

Children of God

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[0 : 00] Well, Oscar Maximilian and Ava Elliott are children of Hugh Jackman and Deborah Lee.

! Net worth \$100 million.! Adopted by Nicole Kidman and Tom Cruise.

Net worth \$470 million. David Banda and Mercy James. Adopted by Madonna.

Net worth \$700 million. Now, the adopted children of these celebrities are arguably some of the luckiest people on planet Earth, many of which came into the world in dire circumstances.

In fact, most of them were adopted from orphanages from different parts of the world. From the humblest beginnings with a hopelessly slim to none chance of elevating from their socio-economic birth origins.

[1 : 21] By and large, all adopted children are quite fortunate to receive a second and more promising chance at acceptance. And the love of a nurturing and caring family.

But when an adopted child is taken in by a celebrity, it's practically as lucky as winning a lottery ticket.

Today, we're going to look at an adoption that is so amazing. Because the celebrity involved in this adoption just happens to be our great and sovereign God.

Father, we pause, Lord, to acknowledge you. And Father, we give you thanks, first of all, for this wonderful day.

Lord, we thank you for your word. And Father, I ask, Lord, that you give me, Lord, the courage. Give me the clarity. Give me, Lord, the insight, Lord, to present your word to your people.

[2 : 32] And Father, at the end of the day, that their lives are affected and changed, all for your honor and glory. We give you thanks once again in the name of Jesus Christ, our King.

Our scripture reference this morning is taken from 1 John chapter 3. 1 John chapter 3, verses 1 through 3.

1 John 3, verses 1 through 3. See what kind of love the Father has given to us.

That we should be called children of God, and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared.

But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure.

[3 : 39] Believers are called children of God because of the Father's amazing love. So their lives are marked with the purifying hope.

And I'm going to focus on two main points this morning.

The Father's amazing love. The Father's amazing love. And the purifying hope. The Father's amazing love. And the purifying hope. Now, what the Apostle John wants us to grasp is how radically different from all the other sorts of love.

He wants us to get an understanding of what this agape love, this God kind of love, is really like.

The NASB translation says, See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us. The emphasis is, Behold, look at the kind of love that God has given to us.

[4 : 56] You see, John is stressing the point. He's trying to emphasize. He's trying to make us take the time and consider and allow the reality to sink down deep in our hearts.

He wants us to get an experience of our breaths being taken away. He wants us to be startled. He wants us to be amazed. So that we are left saying to ourselves, What sort of love is this?

The term used here in Greek means, Of what country? It is a word that expresses surprise in encountering something that's foreign or something that's alien.

Something that we're not accustomed to. In the book of Matthew, The disciples, When they were amazed at when Jesus calmed the storm on the Sea of Galilee, they exclaimed, What kind of man is this?

Even the winds and the waves obey Him. This kind of man, this kind of person, is in a different category from anything we have encountered before.

[6 : 20] What John is trying to get home, what John is trying to emphasize to us, the kind of love that the Father has given to us, is out of this world.

It's not a natural love, but it is a supernatural love. Now what I want you to understand is, this is the kind of love in which God takes all the initiative to make us His children.

This is a love that gives lavishly, that gives generously, and freely, to those who are undeserving. When I started, and when I mentioned those children, those children were from orphanages in Africa, like Malawi, Cambodia, Vietnam, and it had to be an initial step by these people to adopt these children.

And, I really want you to think, and I'll tell you something, what I found was very interesting. The ethnicity of these children were not the same as their parents.

So it had to be something that stirred in their hearts to cause them to adopt these children. But not only that, in some cases, these parents had other children as well.

[7 : 54] So in some cases, they didn't need to adopt children. But, something inside them compelled them to adopt these children.

Now what I want you to do is, think about this. When you contemplate your sin, your rebellion, against the Holy God, and He adopted you, you begin to understand the wonder, the amazement, that John is emphasizing here, in this verse of Scripture.

Because truth be told, why would a Holy God even bother, even be concerned with people like us? Now I know some of you think you're alright.

My wife and I, we always talk about people being alright. And I tell her, they ain't alright. Because I ain't alright. When we really seriously look at ourselves, yeah, on the outside, to society, we may be good people.

But to God, we are not alright. God is the one who makes the initial step to adopt us, to rescue us.

[9 : 19] You see, it's a splendid thing that God should forgive our sins, but even more splendid that He should go and do so at such a great cost.

it costs God, His only begotten Son. And those of us who are familiar with Scripture know the cost, the price that Jesus paid at Calvary.

It was a terrible price. It was horrific. It was torture. And it was the lowest way a person could die in society at that time.

Our Lord and Savior died as a common criminal to adopt us, to get us into the family of God. And you see, God goes a step further.

God actually says, now we are children. We belong to His family. You see, I don't understand it.

[10 : 27] I don't understand this God who delights in changing rebels into children who belong to His family. Our Father not only gave us His name in verse 1, but He also gives us His status.

Verse 2, now we are children. John 1, written by the same writer of this epistle, says it like this, but to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Have you ever soberly taken the time out of your busy life to consider and contemplate what the Father has done for you?

We live busy lives. Oftentimes we forget what God has done for us.

We oftentimes think we're entitled to God saving us. Like, God had to do it. This is what God had to do for me.

[11 : 56] The truth is, God didn't have to do anything. So, we need to sometimes stop, consider, and be amazed at what God has done for us.

Many of us want a road to a Christless hell. So, I think that thought should always cross your mind that the length, the breadth, the extension to what God has done to get you in this family came at such a cost.

And referring to the illustration that I did, in some cases with adoption, it took some of these people years to adopt these children. There were legal road blocks, sometimes parents who abandoned the children came out of nowhere, and said, it's not going to happen.

And in some instances there were fathers. adults. But, these people who decided to adopt these children, they were patient, they persevered, and eventually, even after years, the adoption process was completed.

Now, the concept, as you may have gathered, what John is using here, is the concept of adoption. And we have to remember, as I said, that lay entirely up to our father God, and it was motivated by his love for us.

[13 : 51] Adoption is a legal action by which a person takes into their family a child who is not their own, who has no rights within the family, in order to give that child all the privileges of their own children.

back then in John's day, in Roman law, as in some of our cases today, an adopted child was entitled to all the rights and privileges of a natural born child.

So, again, what would be the motivation for someone to go through the process at such a considerable cost to them? maybe it might be the child was attractive to them.

Maybe in some cases of adoption, being familiar with the parents, but parents who may have died and you had a relationship with them, so you decide that you would adopt the children of the deceased parents.

But we know the basic motivation is pity, compassion, and love. And in the end, love triumphs, love wins.

[15 : 21] And so it is with God our Father. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption as sons.

And because you are sons, or because you are children of God, God has sent his spirit into our hearts, and we cry, Abba, Father.

We identify God as our Father love. Because of the spirit of God that is in us. You and I had nothing attractive.

We deserve, there was nothing in us to deserve this love of God. But God chose to love us because as John always reiterates, God is love.

And this has always been God's way. When it came to the nation of Israel, it was the same principle. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you.

[16 : 41] But it is because the Lord loves you. Deuteronomy 7, 7 through 8. Now, every single person in here, every believer has experienced this kind of love.

And this is the kind of love that has reached out towards them through Jesus Christ. This kind of love lifted you and I out of sin and placed us in the family of God.

If you were ever a prodigal, that is one of my favorite accounts in the Bible. You have to be brought to your senses.

When you read the account, the Bible says, and he came to his senses. And the only way you could come to your senses is God interacting in your life.

And then the decision was made to return to the Father. Now, I'm talking to somebody in here who was a prodigal, who was living in a pig pen.

[18 : 05] You were living in a pig pen and you didn't even know it was a pig pen because you got accustomed to living with pigs. what Jesus was saying back in the day was you couldn't get any lower than this.

Jews and pigs, separate, complete opposite. Jesus was trying to emphasize the point that as low as you could get in life, if God initiates you coming to your senses, working in your heart, your desire is to get back home to your Father.

That is the process that every single believer, whether they accepted or not, had to go through to get back to God.

Now of course, some of us, our pig pens wasn't as dirty as some of the other people. I'm one of them who came from a dirty pig pen. And if God hadn't rescued me, I'd probably be dead from eating pig food.

But you see, what I'm trying to get to you, or get into your hearts, is this love of God, the length and how far God would go to rescue His people, to rescue His children.

[19 : 31] children. You see, I remember when I spoke on that message, and I said something about the young man when he made the decision to go back home.

The very same people he passed when he left, he had to pass them going back home. Because as we know, it was all about worldliness.

It was about greed. It was about doing your own thing. And when he left, he was in good shape, financially.

But we know the story. He burnt out all his money, partying with friends, and then he had to get a job. Again, this is something I learned from an older pastor.

Jews don't work for foreigners. You have to work for a foreigner. along with working with pigs. So he had to take this job that he didn't want to take, just in order to survive.

[20 : 42] So if you feel this morning that you are beyond the love of God, rest assured, God can rescue you from your pig pen.

God can arrest your heart. Your decision has to be through the Spirit of God, I got to get back home. No matter what it costs, no matter what it takes, I have to return to my Father.

God can go. Now, when we are saved, and when we are placed in the family of God, one of the great things that happen is, you have many brothers and sisters.

You have brothers and sisters throughout planet earth. This morning as we worship, brothers and sisters in different countries, we're doing the same thing.

Worshiping the triune God, acknowledging God through Jesus Christ as their king. So you have family.

[21 : 57] Some family you know of, some family you don't know of. God, not only the salvation experience, but God, not only the salvation experience, but God has brought you into the family of God, people, which is every tribe, every town, any kind of ethnicity, we all are children of God.

And when we get home, what we are going to do is enjoy the presence of God forever. Now the truth is, I've been trying to figure out what it would be like to be in God's presence.

I haven't come up with an answer to that question yet, but do your best. God, the ultimate God, in His presence forever, no pain, no suffering.

You don't have to worry about somebody breaking into your house, breaking into your car. you don't have to worry about any disease, any sickness. I mean, that's just a small part.

I mean, when you think about God, like I tell people, He only runs the universe. That's all. God, the reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him.

[23 : 56] Now being children of God means that you've been born again. You have God's Spirit. You've been given a new nature, and that nature is, as I alluded to earlier, out of this world.

It's heavenly. Our thing is that we display a nature like Jesus Christ. We do our best to follow, to emulate, to imitate the life of the Christ.

Now, the only thing that's going to happen here is that the people in the world are not going to recognize you. as a child of God.

In their case, the God of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

2 Corinthians 4 and 4. A passage that I like. I always tell people, because people, when I talk to people, they keep, you know, I don't understand. They just don't get it, man.

[25 : 08] They don't. I tell them, I say, you got to understand. The God of this world has blinded their minds. This is the condition of the people that we encounter as children of God.

Now, the truth is, and the flip side of that is, for me, one time, I was just like them. People would be talking to me. People would be telling me about salvation.

And I'd be looking at them like, it doesn't matter. So what? But a blinded mind, a person who is unregenerate, does not understand what it is to be in the family of God.

I know most people think you're weird. they think this story, this message, is outdated, and it ain't relevant for the times.

And you got to remember something. The world did not recognize Jesus Christ, or his message of salvation. In fact, they were so hostile towards Jesus and his message, they plotted to put him to death, and they did it.

[26 : 33] The world didn't recognize Jesus as God's representative. So, think about it. They're not going to recognize you either. The world doesn't have any understanding of your relationship with God.

they think, man, that God stuff, that's a fairy tale. That's foolishness. You're deluded.

And besides, he's a fanatic. What they don't realize is, you have direct access to the throne of heaven, and from that throne is dispensed all the things you need in life.

Answers to prayers, peace and joy. You see, only God can give you peace and joy when you have crisis. Crisis like what has happened in Dallas.

Crisis that has happened right here in our country, where loved ones are killed. Only God can give you that kind of peace. What is called, is the fruit of the spirit.

[27 : 45] And we know the listing in the book of Galatians, the love, the joy, the peace, the kindness, the temperance, soberness. These are the things that we have accessibility to as children of God.

And I learned this one from a book that we've been doing in care group side by side. and my mind always goes on a particular sister in our congregation.

They don't also understand or have an idea of the ministering spirits dispatched to assist us in fulfilling the purposes of God in our lives and protecting us from harm and danger.

there's another world besides this world that we can't see. And we know their job, the opposing forces, is to kill, steal, and destroy.

We also have the world of angels who minister, who serve the purposes of God and protect us.

[29 : 05] So, the world has no idea of this, I call it secret weapon. They have no idea that you got as a prophet, Elijah.

He was in a situation where he was confronted with a whole army and he had a servant that was, as we say, freaking out.

He said, Master, they're going to kill us thousands. And he said, he prayed, Lord, open his eyes so that he could see. And when he, when God opened his eyes, there were more with them than there were against them.

So, always remember that. No matter whatever happens in this world, you got more on your side if you're a child of God. God is responsible for taking care of you.

He will dispatch his ministering spirits on your behalf. God is God is love. And you got to also realize right in this, in John 3.13, the world hates the children of God.

[30 : 30] Because after all, we don't belong to this world. Our priorities are different from those of the world. And our morals are different.

your message from time to time bothers the consciences of people of the world.

Recently, this is one of the messages that bothers the people of the world about same-sex marriage. marriage. Now, you and I know it's foolishness.

It's craziness. But again, I'm going to tell you, blinded minds do foolish things. So, every time you show up, or every time you say, I'm not for that, I'm against that, I don't approve, I don't validate that, opposition.

Conscience are pricked. You see, deep down in their hearts, they know it's wrong. But, living in denial seems to be the thing of the day.

[31 : 55] And, you're going to face hostility. Some of you face hostility, hostility, let me ask you this, do some of you face hostility in your workplaces?

You're standing for what is right. You're standing on your principles based on God's word. You're going to be opposed.

They're going to come against you. They're going to be hostile towards you. people. And, as I said earlier, you're old-fashioned. That's for them people back in the day.

That's old people's stuff. Now, one of the things that I tell people all the time is, I say, alright, let's take for argument's sake, alright, this God stuff is not real.

I know one thing, if I live according to the word of God, I can have a better quality of life. life. So, there has to be more to this book, to this scripture, to this God, than what people believe.

[33 : 04] You see, any society, and we see it in our country, the further you get away from God, the worse your society becomes. It starts to crumble. And then you have all kind of, you have a myriad of problems that come along with it.

But, it's amazing. But, they cannot see. I know often times, it's hard, and it's difficult, to live in a world where, as a friend of mine said, he said, Yoms, you're abnormal, you know.

We're abnormal. And, what he was telling me was, his friends were saying, brother, you're abnormal, you ain't normal.

You need to live this kind of life. Or, live a life in opposition to God, and you're going to be alright. You're going to be able to function in this world without a lot of problems.

So, we are familiar, we understand that standing for righteousness is going to cost you. And, you could be tempted to give up.

[34 : 19] God, you're going to remember, who is your father? You've got to remember, who is your family?

You know, one of the things, this came to my mind when I was preparing this message, and this is how it was, and in some cases it still is in our society today. Who is a sealy?

You're supposed to know better than that. Who is a moss? This is how you live. You're a man. We don't live that way.

We don't support those foolish practices, that immoral behavior. You're a cox. You're expected to behave a certain way.

And see, this is what we don't understand. If we are part of God's family, if we are children of God, we are expected to live and behave a certain way.

[35 : 24] So I know there are going to be days when it's going to be difficult, when it's going to get hard, and you're going to feel like, oh, this don't make no sense. I might as well join the crowd. I might as well blend in. No.

Remember who is your father. Remember your family. And this should be motivation to help us to make it through a crazy world.

Because this world that we live in does not respect God, does not respect the children of God, does not respect the ideals of God. We are abnormalities.

We are the aliens. We are the foreigners as we journey and as we travel through life. and the fact that they are hostile to what you, it tells you, it confirms to you, it's evidence that you belong to the family of God.

You see, because if you're not getting any opposition, something ain't right. you get opposition from family members.

[36 : 37] You know, in some families, some of us live with unsaved people. I'm not going to go, you know what it's like living with unsaved people.

One of the things in my family, right, I just sometimes I listen to conversations and they were talking about some cousins of mine about how a young lady is living with a boyfriend.

And there are those of us who said, that is wrong, that is not right. And there are those who say, so what's wrong with you all? This is this is modern, this is modern, this is what happened, you all, what planet you all living on.

But you see, this is what breaks down and decays our society. Because we make decisions that are opposed to the word of God.

And you pay a price. Because in one particular instance, you know, you've got mothers that condone this kind of behavior.

[37 : 59] And it's not right. But again, we live in times where that's normal, according to them.

But we have to be people who make a difference. We have to be people who stand for what is right. My second main point is called the purifying hope.

And I'll just read the second part. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared, but we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.

And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure. I'd like you to turn to the book of Romans.

Romans 8, 22 through 25. I'll do my best to connect this to what I am addressing this morning.

[39 : 14] Romans 8, 22 through 25. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now are not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit grown inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

For in this hope we were saved. Now, hope that is seen is not hope. For hopes, for who hopes for what he sees.

But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. When you see early blossoms on a fruit tree, that indicates to you that there's a future harvest.

And in a similar way, the fruit that the Spirit produces in our lives provides hope that one day we are going to be like Christ.

But in the meantime, we groan, we grieve over any sinfulness that remains in our lives. Now, what we need to always be mindful of is the adoption process.

[40 : 44] process. And this adoption process began with the Father's choice. And that included us being brought into the family of God, being made children of God.

And that happened at the time of our salvation. But you see, it's a process. And one day, it's going to culminate into something that's glorious.

we are going to be a people who are changed. We are going to look like Christ. This is what the Word of God says.

And this is the path that we are on. When Christ returns, every believer, every child of God is going to be conformed to his image.

And what that means is we are going to have the nature of Christ. But, see, there's a tension that exists between the first part of the verse and the end.

[41 : 54] Now we are children, and the latter part, we will be like him. And this is the tension that we find ourselves living in. We're living in this purifying hope that at Christ's return, we're going to ultimately be conformed to his image or likeness.

Again, think about it. Think about what it would be like to have the nature, the character of Christ in you.

I think that defies human understanding or human description. because we're back to the concept. Alien, foreign, out of this world.

That is what we, as children of God, that is the ultimate end. That is the ultimate finishing of the process that God has initiated in our lives.

Now, because of the Father's love, that makes us children of God, as we've read, because we have been adopted into his family, because of this future hope, we fix our eyes, we fix our gaze on Christ.

[43 : 21] And our desire is to be like him right now. That's the goal of a follower, a disciple of Jesus Christ. You see, we're going to do our part while we're here now.

Then God is ultimately going to do his part in the end. So, we have to be people who have this hope.

Who have this hope that in the end, we're going to be like Christ. And we have to be people who in the meantime pursue holiness.

We have to be people in the meantime, until that day, we have to be people, children of God, who pursue holiness. To put it another way, our lives have to be marked with this purifying hope.

And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself as he is pure. that is our assignment while we wait for that great day.

[44 : 35] It's a continual process. And we are expected to conduct ourselves in a manner that is worthy of the gospel of Christ.

we are to be, as I said before, children of God, people of God who pursue righteousness.

Look at 1 John, if you're still there, 1 John 2, 28, 29, just above our passage. 1 John 2, 28-29.

And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears, we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.

If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him. Everyone who practices righteousness has been born of God.

[45 : 49] You see, we have a legitimate claim to this purifying hope because we are the ones who remain faithful to Christ.

Now, I like to keep things home. I always tell people, I'm a Bahamian, so I start with me. I cover me first. They are quote-unquote children of God in the Bahamas.

they profess to be Christians, but we know their lifestyles and their behavior are questionable.

And some of these people have been going to church for years. They live with us. Going to church in the Bahamas, that's the way it is.

Getting the church in the people, that's another story. Getting Christ, getting God and people, that's where the challenge really is. So Bahamians, we know, we have them in our families, they are our co-workers.

[47 : 04] Because after all now, you're the person who are. They're saying you, you are. They're telling you, something wrong with you. But now you also know too, they go to church every Sunday.

Every Sunday faithfully they are there. So you try to figure out in your mind, but I wonder throughout the week, what's really going on, what's happening in their lives.

You're still in 1 John? Read 1 John 3, verse 9. And this is going to describe to you basically what I'm talking about.

1 John 3, 9. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.

You see, we have this thing where we say, well, well, in a way, okay, we know the lady who is not married, who is taken care of, because she has a sweetheart.

[48 : 23] Now, they're in my family too. See, that's what I like to see. I have people in my family, and of course, I strange when you talk to them. No, you used to crazy when you read. But this is what I'm talking about.

See, John says as I let, no one born of God makes a practice of sinning. You see, the issue is not so much having the sweetheart, you got to stop. You have to stop living that kind of lifestyle.

You got to stop sleeping with your boyfriend. You got to be upfront and unmarried with your business dealings.

You can't be taking the people things from the job home. But you see, we live with these people.

We know these people. But see, our job is to tell them, listen, it has to come to an end. If you say you are a child of God, because let me tell you the common terminology I always hear.

[49 : 35] Why is a king's kid? I is a child of the king. And I always say, boy, you need to live it. You need to live that way. Because if you say you're a child of the king, you're expected to live and behave a certain way.

You can't just say it and keep on sinning. One thing I like about John, he gets right to the point. no one born of God makes a practice of sinning for God sees abide in him and he cannot keep on sinning because he is being born of God.

And that is how you know the difference between the genuine and the fake. You see, you can't say, or like you say, you can't have it both ways.

You can't be in the world and say, I belong to God. No. You got to come out of the world. Or what I'm meaning is the practices of the world, the behaviors of the world.

You've got to be distinct. You've got to be different. You've got to be holy. You know, it's only years later I'm beginning to understand that's what sanctified means. Sanctified, set aside for the purposes of God.

[50 : 53] What we have to work on, and this is us, our priorities have to change. We need to be people who humbly submit to the spiritual disciplines of grace.

And we need to ask God by the power of the Holy Spirit to give us help. You know, reading God's Word, meditating on God's Word, memorizing God's Word, having a consistent prayer life, being consistent in attending corporate gatherings, and having a persevering attitude coupled with faith and obedience is what's going to help you.

You see, one of the things I come to realize, see, I didn't make the rules. See, God tells you, listen, this is what you need to do. If you say you are the child of God, you want to persevere, you want to make it in this world, these are the things we got to do.

I know sometimes it's difficult, it's hard, and we don't want to do it because we got voices that tell us God don't really love you, or God is your father.

But if he's your father, why are you in this condition? Why are you living like this? Look at you. The people who ain't checking for God doing better than you.

[52 : 22] The voices come in your head, they talk to you, and it goes on and on, and then you say, that's true, I don't need to be no child of God, let me do what everybody else is doing, and be happy.

But the things that I mentioned, these are the things that are going to sustain us. you see, I want you to think about, think about our country, see that those of us who, who are as old, or older than the Bahamas today, so if you're 43 or more, you've been around a little while.

We know the difference of the generations. We see it, we see our society, we see what is happening.

We know all the time, boy, old fashioned, that don't count no more, them things ain't valid. But you see, the society is crumbling all around us.

We have to be people who make a difference in our generation. what's at stake are generations to come. What kind of foundation are you laying for the generations to come?

[53 : 57] You see, because some people believe, well, let them do what they want to do, they ain't gonna affect me. Well, stray bullets have no respect for anybody.

We have a situation in this country where we've got a lot of people that are angry. And a lot of the challenges we have are because family structures are broken down.

They're only living out what they've experienced. And what they've experienced has been a result of people just not standing for what is right, or just saying, well, that's all right, don't worry, don't worry yourself for that.

that can work out. Well, if you look around, I don't see nothing working out. Not for our benefit. So, we need to be people who continue to be holy people, to be sanctified people, to be people who make a difference.

if you got to be like John the Baptist, that voice crying in the wilderness in your family, I support you. You see, because you know what always happens? In most cases, they come back and say, you know, some of you were right.

[55 : 22] You were right. I should have never allowed that particular situation to get that far, or to go on for so long. I always liked the illustration of Dr.

Frankenstein, who made a monster, and he couldn't kill it. He couldn't. Why? Because he loved it. And see, this is what happens.

These are people that we love. But you know the truth is, we don't love them enough to tell them that you're going to hell. You got to love people enough to say the truth to them.

And I know for some of us it can cause rifts. I know some of you are living in rifts right now with family members. But you got to be the person who you see, what I'm saying is, you carry the title, the child of God.

And God expects you to own up to the title. Because if you didn't, then what God did through Christ was a complete waste of time.

[56 : 29] And that was a costly experience. Very costly to God. God. So, we need to be obedient to the things that God instructs us to do as people.

Because it preserves and it protects. And it helps us. Because I'll be the first to admit, this is a hard journey. Living in this world is not easy.

You're bombarded every day with all sorts of ideologies, all sorts of philosophies, and they come against what you believe. So, the only way for you to stay stable, stay rooted, grounded, as we say, you've got to stay in God's word.

You've got to stay there. There ain't no other way. See, every day, we've got to work at rooting out sin in our lives.

We've got to make every effort to walk honestly before God. and we got to cultivate hearts that are sensitive to repentance because you are going to fall.

[57 : 45] You are going to make mistakes. But always remember, when you turn, when you make the decision to go back home, God is there waiting.

Oh, this is the other part. I'm sorry, I like the prodigal son. The truth about the prodigal son is, it says, and when the father saw him in the distance, the father ran to him. Jewish men don't run to children.

That's why I love that account. Jesus was, what did we say? Off the chain. Off the chain when he was giving. See, and that's why the hearers understood exactly what he was saying.

God, when you make a decision to repent, God is there waiting. And then we know the other part. Big party. Big party.

Now, I don't know the kind of party. Now, I've been to some parties, and I know plenty of you have been to parties in your lifetime. But think about the kind of party with God control. well, I guess, I guess you don't get that one.

[59 : 00] You see, our goal is to be like our brother Jesus, who was tempted in all ways, but he did not sin. That is what we strive to be like.

That is our goal. That is our assignment while we are here. now, in closing, I'd like for us to read 1 John 4 and 9.

1 John 4, verses 9 through 10. I found this encouraging. 1 John 4, 9 through 10.

In this, the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only son into the world, so that we might live through him.

In this is love. Not that we have loved God, but he loved us and sent his son to be a propitiation for our sins.

[60 : 11] sins. And that is what makes this adoption into the family of God so special. You see, God chose to love us when we were enemies.

See, that's the one that really gets me. Anybody who is not a child of God, or anybody that's not born of God, is the enemy of God.

That may seem harsh. You are an enemy, or you were an enemy. But God chose to love you when you were his enemy.

Think about that. You think you would love your enemy? Really? Honestly? Now, mind you, we are expected to love our enemies. That's what God said. You see, one of the things I found about God and his word, everything he tells us to do, he did, through Christ.

You see, you don't, at the end of the day, when you're being tortured and killed, you know this to forgive people? And I even can't forgive people who cut in the front of me in traffic.

[61 : 20] I mean, think about it. You see the distance, you see the gap, and see, this is what we, see, we always have to be conscious and mindful of this. We were the strangers, we were the foreigners, we were the aliens, sinners, we were the sinners, and we were the undeserving, but the father loved us so much, he called us children of God.

He brought us as close as he could get, as close as he could get us to him. And the closeness is, we now are family. And this kind of love tells us something very important about who we are.

you may be struggling with sin. You may be in recovery from some addiction. And addictions are many.

Not only narcotic, not only alcoholic. Many of us are addicts for things, things of the world. But one thing you can rest assured, we matter to God.

We are important to God, because God puts such a premium on us. Such a premium on us. Such a value God places on us.

[62 : 45] That he gave us the best gift he could give. The best. And that gift is what would bring us back to him.

that gift of salvation the father provided comes through a faith in Jesus Christ.

And it is all for who believe. To become a child of God, what you have to do is believe in the finished work of Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross.

I guess for some that's so simple. Too simple. But that's what it takes to become a child of God.

You got to believe in the Christ. You got to believe in the work that he completed and finished.

And you have to trust him as your savior. Only him, nothing else. as I alluded to in the beginning.

[63 : 53] See, he's the only one who can sign the adoption papers. And the adoption papers are signed in blood. That is what makes the difference.

Children of God, Amen.