way back to the farm where he grew up.

[20 : 06] And he's practicing the speech saying, I know that I said you're dead to me. Will you take me in as a servant on your farm? And as he's walking home, the father sees him in a distance.

And the father's heart is moved with compassion. And he picks up his robes and he, in great shame to himself, he runs down the road and he throws his arm around this prodigal son.

And he says, My son, my son, it is so good to see you again. Welcome home. And the son says, No, no, no, I'm not your son anymore. I've come to sell myself as a slave.

Is it possible that I work on your farm as a servant? And the father says, Shh! My son, my son whom I love, welcome home.

And the father says to the servant, quickly, kill the fattened calf. My son who was once dead is alive. The father welcomes home.

[21 : 07] Friends, see what kind of love the father has given to us, that we should be called children of God. And this is what we are. Friends, where once there was enmity and hostility, God has thrown his arms around you and I if you are in Christ.

And he said, My son, my daughter, I love you. Welcome home. J.I. Packer is one of the greatest theologians of the last century.

He died just a few months ago in his early 90s and he writes this. He says, What is a Christian? The question can be answered in many ways, but the richest answer that I know is that a Christian is one who has God as father.

If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he or she makes the thought of being God's child, of having God as father.

If this is not the thought that prompts and controls your worship, your prayers, indeed your whole outlook on life, it means you do not understand Christianity very well at all. Father is the Christian name for God.

[22 : 21] Friends, if you're a Christian this morning, how do you think God feels about you? Friends, I know that many of us grew up with difficult relationships with our parents.

Friends, you may not find that description that God is a father or that comforting. But consider the longing of your heart. There's not the fact that you long to be approved and affirmed.

There's not the fact that we long to hear our parents speak those words of us. Tell us that they're proud of us, that they love us, that they're for us. Does that longing to be accepted and affirmed and approved, does that not suggest that this is how things ought to be?

Friends, in God the Father we have the perfect Father who is tender and compassionate, who is exceedingly patient and long-suffering, who never loses his temper, who is never disillusioned with us.

A father who knows us better than we know ourselves and yet who loves us to the utmost. This is who God is. This is what he's done for us in Christ's death on the cross.

[23 : 30] Now, like all other doctrines that we've looked at the last few weeks, the Bible says that in Christ we have received adoption as children of God. But this is both a status that is given as well as a lived experience for us to enjoy.

It's a status that's conferred upon you the day that you put your faith in Christ. You've been transferred from the category of hostility, enmity, to the category of beloved son or daughter, child of God.

Being God's child is not a relationship you need to earn or cultivate through your good works. It is a status that is given to you. Remember how John said it in chapter 1, to all who receive him, who believe in his name, we are given the right to become children of God.

It is put upon you. You are God's child if you are in Christ. And yet like all the great doctrines of Scripture, this is not just meant to be something that we intellectually understand in our head, not just a theological badge we can articulate.

This is meant to be something that shapes our lives, that shapes our lived experience. As J.R. Packer said, it's to shape our praise and our worship, indeed our whole outlook of life.

[24 : 38] In fact, so important is it that Christians operate and live from this place of understanding of being God's children, that God says he gives us his Holy Spirit almost expressly for this purpose.

Look at how Paul writes in Galatians 4. He says, God sent forth his Son to redeem those who are under the law that we might receive adoption of sons. And because of your sons, God has sent his Spirit into our hearts so that we might cry out, Abba, Father.

One of the reasons God gives us the Holy Spirit is so that in the day-to-day reality of our life, as we're in the marketplace and at work and at university, as we're at home looking after children, God, the Holy Spirit who lives within us, helps us to pray and to cry out and to call out to God as our Father.

Friends, as you go to work tomorrow, as you're making deals and pricing deals, as you're sitting under a job performance review, as you're applying for jobs.

Friends, as you're looking for a romantic relationship and somebody to date. Do you do so knowing that God is your Father? Now, similarly to what we said about reconciliation, the reason Christians have always been at the forefront of fostering and adoption in our cities, looking after vulnerable children of our city, is because in many ways this is one of the foundational understandings of what it means to be God's children, to be a Christian.

[26 : 04] This is so central to the Gospel. So as we are adopted by God into His family vertically, so we live out the Gospel horizontally. And Christians have always been at the forefront of fostering and adopting the vulnerable children in our city.

Now, at this point, it's important to clarify a common misunderstanding. This awesome truth that God, the eternal, awesome, merciful God is our Father, cannot be said of every human being.

This is something that is given to those who are in Christ through faith and repentance. That those who have put their faith in Christ and trusted Jesus as their divine sin bearer.

The idea that all people are God's children by birth is actually not found in the Scriptures anyway. Galatians 3 says this, you are sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, and no one comes to the Father, in other words, no one gets to experience God as Father except through me. To be declared a child of God is not a universal status that is conferred upon all people by way of birth.

[27 : 09] It is a gift that is received by being born again, the supernatural gift of God. To all who receive Him, who believe in His name, He has given the right to become children of God.

Friends, if you're not a Christian this morning, let me just speak to you for a second. At the heart of Christianity is this declaration that apart from Christ we bear our transgressions and our sins.

That we are, there's a breakdown in relationship between us and the God who made us to know Him and love Him and experience Him. But God so loved the world, God so loved you, that He sent His only Son to end the hostility, to reconcile us, that we may know God as our Father.

Friends, the heart of Christianity is that Jesus died on the cross. God became man to die for you. So that you will know Him and experience the love of God.

That God the Father, the one who knit you together in your mother's womb, the God who made the universe, will be able to welcome you into His family as a son or a daughter to pour His love upon you.

[28 : 21] This is what Christianity is all about. A few weeks ago, Chris shared this amazing quote by Richard Lovelace. We've shared this so many times at Watermark.

I want to read it one more time. It says this, For most Christians, we intellectually know that God accepts us because of what Jesus did on the cross. But in our actual day-to-day existence, most of us still rely on our spiritual or moral performance to assure us of God's love and acceptance.

We know in our heads that God loves us, but actually, we don't feel it in our hearts. Friends, in the same way, most Christians intellectually know that God loves us and accepts us, that God is our Father and we as children.

But in our actual day-to-day existence, we live as spiritual orphans because we do not understand what the Scriptures say when it says God welcomes us as fathers.

Again, J.I. Packer says this, The most pressing question one can ask of oneself is this, Do I as a Christian know my real identity?

[29 : 25] Do you know that you are a loved child of God, that God is your Father, that Heaven is your home? Say it over and over to yourself, first thing in the morning, last thing at night, as you wait for the bus, as you're on the MTR, any time when your mind is free, and ask the Holy Spirit that you may be enabled to live as one who knows that it is utterly and completely true.

This is the Christian secret of a happy and a blessed life. Even more so, this is the secret of living the Christian life. This is the secret, the Godward life.

Earlier this week, I was talking to a friend of mine who grew up in Hong Kong. He was born here, and at the age of two or three, his parents moved to the U.S., and he stayed behind.

He moved in with his grandparents, and he was raised by his grandparents here in Hong Kong. Around the age eight or nine, he moved to America to be reunited with his parents, but his parents, being Chinese immigrants, worked exceedingly hard to provide for the family, and so in many ways, they weren't very present in his life as he grew up.

And so when he got to college and then started working, he realized he wasn't the smartest kid in the class. He didn't have the most natural gifts and talents, but the one thing he did know was being Chinese, he could outwork everybody else.

[30 : 49] And so if his classmate put in four hours for an exam, he would put in eight. If a colleague worked ten hours for a presentation, he would work twenty. And so you achieve great success by just outworking everybody else.

But he says underneath this desire, this drive to be successful, was this longing to be affirmed, to be approved, to be accepted by his superiors.

All his life, he had wished that his parents had spoken these words of affirmation and love over him. And when he didn't get it from his parents, the next best place was to get it from his boss, his colleagues, his industry.

And so for fifteen years, he just worked extremely hard. He was fairly successful. He gained the approval and the recognition, the acceptance that he so desperately wanted of those around him that he had never previously had.

And he transitioned from the marketplace into ministry and even there as a pastor, he still lived like an orphan, always longing to be loved and accepted and affirmed and approved.

[31 : 59] As I was speaking to him this week on the phone, he didn't know what I was talking about this week and he said these words to me. He said, A few years ago, he changed jobs and worked for a new boss employer and this boss employer isn't the most verbal person full of communication.

And he said that it absolutely crushed him. Though he was exceedingly hardworking, he just doubled down and worked even harder. All to hear these elusive words of, You're doing so well. You've done brilliantly.

But those words never came. Eventually, he hit a wall and absolutely burnt out as he worked himself to the bone just to hear these words, You've done well. Well done. About two years ago, he eventually came to the place where he realized I'm an orphan and I'm treating God with an orphan mentality and for the first time in his life, started to come to God as Father.

Friends, if you're a Christian this morning, are you living like an orphan and sure of God's love and approval? Jack Miller describes the orphan mentality like this. He says, Orphans always have to look out for themselves and can depend on no one.

Orphans must always be strong and protect themselves from being taken advantage of. Orphans struggle to feel weak or to be weak and vulnerable. Always need to be accepted, belong, understood.

[33 : 44] Orphans crave to be loved but doubt they ever will be. Orphans always feel on the outside looking in. Orphans never come to a place of rest.

Friends, do you know that God is a Father who knows you. He understands you better than you know and understand yourself. And He loves you and He accepts you.

He won't take advantage of you. He's gone out of His way even sending Jesus to the cross so that you and I don't need to be on the outside looking in but can be brought into His family and experience His love.

Friends, I know that many of us today still carry deep, deep wounds from our past, from our childhood, from things that our parents said or didn't say. Friends, for some of us you've never ever heard your father or your mother say I love you.

Well done. Friends, some of us most of the time all the words we heard from our parents were just pointing out where we'd gone wrong, where we failed, where we weren't good enough.

[34 : 50] Friends, some of us have never heard our parents say I'm proud of you. You bring me such joy to my heart. Friends, if you're in Christ this morning, if you've been, if you've put your faith in Christ, God the Father has welcomed you into His family.

He's adopted you as His son, His daughter. He's given you full rights and status as a child of God. You're not a stepson. You're not a halfson. God the Father throws His arms around you and says, my son, my daughter, I love you.

With you, I am well pleased. Now, Father, pours His love upon you. Your failings have been put on Jesus. Rather than pointing out where you've gone wrong, God says, my son, my daughter, I've loved you with an everlasting love.

I'm so pleased with you. Friends, this morning, if you're a Christian, you have been reconciled with God, no longer at enmity with God, but a son, a daughter, with God as our Father, Christ as our older brother, the Holy Spirit in our hearts, crying out with us, Abba, Father, don't live as an orphan anymore in this world.

Don't fight for an identity. Strive to be at rest. Come to your Father. Come home to God. See what love, what kind of love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God, and so we are.

[36 : 10] let's pray together. Oh, Father God, we come before you this morning because we need you.

God, we need you through the personal Holy Spirit to pour your love into our hearts again freshly. God, we hear these words and for some of us we cannot believe them.

Automatically, there are a thousand defenses going on in our mind that says, but not me. Everybody else, sure, but surely not me. The things that I've done, not me.

God, I pray by the power of His Word won't you break into our hearts and flood our hearts with the Father's love. Christ, won't you minister to us deeply.

God, for those that have never heard the words of the parents saying, I love you, I'm proud of you, I delight in you, God, I pray that you will write those words in our heart in a deep, deep way.

[37 : 35] Christ, for those of us that feel nothing but disappointment or even hatred towards ourselves, won't you set us free?

Christ, won't you come and show us what does it mean to be your children? God, we need you. God, and I pray that as we, that this won't just be something we think about and reflect on today.

I pray, God, that every day this week, tomorrow, as we wake up and go to work, I pray as the university students go back to class tomorrow, as scholars go back to school, that God, we will go knowing absolutely rooted and secure in the love of the Father, knowing that we wake up tomorrow as your sons and your daughters.

God, come and minister to us, I pray. Come and write this truth in our hearts.

Bernard's going to come and lead us in a time of communion now. Friends, I want to just say that I'm sure many of us could do this and pray afterwards. Don't run off after service.

[39 : 03] Join a breakout room and let's pray for one another. If anybody needs or would like prayer in particular, please reach out to us. We would love to connect with you.

If you want to pray today, we can meet up with you, we can minister to you, we hear for you, we're a family. Let's make sure that we let God minister to us today.