

Ponder Your Wondrous Adoption

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Preacher: J.D. Edwards

[0 : 0 0] help, we'll be having six or seven sermons now on a new series called Life in the Father's House. As we saw in Sunday school, this is a reference to what Jesus promised in John chapter 14. He said, in my Father's house are many rooms, and I'm going to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there you may also be. And he says, I'm not leaving you as orphans. My Holy Spirit is with you.

And we'll see in Ephesians what else he says about this glorious promise. So biblical church, Life in the Father's House. And our sermon text today is Ephesians chapter 1, starting at verse 3.

It's a longer passage. We're going to go all the way through chapter 2, verse 10. As I read this, remember, this is God's inspired, inerrant, infallible, clear, and sufficient word.

This is God's very own word for you, his people. So when I'm done with the reading of scripture, I'll say, this is the word of God, and you can respond with joy and gratitude. Thanks be to God.

Ephesians 1, starting at verse 3.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ.

[1 : 1 2] According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he has made us accepted in the beloved.

Verse 7. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace, wherein he has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he has purposed in himself.

Verse 10. That in the dispensation of the fullness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him, in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things after the counsel of his own will, that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ, in whom you also trusted after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom after that you believed you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.

Verse 14. Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory. Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.

Verse 18. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what are the riches of his glory and his inheritance in the saints.

[3 : 2 8] That is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.

And he has put all things under his feet and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filled up all in all.

Chapter 2. And you, he has quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience, among whom also we had our conversation in time past, in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by

nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Verse 4. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love, wherein he loved us, even we who were dead in sins, he has quickened us together with Christ.

By grace, you are saved. And he has raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. That is, in the age to come that he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Jesus Christ.

[5 : 08] For by grace you are saved through faith, and that is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works, which God has before ordained, that we should walk in them.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. We read in Isaiah 40 that the grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of the Lord, it endures forever. Would you pray with me? Amen. Amen. Oh Lord, cause us to behold Jesus Christ and by seeing the work of Christ as our mediator, to understand and to personally know this great mystery of our salvation so that you will be glorified in our lives, we pray.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, I invite you today to ponder your wondrous adoption.

To ponder means to consider, to contemplate, to bask in your wondrous adoption. Wondrous, it means exceeding and surprising good.

[6 : 52] inspiring a feeling of wonder and delight. That's what this glorious passage that Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus does.

It causes us to ponder our wondrous adoption. Well, he says this in verse 5, chapter 1, verse 5, that you were predestined by God to be adopted in Christ.

That's what he says to you who believe. And the metaphor of adoption itself, it gets our attention. It reminds you that had God not adopted you, look what you would have been.

The musical Annie describes a life before adoption. The children in the orphanage, they say, Don't it feel like the wind is always howling?

Don't it seem like there's never any light? Once a day, don't you want to throw the towel in? It's easier than putting up a fight. Empty belly life, rotten, smelly life, full of sorrow life, no tomorrow life.

[8 : 07] But Paul takes the church in Ephesus and says, God predestined that you be adopted in Christ by God the Father.

That's not the type of life for you. You get life in the Father's house. That's what you get. See, the Roman world had a very large percentage of their social demographic that were orphans and slaves that were neglected.

So the church of Ephesus had a really weird mix. You had slaves as part of the congregation. You had literal orphans that were being brought in by the members of the church.

But Ephesus as a city was the wealthiest hub of Asia Minor. And much of the wealth of Ephesus was kept at the temple of Diana. So this temple was a place of horrible sin and vulgarity, all kinds of pagan idolatry.

But it was also the treasury for the city of Ephesus and really the financial capital of Asia Minor. So within this church were those that were very successful in commerce, and you had this great diversity within this little body.

[9 : 19] There were some who were Jewish descent. There were many who were Gentiles. And Paul is writing to them from prison. And the reason Paul is in prison is because he went out to take the gospel to the world, to people like them.

If you've been neglected, hurt, or abused by a church, then you need to hear what Paul says in this letter to the church in Ephesus.

If you are still deciding whether you will ever take the risk of caring very much about people in church again, then you need to hear what Paul says in this letter to the church in Ephesus.

And if you want to believe that a true biblical church that's fed on Scripture, that's Spirit-filled, that's owned by Christ himself, you want to believe that that is possible, maybe even right here, then let's hear together what Paul writes in this letter to the church in Ephesus.

In this longer passage, I'm going to do my best to not skip any parts. Five wondrous truths, and then what this means for us on how we need to live. So number one, ponder with Paul the cause of your adoption.

[10:35] Ponder the cause of your adoption. If you are in God's family, if you can say, I belong to the Father's house, why? What caused that? Look at verse 3.

So chapter 1, verse 3. Paul begins by making it very clear. Everything he's going to tell them about church, it's to bring glory to one God.

Who gets all the glory in the church? Look how he starts off. Chapter 1, verse 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, the church displays all these glorious blessings, but it's God who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places.

How? In Christ. Now the next question is, why? What is the cause? Look at verse 4. According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.

He has predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he has made us accepted in the beloved.

[11:58] When you hear these truths, it truly is heavenly glory. Because in our flesh, we're a lot like that little orphan Annie, aren't we? We want to believe that maybe God will like my personality or my charm or the things I can do, and that's why he'll show me his grace.

Maybe we can cause God to adopt us. Thomas Brooks, one of the Puritans, he said, until you have faith in Christ, your best services are but more glorious sins.

You're trying to be saved by your own goodness, by your own good works. But this glorious passage, it tells us that if you are in God's family, look again at verse 4.

If you're adopted, it's because God has chosen you in Christ. Well, when did God do that? When did God choose you personally? Was it after God observed enough of me to decide that one's good?

No. He says in verse 4, it was before the foundation of the world. So what does this tell us about God? God wants you to enter into his holy throne room and behold him, God the creator of all, Father.

[13:19] And as you approach his throne room, he speaks to you and he says, Dear child, because I am love, I made you, look at verse 4, I made you holy and without blame as you stand here before me.

Verse 5, he answers the objection. We want to say, hold on God, how can this even be possible? The creator of all, your adoptive father in Christ.

He smiles at you and look at what he says in verse 4. You are in God's family because I predestined you, along with all those in my true church, unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to myself.

And I did this, this is what it tells us about God. He says he did this because it was the good pleasure of his will. Why are you adopted? What was the cause?

It is the good pleasure of the father's will to adopt you before you did anything to deserve that. The question was, ponder the cause of your adoption.

[14:32] If you are in God's family, why is that? Well, these verses tell us you were adopted in Christ freely by God's good pleasure due to no merit of your own.

Some of you, that's what you need to hear this morning. And that would be enough. If we can truly embrace that and live in that. I think for others of us, maybe for myself right now, I need to remember that about every single Christian here, but globally, if they belong to Christ, it's because he showed them love.

He gave them a new heart. He showed his favor to them and adopted them. And they stand before him, and I stand before him, warts and all. And he says, you are holy and blameless in Christ.

Because I, in my good pleasure, wanted to adopt you before the foundation of the world. Ponder the cause of your adoption. Number two, ponder your hopelessness if God had left you dead in sin. Ponder how hopeless you would be if he had not adopted you who are Christians. I'm going to have us bounce around a little bit within this broader passage.

[15:52] So look at chapter 2, verse 1. Paul writes to the church, this mixed church in Ephesus, and he says, you, God made alive.

And that verb, that God made you alive, it could be translated that God quickened you who were dead. He regenerated you. He breathed life over you and into you, just like we read from Ezekiel 37.

What Paul is saying is that every person in the church was dead. We were dead in our trespasses and sins. Now, notice how powerful was the bondage before Christ adopted us.

Look at chapter 2, verse 2. He says, In time past, you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience, among whom we also had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our own flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.

And we were by nature children of wrath, even as others. Ponder your life should God had left you to continue walking in that way.

[17 : 17] You're walking without Christ's adoption in the pattern of the world. You are blown along by whatever the godless world loves.

That's steering your path, and you're fulfilling all those cravings and lusts of your own flesh. It's by the walk that you know who's your master.

Don't be deceived, and also don't be hurt by everything that slaps the label Christian on it. You can tell by the way they walk.

Francis Schaeffer said, he said this about those who claim to be Christians that are whitewashed tombstones. He said, there is no such thing as a true church that's worldly.

He says of this, of the fake church, tell me what the world says now, and I'll tell you what false professors will say in seven years. The church, the false church, is just following the pattern of the world.

[18 : 24] They're like a dead fish that just goes with the stream. As someone said, only a living fish that's been regenerated, made alive, can float against it. What the world loves is not neutral, Paul says.

So no matter what the coffee mugs or the shirts you buy at Target are going to say, it's not cute. It's not innocent. It's manipulated by Satan.

Look at what Paul says here about the spirit that governs the world in verse 2. He says, it's the prince of the power of the air. And if you are still a slave to sin, you are a slave to disobedience, verse 2 says that it is Satan's spirit that works in you.

You think you're free. You're a slave to your own sin and you're a slave to Satan himself. Let that thought scare you for a moment.

Ponder your hopelessness if God had left you in that state. The context and the metaphor in Paul's writing here is adoption, remember?

[19 : 33] Well, I looked this up this week that the National Foster Youth Institute says, this is sad. One out of every two children in the foster care system will end up homeless and jobless once they age out.

If God did not adopt you, that's the walk you were headed on. You would be eternally homeless. Now go back to chapter 1, verse 7.

Paul says, in Christ, we have redemption through His blood. Chapter 1, verse 7.

How are you redeemed? It's by the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace, wherein He has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence.

In the Roman world, you could go to the market and they would put one slave up after another on the block and there would be an auction and the highest bidder gets the slave. So a human being had a price tag attached to them.

[20 : 49] Now what someone could do is pay that price, win the bid, that slave became their property, their possession. And once you had the title to that slave, you could release them and set them free.

When that happened, that was called being redeemed. So that person would be considered a redeemed slave. Did you see what Paul writes in chapter 1, verse 7?

He says, in Christ, we have redemption. Well, what was the price? It was the blood of Jesus that purchased you.

And Jesus sets you free from the bondage of Satan with his precious blood. Why did God do this? It's to show you the riches of God's grace. He says they are overflowing. They are abounding. They abide fully to you who Christ has purchased.

[21 : 48] How could this be possible? Only by the precious blood of Jesus Christ himself, being very God, took on flesh to ransom and to redeem you.

Number three, ponder the finality of this adoption. Ponder how this adoption is done and over. It's completed. I just want to walk through six reasons in verses 9 through 14.

How is your adoption final? It's over. It's already happened. Number one, your adoption is final because God does not change. You don't need to fear God changing his mind like an earthly father. God chose you. He will never unchoose you. Look at verse 9. Having made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he has purposed in himself.

There's no greater place to purpose your adoption than in God's own pleasure. He will not change. Number two, your adoption is final because it is held and accomplished by Christ himself.

[23 : 01] To doubt your adoption is to doubt whether Christ is capable of it. Look at verse 10. That in the fullness of time, in the dispensation of the fullness of time, God might gather together in one all things, notice the next two words, in Christ, in heaven and which are on earth.

And if he needs to say it again, even in him, it's all held together by Christ. Number three, your adoption is final because God adopted you in Christ already because he's referring to your adoption in the past tense.

It's finished. It's accomplished. Look at verse 11. In Christ, there it is a third time, also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

He says in verse 11, we have obtained. You already have it. It is already accomplished by Christ. It is already your adoption.

When a child does get adopted, by a family, there's a grace celebration and it's called their adoption day and it's often celebrated. Maybe like a birthday for years to come or the whole party, the whole church comes together and celebrates.

[24 : 22] Well, Paul is saying, church, you have already obtained your adoption. Your adoption day was already accomplished when the Spirit applied the work of Christ to you.

You are adopted fully and finally. And when we celebrate your baptism, we are celebrating that fact as a church. You have been adopted.

The fourth reason that your adoption is final is because it's really just evidenced by trusting in the active present tense, trusting in God.

Look what he says in verse 12. He adopted you that you should be to the praise of his glory. Who is he talking about? He's talking about those who first trusted in Christ.

Yes, there is a moment in time when you did not trust in God, now you first trust in him. But look at what he says continuing on in verse 13. In whom you also trusted after you heard that the word of truth and the gospel of your salvation.

[25 : 23] He goes on to say you continue believing in the scriptures as you're taught by the Holy Spirit. See, if you are trusting in Christ right now, you don't need to remember that day.

For some of you it's more of a gradual looking back on your life. But you can have assurance if you are trusting fully in Christ now, he has adopted you. Because if he had not worked in your heart, you would not want to trust him for your salvation.

And if you are trusting him now, it should encourage you, your adoption is final. You've been adopted. Number five and six will confirm this further for you. Number five is this, your adoption is final because you have a certificate or a seal, like that poured wax with the signet ring on it.

You have a seal testifying that you are adopted. This is in verse 13. What is that seal? After you believed, he says you were, in the past tense, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.

You don't need to look for a future feeling feeling or a future experience. If you believed, you have been sealed already by the Holy Spirit. It is accomplished and applied to you.

[26 : 38] And then the sixth reason that your adoption is final, it's because the Holy Spirit in you, the Holy Spirit inside of you, it's like an earnest of your future inheritance.

Look at verse 14. He says, This Holy Spirit of promise is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory.

There will be a great day when our Lord Jesus descends with the army of angels from heaven. And what we believe by faith spiritually is accomplished now, he will reveal this is finally, physically, consummately real.

The kingdom of heaven is fully on this earth. And until then, he's left his Holy Spirit dwelling inside you individually who believe in us as a body, as a further encouragement that you are adopted.

This picture of an earnest or a deposit, I think it's best illustrated with a young man who wants to marry a young lady. And so what does he give her? The engagement ring.

[27 : 41] Expensive diamond made of gold and it goes on the finger until that day where they will be married. But in that meantime, she has that ring to remind her of his great love.

She has that deposit, that earnest. Do you see how your adoption is final according to these verses? And because your adoption is final, you can live in this world with boldness.

You no longer will go with the pattern of the world. You will be alive. You will be going against the stream. You will be with the army of King Jesus marching out with faith in the kingdom to come no matter what happens on this earth.

G.K. Chesterton pointed out, we don't want, as the newspapers say, a church that will move with the world. What we want is a church that will move the world.

The church moves the world when the church trusts in Jesus Christ and follows him. It's King Jesus who is storming the gates of hell and they will not prevail against him.

[28 : 51] Well, next, I invite you to ponder how your adoption becomes true. I know this might seem a little bit out of order, but I'm trying to follow the flow of this passage.

And I think it's important because he's writing to the church to begin with, but he's correcting probably some wrong understandings about how did I get adopted? Can I know for sure? Am I saved?

See, some of you have been regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit, but you've probably gotten some confused teaching over the years. I know I sure have about how God actually adopts people.

And then others of you, you've been taught right, but you need to know for you personally. I don't need to just know theoretically in my head. I need to know whether I'm adopted. And this, I think these next verses here can really help you have correct understanding of how God does this and reform our thinking in that way and also personal assurance.

So how does this adoption become true for you personally? Well, let's look at chapter 1, verse 15. See, Paul is talking about the church and he's thinking about how they've changed so much.

[29 : 59] And he sees evidence that they have been adopted by God by their love, by what's concerning them. Look at what he says in verse 15. After I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and your love unto all the saints.

Verse 16, Paul says, now I can't stop giving thanks to you and making mention of you in my prayers. He sees their love, now he wants to encourage them.

Just think about how God saved you, God adopted you. Number one, how does adoption become true? Well, Paul is praying for them to know this. So we pray for adoption to be true.

And there's that loved one or that dear friend or that family member. You don't know if they're saved yet. And you want so much for them to have that assurance and that new life in Christ. Do like Paul. Remember them always, making mention of them in your prayers. Number two, trust that it is God who gives understanding. Look at verse 17.

[31 : 00] The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory. Paul is praying that God himself may give to them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.

See, it's the spirit of God in verse 18 who opens the eyes of their understanding. They were dead and darkened, but it's the Holy Spirit who enlightens them. Ponder how this adoption becomes true.

Number three, it becomes true because God personally calls you to know this truth. Paul writes in verse 18 that you may know, you personally, you may know and trust what is the hope of Christ's calling and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance are to you who he says are my saints.

It's for you to personally know that. Number four, adoption is accomplished by God's power.

The same power that raised Jesus from the dead. Look what he says. Here's evidence of your belief. Verse 19, you need to know the exceeding greatness of God's power toward us who believe according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ Jesus.

[32 : 22] He's saying, do you believe in God? Well, then it's because God has worked with such power in your life he's caused you to believe and it's the same power he used to raise his own son from the dead to give you newness of life.

It's that power that has caused you to now believe. So, the fifth observation is that your adoption is just as true as Christ's resurrection.

God raises you from spiritual death unto spiritual life just as God, he says, in verse 20, God has raised Christ from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.

So, that same power that raised God, raised Christ from the grave, seated Christ on the heavenly throne, it becomes yours through adoption. It brings life to you and it unites you to Christ.

So, I want you to look next at chapter 2, verse 4 to see how all those that God causes to believe he has adopted. See, God adopts all those that he regenerates.

[33 : 30] Look at chapter 2, verse 4. He says, God, who is rich in mercy for his great love, wherein he has loved us even while we were dead in sins, he has quickened us.

He has made us alive together with Christ. If you believe in Jesus Christ, it's because he has breathed that same resurrection life into you.

He has united you to Jesus Christ who sits at the Father's right hand. Ponder how this adoption is true for you personally.

The more you feel and understand that I do not deserve such powerful grace poured out in my life, the more useful Christ makes us for his kingdom.

Charles Spurgeon said, the most useful members of church are usually those who would be doing harm if they were not doing good. We would have been on that path and we know it, but God adopted me.

[34 : 31] He brought me into his father's house. I will serve him. I will be useful for his kingdom out of gratitude. I warned you against those false labels. They slap Christian onto different things.

Here's what we just saw in this passage, that the true church is made up 100% of redeemed slaves. The true church is made up 100% of adopted orphans.

If you belong to Christ, you are in his father's house. You never have to fear eternal homelessness. He puts his name on you. You have been adopted.

He will not change his mind about you. Number five, ponder what it means to belong to God's family, the heavenly kingdom, Christ's body on earth.

A few verses back, I read for us how Paul is describing the power of Satan over this present evil age. Doesn't that give you the chills up your spine? If we understand what the Bible really says is going on in the spiritual realm, this present evil age is terrifying.

[35 : 55] We need to take up arms. There's no more time to be drowsy or distracted. I know my own weakness, the remaining flesh, the battle, and there should be a healthy fear, a healthy zeal in all of us to depend on God and to keep trusting him.

Don't trust yourself for one moment. You should fear that relapse into the pattern of the world. We all should. But we also should not have fear. We need to live in light of this reality.

Christ lives and he rules from heaven. Look at what Paul says here in chapter 1 verse 21. He encourages this church. He says, far above all principality, power, might, dominion, and every name that is named, far above all those is our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings on his throne of glory.

What's more, it's not only in this world, Paul wrote, but also in the world which is to come. If you are adopted into God's family, you already belong to that spiritual heavenly kingdom.

You belong there now. And be encouraged with verse 22, Paul writes that God has put all things under the feet of Jesus. Yes, our King Jesus is already ruling here now spiritually, and he will come one day consummately.

[37 : 18] We are in that overlap of the ages, this present evil age and the age to come which is already inaugurated. We already have been adopted into that kingdom. His kingdom on earth right now is a spiritual kingdom.

Look at what he says in the rest of verse 2. The Father gave Jesus Christ to be the head over all things to the church. Verse 23, the church is his body and is the fullness of him that fills all in all. How does God rule over this whole world? Well, God never stopped being the creator and the sustainer of everyone and everything. Yes, he's preserving the whole world for his purposes, but it's through the church that his spiritual rule has already begun.

And King Jesus, he rules this entire world through his church until every last one who will be joined in to the family of the father believes. That's how his kingdom is coming.

What you enjoy now by faith belonging to the spiritual kingdom, you trust by faith, one day you will enjoy it fully and consummately. Go back to chapter 1 and look at this promise in verse 7.

[38 : 39] Ephesians chapter 1 verse 7. God wants you to believe that in the age to come, he will show you the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us who through Christ Jesus belong to him.

He wants you to see now by faith the exceeding riches of belonging to the father's house. You already have the family name. You're already there. And one day all will see the riches, the exceeding, abounding, overflowing riches of God's grace and kindness.

So maybe God needs to reform and heal our view of church itself and who we are. The Bible fed, spirit filled, Christ owned church is not a depressing foster shelter.

Church is life giving hospital for souls. The Bible fed, spirit filled, Christ owned church is not your temporary orphanage.

It's your forever family. family. Well those are the five things I want you to ponder but we also need to see how Paul ends with an exhortation.

[40 : 08] If this is true for you, you belong to the family of the father, it needs to change our walk. Ponder what your adoption means for your walk. Look at chapter 2 verse 8.

Paul said, Paul couldn't make it any clearer here.

You are not saved by your own works. That's good news. You were not adopted based on your good works.

You know what that means? God will not unadopt you based on your works. Once adopted, you're in his house.

Is a loving father going to let his adopted child go around with lice in the hair, rashes all over the skin, no deodorant?

[41 : 18] Look what he says here. You're adopted. You're going to have the Holy Spirit working on you as a masterpiece. God is the master craftsman and you are the project.

He loves to work on you and me. He says we're being crafted by God himself. Look at chapter 2 verse 10. Paul says we are his workmanship.

Paul's in this too. The more God works on him the more he says I'm the worst of sinners. We are his workmanship. We are created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

Isn't that the beauty of the gospel? Law and gospel. That's it right there. That's why I jokingly say Paul was a reformed Baptist. He got it. Well, Sinclair Ferguson, a Presbyterian, the coolest Presbyterian, I love how he put this exact gospel truth.

He said this, those Christ adopts have the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is sent into your life to make your life the kind of place which the Father can say to the Son, I feel at home here.

[42 : 38] Don't you? Remember how Jesus said in the gospel of John, my Father is always working? This is how the Father is always working.

He is working in you and in me. And he's working through the church together to accomplish his purposes in all the world. William Tyndale understood this, I believe.

He was the Englishman who first translated the scripture from the Hebrew and Greek into the English nation. So he was using his own country as a mission field to bring them the word of God and the gospel.

Here's what Tyndale said, he said, the church is the one institution that exists for those outside of it. Why is that? Well, because we're in the Father's house.

And he's working in us and through us to bring more sons and daughters into his family. And that's what Paul says here, church, that you and I and Paul and all those who belong to Christ, we are the body of Jesus Christ on earth.

[43 : 42] that's our mission. And he says we will walk as the body of Christ in those good works. Notice what he says at the end of verse 10, those good works which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.

That steals all the glory out of anyone wanting to take credit now for walking in good works. Did you do a good work this past week? Probably all of us did. Well, God in his infinite wisdom, he prepared that good work that you did this week.

He prepared that you would walk and do that. You're his hands and feet, his body on this earth.

Who gets all the glory for your good works? It has to be God. You would have been walking a totally different path if God had not saved you.

And he foreordained great works for each one of us to walk and accomplish so that he would get the glory in all of them. Here's the rest of Sinclair Ferguson's quote.

He confesses what I feel in his words. He says, I look at my life and there's still so much that needs to change. Amen? There's so much that needs to change in my life to make it a place where the Father and the Son feel at home in me.

[45 : 02] Ferguson encourages us, take comfort. That is the Holy Spirit's ministry. ministry. Ponder your wondrous adoption in Christ and inevitably you will walk in the good works that God has already ordained for you.

let's pray. Let's pray. Paul said that he prayed for them from prison and I just want to read to you Paul's prayer and I join my prayer, my thoughts for you with his before the Lord.

from Ephesians 3 starting at verse 16. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with his power through his spirit in your inner being so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith and I pray that you being rooted and established in love may have power together with all the Lord's holy people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine according to his powerful work that is at work within us.

To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever.

[46 : 51] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.