

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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Grace Unleashed

PART

2

TITLE

We Are Adopted

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:3-6



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Well, it's great to see you Providence. I hope you've had a great week, and if you're a guest with us, welcome. We're so glad that you have joined us. I hope you know that, that every single week we have guests who come. And if you know Christ, just to come and worship Him with us and if you don't we're really glad that you've come to learn more certainly about Him. But we really are glad that you are here. I want to ask you to look with me at the first chapter of Ephesians. We're going to study verse three through six here this morning. We love the Bible here, I hope that you know that. We absolutely believe that what it says even about itself is true.

In James, God's word calls God's word a mirror in which we, the people, look at our lives. We see who He is and we see who we are and we see where we fall short. And he encourages us to stay in front of that mirror and to allow God to do everything that He really wants to do in our life, even before we leave. As we gather, every single week that we gather, we make it a priority to open up the Bible and see what God would say to us. And what we see every time we open up this book, there's certainly points of application for our life, but the dominant thing is that every single one of the pages of scripture, they co-ordinate to tell one central story, and that is that we have fallen short of a God who created us and who loves us, and yet He continued to love us.

In His love He may promise us to come and rescue us and then He fulfilled that promise by sending His son. We love the Bible because of what the Bible does in placing us in front of the greatest man who's ever lived and that is Jesus Christ. As we start this book, this is a transformational book. In fact, there's a lot of people who would put Ephesians as their favorite and certainly in the top two or three favorite books of the Bible. One is because it's shorter, but, two, is it gives the grand narrative from the beginning to the end and includes what He's done in our life the first three chapters and then what He wants to do through our life in the last three chapters.

I want to encourage you to lean in, as we study this book, to actually study it, read it, even before you come and even to memorize one or two verses each month. In September, what we're doing is Ephesians chapter one verses 13 and 14. Each time that we gather, or at least most of the times that we gather, we want to practice and this happens to be one of those times. If you would, it's going to be on this screen for us. Let's do this, okay? "In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory."

If you would, let's bow. Let's pray together. Father, as we open up your word we believe what it says to us is true. And the parts of our heart that would resist it, the parts of our heart that would want to argue about it, maybe even the parts of our heart that want to believe it, but struggle to do so. I pray that you would rescue us, that you would open up our eyes to see how trustworthy it is, and how it places us before Jesus Christ, who can satisfy our soul. God, I pray that you would speak through weakness that you would glorify Jesus Christ as we open it this morning. We pray in Christ name. Amen.

Well, in October of 2015, there was this little article that published. It was written, published, it was entitled Death, Taxes and the Chicago Cubs. Then it said, "Some things never change." Right? Because in that season, which was the case for a number of seasons before that, really didn't matter how close the Cubs came to winning the World Series. They fell short, and had fallen short at that point in time for 108 consecutive years. You think you have it bad, that your last championship for the team that you root for was X amount of years ago. Nobody really rivaled the Chicago Cubs in terms of futility. Just imagine that as a fan base. When they recorded their final out in the 10th inning of game seven the World Series last year, even as a Cardinals fan, I'll just be honest with you, that I smiled at the pent up elation that we saw, that I saw, on the TV screen in both players and fans.

Now, I realize there's a few of you who love maybe another team and maybe the team that they beat. But the fact is, is that when you see elation, it's a pleasant thing to observe. It really is. And that's why Ephesians chapter one should be so pleasant to all of us. Because in Ephesians chapter one, we're actually placed in front of a man who is elated at what God has done in his life. His name is Paul and Paul has received a gift that he did not deserve and this gift is beyond words. The fact is because it's written, it's words, it's been preserved through time, is that we do not get to see the expression on his face, but we get to see the explosion that kind of flows from his pen.

He sits down, he begins thinking about the blessings that God's grace has poured out to him and to those who know Him as Savior and Lord. And suddenly Paul rattles off a 202 word sentence with pausing for a single period. If you look in your Bibles in English, your translation, you see verses three through verse 14. You see that section? Well, in Greek, that is one sentence. One. One amazing, glorious sentence. And what I want you to see in it, is that three times this sentence, which is actually a song, that God is doing these things and on three different occasions He actually tells us what His intent is in doing these things in our life. And it is for the praise of His glory.

In other words, what we're gonna read here in the elated man, Paul, what comes out of his mouth, out comes from his heart, is written specifically, it was inspired by God to be put into the heart of Paul to write this down, to be preserved for 2,000 years. Knowing that you and I would actually pick it up, read it today, and His desire is not that we would argue about it, or that we would fret over it, but that we would sing about it. Maybe even sing with more intensity than we just did. And so listen to an elated man. He says in verse three, "Blessed be the God and father of our lord, Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love, He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ all according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace with which He has blessed us in the beloved.

“In Him we have redemption through his blood. The forgiveness of our trespasses. According to the riches of His grace which He lavished upon us and all wisdom and insight, making known to us the mystery of His will according to His purpose, which He set forth in Christ as the plan for the fullness of time. To unite all things in Him. Things in Heaven and things on Earth. In Him, we have obtained an inheritance having been predestined according to the purpose of Him, it works all things according to the counsel of His will. So that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be for the praise of His glory. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it to the praise of His glory.”

Paul wrote that down and go, “That’s a good place to end. Period.” It’s an amazing thing what he does here. You see, elation is fun to see in other people, but it’s even better to experience ourself. And this is Paul’s desire. It’s his intent in writing this down. He wants us to share his elation and what God has done in our life just as God had done these things in his life. And so what Paul does is he wants to take us on a tour through what, in essence, is this vault that’s full of God’s blessings to each and every one of us who know Christ. And most of you have seen a vault. If you haven’t, I want to show you one. This is the vault that’s underneath London. This is their gold bars there in London.

No what Paul was doing is ... He’s saying this. He goes, “Now, I want to walk you into the door and I just want you to look at all of this.” What he’s gonna do is he’s gonna take us from one cabinet, one shelf to another shelf to another shelf to another shelf through the next three chapters of this book showing us. He says, “Now, look what else He made available for you. And look what else He’s done for you. And look what else He’s done for you.” He’s our tour guide in essence. Showing us in one sentence some of the things that God has done in each of us and the reason is because he wants to get us singing. Now what you find in this sentence that we read is every, single one of these blessings comes to us through Jesus Christ. All the blessings are tethered to Christ. You have to go through Jesus in order to experience any of these blessings.

And yet what Paul does in this one sentence, is he breaks down each member of the Trinity. God the father, God the son, and God the spirit, and their involvement in the process. And so in verses three through six, we see the father’s work that’s put on display in the salvation process. In verse seven through 10, we see the son’s work that’s put on display. And then in verse 11 through 14, we see the Holy Spirit’s work that’s put on full display. So what we’re gonna do is we’re gonna take three weeks to work through this one Greek sentence. Today, we’re in verses three through six looking at what has God the father done that should make us so happy, not that we will sing, but that we must sing.

The first thing we find here is this, is that God has blessed us in Christ. He's blessed us in Christ. Look what verse three says, he says, "Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places." It's a beautiful thing that he uses three different words to describe Jesus. This week I just kind of looked at those words: Lord, Jesus, Christ. The word Lord is the result of His accomplishments. Jesus says that because He descended and became humble, and He took the very nature of a servant. He went to the cross to pay for us. He says that God the father gave him the name that is above every name. That at his name, every single knee will bow and every tongue confess that what Jesus is Lord. That He's Lord. This was His intent. He's the Lord.

The name, Jesus, was the name that He was given when He was here on the earth. Mary and Joseph certainly had a part in this, but God told them what to name Him. He says, "You will name Him Jesus for, because, He will save His people from their sins." And then the word, Christ. Christ is not His last name, that's His title. The word, Christ, was a word, it means Messiah. It means the Savior. It means the Promised One. That from the very beginning when we sin and God said, "I'm gonna send you the rescuer." When Jesus came, he was the Christ. We shortened it and we just call Him Jesus Christ. But when you see those words, Lord Jesus Christ, isn't it interesting not that that is precisely at the very thing at the heart of fallen man? Defames when we stub our toe. We say ... Well, not we, but some people. Right? "Jesus Christ." And we say it as if it's His fault. And yet what they're actually when they're saying, "Jesus Christ," is God's promised one who came to take away my sins that I'm now spewing out of my mouth that He is ultimate Lord of all.

What it says here is that God, the father, gives you all of His blessings through Jesus Christ. You see, when we come to Jesus as Lord, we don't stand at a distance believing truths about Him that are out there and hoping He's gonna throw us a little table scrap. No. We actually join Jesus in the most remarkable way. It's sort of like hiding a broken box inside of a perfect box, or Tupperware. I want you to think about this for a second. Okay? Throughout this book, even in this one sentence, on 12 different occasions he uses the words in Christ. In Christ. Colossians chapter three, verse three says this, is that you have died and your life is now hidden with Christ. So God draws us so close that we actually are enabled to take on an identity that is only true of Jesus Christ.

So, for example, we look at our life and we all have an identity. And we look at it and if I had a pen, I could mark it all up, and I can write all my sin on here, I could write all my weaknesses on here. And I can say, "You know what? This is who I am." I look into the mirror every single morning and I see what I'm not. I see weakness. I see failure. I see a few singles and I see a few strike outs. I see see good days and bad days. And every single one of us, our identity shapes our behavior, our activity. So every single one of us, we all look at ourself just like this. What he's saying is this, is that when we come to Christ as Lord, it's not that we sit over here and Jesus sits over here, and we intellectually ascend to a belief about Jesus Christ. No, the blessings come this way. He says that we can actually be hidden in Christ.

In other words, that we who were once sinners, we look at our life, our identity, and our failures, and we go, “You know what? I’m a sinner.” Suddenly, we allow to be in Christ and now we look at ourself and we see ourself through the identity that only applies to Jesus Christ. That He is a saint. He is the Holy One. He is the only Holy One who’s ever been on the earth. The Bible says that in our sin, that we by ourself, that we are spiritual orphans. That we’ve been separated from God, from a right relationship with Him. We can look at Jesus and go, “Wow. There’s the son of God over there. He’s in God’s family. I believe in Jesus.” But that’s not what the gospel says. The gospel says that we, who were once spiritual orphans, now by trusting Jesus we actually, our life is now hidden with Christ and God then comes to us and he says, “I’m gonna make you my children. My sons, my daughters, and you’ll be heirs and co-heirs with Christ.”

In other words, when you trust Jesus Christ, you receive an entirely new identity, and it’s the identity of your Savior in whom you now live. And Jesus just loves to share His inheritance with us. I want you to think about this. Some of you, you read the Book of Revelation and you go, “I need a commentary or a teacher or I’m just gonna leave it to the Lord. I’m just gonna keep living because I don’t know what it means. I don’t know what it says.” There’s a lot of interesting things in that book. It’s confusing because sometimes you’re reading it and it just seems like real straightforward teaching. And at other times it’s like, “Wait a minute. What does that mean?”

Let me give you the whole book in just a real, really, really small nutshell. Jesus is the Savior. He looks to the church and he says, “I’m your high priest and these are some of the things that I see in your life that are mistaken.” Suddenly, John, he has a vision of what’s gonna take place in the future and he looks and he says that there’s a throne and it says there that there’s a scroll. There’s a title deed to the universe, to all the worship in the world, has authority over all things. And they’re looking around saying, “Who has the authority to actually go and take hold of that title deed?” And there was no one who could do it. So it says they begin crying until an angel says, “Wait a minute. You don’t need to cry anymore for there is one. The lamb of God from the tribe of Judah, Jesus Christ.”

And Jesus comes as the resurrected Christ after He’s been crucified and resurrected from the dead. He comes and He takes that scroll. It’s the deed of the whole world. And on that scroll, what we’re told is there’s seven seals. Now this is important because in ancient times when there was a document of legal significance, you knew that it was not tampered with if you could break seven wax seals. So if you died, your kids would take the title deed of your inheritance, they’d go to a judge, and if it was broken seven times, it was authentic. That what was in there was really your wishes. And so the rest of the Book of Revelation is each of these seals being broken to authenticate that Jesus has the authority and that Jesus is the one who can hold the title deed to the universe. It opens up at the end and it says that Jesus because of His victory on the cross and His resurrection, He is the heir of all things. What Ephesians 1:3 says this. It says that Jesus wants to share His inheritance with you and with me. It’s a remarkable thing if you think about this.

Now I'm gonna make a really, really sharp left. Okay? Have you ever seen the show, Storage Wars? All right. I know we just went from Revelation to Storage Wars. Storage Wars is proof that we have too many channels that have to be filled with 24 hours of programming. And so somebody thought, "You know what we should do? Let's make a show." Here's the theme. By the way, this is not like my life. Okay? But I've seen it before. The theme is this, all right? People foreclose on their storage shed. They don't what to do with it and so they auction it off. So the whole show is you got people and they clip the lock and then they sit back, and they auction, they bid on owning the contents. But they're not allowed to go through it and see what's there. They can only see it from a distance. So they're like, "Ooh, that looks kind of like a couch back there. Maybe that's of worth." But there's multiple people and they all bid on it.

Sometimes the whole shed goes for like 30 bucks. I mean, this is not like valuable stuff always. Right? So they go through and then the rest of the show is they show what they found inside the shed that they just bought. Sometimes it's sort of let down, but other times they'll say something like, "You know what? This was even better than I thought." Now listen to me. When we trust Jesus Christ, He opens the vault that He purchased with His own blood and then He says to us, "This is all ours." It's all ours. And all the blessings in Christ are so deep and wide and great that we will forever say, "This was even better than we thought."

You see, for some of you today, you're here and you have not yet trusted Christ and you look at the option. You look at the opportunity to believe in Jesus Christ and maybe to come into Him in faith and you look and you go, "Well, perhaps there's a benefit there that I could be forgiven of my sin." Or, "Perhaps I kind of see that back in the back corner that maybe being a part of people who believe in that might help me through life." And what you need to know is that when you trust Jesus Christ and you start going through the vault of everything that He's made available, it is better than what you now see. It is better. As the church family, we confess to you, it is better than what we even knew when we came to faith in Jesus Christ. He has blessed us in Christ.

The second thing I want you see that God has done is that God has chosen us in Christ. He has chosen us in Christ. You see, as Paul begins his tour around this vault of all of God's blessings, he makes his first stop at a place that many believers squirm. He says, "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world. In love He predestined us." I just love Paul's courage. It's because I don't think he thought that he was being courageous right now. He just jumps into the most contentious theological swimming pool in the history of the church and he does so without any warning, any explanation. And he doesn't do just a nice dive. He cannonballs in. Right? Just so everybody can just get splashed upon. He like, "Yep. This is what happened."

You know what interesting? Is he just assumed that the church would be thankful for this. Because he doesn't even explain himself. And, apparently, the church took his cue and they were thankful because we don't find Ephesians, or the second book to the Ephesians, to explain what he meant about God choosing and predestining people. They all looked at that and they said, "You know what? This is a blessing." And yet, isn't it the case that when I use the word ... I didn't use the word, I just read the word. "Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world and then in love he predestined us." That made many of us in the room just kind of tighten up a little bit. We look at the blessing of forgiveness and we smile. We looked at the blessing of election and we go, "I don't know."

What I want you to see here is that this is a good gift. You see, there's a lot of us who grew up in schoolyards where during recess you'd pick teams. You got two captains who were normally the best at whatever they're doing and they start. "Well, I want this guy on my team. I want this gus on my team." We understand what elections are. We understand what choosing up teams are. All of a sudden, when that's applied categorically, those words are used by God and in the context of saving people. All of a sudden we back up and go, "Wait and minute. God would never do that. God would never do that." But you have to understand something, Providence, and that is that God's choosing is not a new concept in the Bible.

You see, God looked down upon the earth and every single person had fallen away from Him. They'd all sinned. He looks at a guy who's worshiping stones. It's not because he was more righteous. It says that God chose Abraham among all the other people to put His blessing upon him, so that through Abraham, all nations could be blessed. Years later, he had two grandkids and it says there that God chose Jacob, that he would be the recipient of the Covenant and not his brother, Esau. Year later, there's a lot of people in the nation of Israel and it says that God chose Moses to lead them. There was even a few times where there was a little coup. And they said, "Maybe Moses shouldn't lead us."

And God chose repeatedly, "No this is my leader. I choose him." There was 12 tribes in the nation of Israel and God chose one tribe, the Levites, to be the priests. Jesus came to the earth. There was a lot of people He could choose and He chose 12, the 13th didn't get chosen to be His disciple. You say, "Well, that's not fair." But that's what He did. We look at even Paul, himself. If you were here last week, we looked at how Paul became Paul. At one time he was Saul. Next chapter nine, God met him. He opened up His eyes and at first He blinded him, then He says, "This is who I am. I'm Jesus and I have a task for you." And God goes to another man, he says, "I want you to go help Paul out."

And the other man says, "Wait a minute. He's come here to arrest believers. I don't want to go be known as one of the believers to him because he may arrest me."

All of a sudden, God says, "Go for he is a chosen instrument."

I mean, there's a reason that it's the apostle, Paul, and not the apostle, Larry or Brian or some other name. God chose Paul for that specific task. It's an amazing thing that even here in Ephesians, as well as in Romans nine and Acts 13:48, Titus 1:1, second Peter 1:10. We're told of God's choosing people unto salvation. And some people look at that and they think, "Well, I just can't absorb that. I can't take that. That can't be true of God." I think we don't like it because we fear that it doesn't make Him palatable, too attractive. That seems not loving. So let's not talk about that and let's not let that be known. God says, "This is how things went down and I'm telling you so that you'll sing and not argue about it."

You see, one of the unique things about salvation and the Bible is different verses talk about different facets of this diamond. Sometimes we look at it and we see the need for human responsibility. We have to believe. Sometimes we see that there was God's foreknowledge and sometimes we see God's choosing. We see different words and they all talk about the same thing. Sometimes we think, "Well, if one is true, the other's can't." What you need to understand is this. Just because in one particular verse He focuses on one facet, He doesn't disbelieve all the rest. You see, some people find comfort in this idea of God's choosing people unto salvation and they find comfort in a verse like first Peter, chapter one, verses one and two. There Peter writes and he says, "To those who are elect." That word means chosen. To the chosen. "According to the foreknowledge of God."

And some people go, "Well, see it's about foreknowledge." Most of us can sort of get rest in that because God, He sees the whole train. He doesn't see one little car at a time. He gets to see the whole thing. Even before the foundation of the world, we look at this, and it says that He looks and He sees the day when Brian, when he was 16 was gonna trust Jesus Christ. And He says, "Well, it's by foreknowledge." Some of us find great comfort in that and we should find comfort in that. The reason is because it provides us an additional window. But, listen, it does not negate God's rhythm of sovereign determination throughout the Bible.

My encouragement as we open this little verse is even the parts that are mysterious to you, don't assume that they're not true. When God says without apology He blessed you and chose you before the foundation of the earth, we're supposed to smile about that and sing about that. Not go out to our life groups and fret about that and debate about that. We're supposed to look at it and go, "God, I don't understand how all of it fits together, but thank you."

So why do we struggle with this doctrine? I think there's three reasons. I think the first reason that we struggle with it is this idea of fairness. Many fear that this idea of God's choosing, it sort of injures God's loving impartial reputation in the world. You have to understand something about God, though. He's not a piece of clay that's sculpted by our thoughts about Him. He doesn't take votes. "Oh, you want me to do it that way? I'm sorry." That's not how God acts. That's not who God is. God doesn't become because we believe something. God just is and He tells us who He is and then he urges us to respond to who He is in faith.

Believing that what He said is true. You see, God's choosing should not cast doubt in whether or not anyone is welcome to come to Jesus because John chapter three, verse 16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." Whoever is the recipient of the invitation, all may come. God is simply explaining that those who do believe, do so on purpose and with help.

The second reason that we struggle with this idea of election is because we think that it contradicts human responsibility. We think, "But wait a minute. People are supposed to believe." And Paul would totally agree with you, which is why in the same Greek sentence, you find verse 13 in your English Bible. It says, "And having believed in Him." You see, God's choosing and our faith and our belief in Him, they fit in one sentence. It just happens to be a sentence that only God could write. Because our mind, it just challenges. It strains and buckles under the pressure of having to put infinite things into it. You see, you and I, we kind of look at salvation and we look and all we can see is what looks like two different ropes. "You know, I'm reading this passage and it says here in the verse four, it says God chose us." And all of a sudden, you get down to verse 13, which happens to be the exact same sentence. And it says that we're supposed to choose Him.

And we look at these things and it's natural to look because our vision is blocked and we think, "Well, there's two different ropes. Which one am I gonna hold on to?" And so throughout time, people have literally rallied around theological camps that choose one or the other. And what God wants you to know is it's actually just one rope. If you don't hold on to both, you fall to the ground. The one rope and it goes over a rafter. You hang on to one side ... I've realized there's a clip on this. But if you hang on to one side, the rope just spins over and you fall to the ground. If you sit here and you say, "You know what? God just chooses so we don't have to tell anyone about Jesus. We're just robots." Well, clearly, that is not going to be ... It's not going to produce the kind of lifestyle God intends because He told us otherwise. And on the flip side, you can't just hold and say, "You know it's all about us. God has nothing to do with this." Because clearly He says that He does.

I think the third reason that we struggle with this is inability. Not only are we limited by a finite mind to try to fit infinite number of puzzle pieces into something that's so simple. Something defined and manageable. But we're also unable to see how deeply sin has affected us and our ability to get back to God. You see, some of us really do believe, "If given a fair shake, I think I would choose Him without His help." I think some of us think that God is exaggerating in what He's saying about our inability to come to Him. Roman 8:7 says, "For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot."

What He's saying is this, is that without God's intervention in your life and my life, that we have no ability to trust God. This is why when Jesus was on the earth in John chapter six, verse 44, he says, "No one can come to me unless the father who sent me draws him." You see, sin does not make us incapable of being kind or doing good. Sin makes us incapable of taking a step towards God without Him first taking a step towards us.

But God, out of His mercy, chooses us unworthy as we are to be objects of His grace. Do you see when He did this, He didn't wait to see how well you lived your life. He said, "Okay, I'll choose him. He's doing pretty good." He says He chose us when? Before the foundation of the earth, before we were even here. This is the sovereignty of God that boggles the mind. But it's supposed to stir worship within our heart.

Charles Spurgeon, looking at all of this, wrestling with all of this, he said these words. He says, "I believe this because I am quite certain that, if God had not chosen me, I should never have chosen Him; and I am sure He chose me before I was born, or else He would have never chosen me afterwards; and He must have elected me for some reasons unknown to me, for I never could find any reason in myself why He should have looked upon me with special love." He didn't understand everything about God's eternal purposes and His sovereignty, but he looked and in faith and humility, said, "I don't understand all of it, but I trust and I choose to believe."

First Corinthians, chapter one, verse 27 through 29, says, "God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God." And if you look at the context there of what God is choosing. God chose what is foolish in the world. What he's talking about is the people who have come to faith in Him. He says that, "Not many of you are of wise standing and not many many are of noble birth, and not many of you are these amazing people." He goes, "I pretty much chose you because it would prove there's only one hero. That glory will not be robbed from me."

See, this is the gift. Now, listen, I know this is a mystery. I just confess it to you just bluntly. All the pieces don't mesh perfectly in my own brain. And I don't believe they ever will. But God told us about this to get us singing instead of fretting. And so I urge you, Providence, to admire this treasure in the vault. Admire His grace. Admire His love for us for none of us would be allowed in the vault if God had not done it.

And that gets us to the third thing and that is that God has adopted us through Christ. You see, what He says? Verse five and six, "In love He predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ." Sons and daughters. When I was a little boy, my parents came and they says, "You're gonna have a sister." Which was a surprise. They said, "Now, this is going to be an adopted sister, but she'll be a little baby." My sister, Amy, she was born to a very, very young teenage mother and there's no dad around, and she was in need. My parents looked upon this person with endowed, God given dignity, personhood, abilities, gifts, beauty, and said, "This human being has not earned anything from us, but we're gonna adopt this baby and make this child our own."

And it's interesting as a son that was born into that family. My sister now has an equal share to everything that I have. Gladly. Access to my parents, an inheritance, a home, a place to be. And you see, some of us who have never been adopted, we look at this and we go, "Oh, yeah. God adopted us." And it's because we're not amazed and the reason we're not amazed is because we don't ever see ourself as spiritual orphans.

When we sinned against God, that we literally broke fellowship with Him, and we didn't have a spiritual family, we didn't have a spiritual father who could take care of us, who could provide for us. And so God did what we couldn't do. He sent His son to die and rise from the dead. He says everyone who believes in Him, not only are they forgiven, but He says He adopts us into His family.

Now think of the amazing benefit here. In salvation, the benefit is rescue, but in adoption, the benefit is a relationship. He could have saved us and said, "Okay. You're forgiven but you gotta live on that island over there, not near me." Adoption says, "I want you not only on my island, I want you in my house. I want you at the dinner table. I want you around." And you see the best is yet to come, Providence, for everything has been signed and paid for. We're legally adopted children of God, yet we're not home. We're here on the earth because we have a mission to tell other people about Jesus. But God has determined a day when we will be home and we will not make it there because we're strong. We'll make it there because He's strong and He's faithful.

So what do we do with this? A few points of application and then we're gonna sing. First is let's trust in Jesus. If you have never Jesus Christ as your Savior, you can do that today. Simply relinquish your understanding that you can save yourself and you trust in Jesus righteousness, his death, and his resurrection. The Bible says you will be forgiven. You'll be adopted into His family. You can trust Him today.

Second, is let's pursue a holy life. Did you notice why He called? He says He called us, He adopted us, so that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In Christ our blame has been removed, but now we have a responsibility to pursue a holy life, a different life. We do that by examining the scriptures. We do that by repenting of sin. We do that by engaging in the lives of other believers who are our brothers and sisters in Christ, adopted into the same family, that we can help each other through life. By praying for one another, loving one another, encouraging one another.

Third thing is let's be on lookout this week to talk about Jesus. You see, God's choosing does not lessen the need to tell people about Jesus. It only gives it hope. See when Paul went to Corinth and he was discouraged because nobody was trusting in Jesus Christ, God came to Paul and He said, "Do not be afraid. Go and speak for I have many people in this city. None of them have yet trusted Jesus, my son, as Savior and Lord, but I have many people, so keep talking." It's a mystery, isn't it? Some people will believe when you speak the gospel.

And fourth is let's worship the Lord. The refrain that's given throughout this song is to the praise of His glory. Praise is the goal and redemption is the means. If God has done all this then how can we not sing? So let's pray together and then we'll do just that. Father in Heaven, we thank you for your kindness. We thank you for these amazing truths that we see within your word of what you've made available to us.

For the parts, God, that are hard for whatever reason doesn't sing about, would you open up your eyes to help us to see how amazing it is? For the parts that we look at and we find conflict within our heart, God, would you help us to believe you and trust your heart? And, God, for the parts that we understand, that we love, God, would you fill our hearts with passion and compassion? And as we sing to you, we pray that all of it will come out of a full heart. We love you and we pray this in Christ's name. Amen.



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