

Blessing # 1 Adoption (Continued)

Ephesians 1:5-1:6

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, November 10, 2019

This morning, we're looking at a book that addresses new life in the church, and it is the book of Ephesians. So if you would, turn there with me in your Bibles.

As you are turning there, if you are joining us for the first time today, we are in a series on the book of Ephesians called the "All of God" series because that's what the book is about. Ephesians tells us that our salvation is all of God. It says that the blessings and riches and treasures of the Christian life come from His hand and not from us. In other words, this is where new life starts. This is where the Christian life begins. It begins with God. It begins with Jesus Christ. It doesn't start with us. Christianity is a God-centered religion, it's not man-centered. It is Christ-focused. It puts Him on the throne - it is not man-focused.

So many times when we give our testimonies or we tell people how we got saved, we start with "us." We tell people about the change that occurred in "us," which is fine and appropriate, but Paul actually doesn't do that here. He doesn't start with "us" in this book. He starts with God because our salvation begins with Him. He is the catalyst, He is the beginning, He is the originator of how each of us came to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. There's a theological principle that says, "God always proceeds." God always comes before everything.

And no book of the Bible explains this better than the book we're in this morning, the book of Ephesians. You can see this demonstrated in a couple of ways. For one, if you were to survey the book of Ephesians, you can see it in the key words in the book. Words like "glory" and "fullness" and "riches" are repeated over and over again to say that this is what God has done for you in Christ: He has made you full; He has made you rich of His blessings so that you lack nothing.

You can also see this in the outline, in the way the book is laid out. The first three chapters tell you about your position in Christ, and the next three chapters tell you about your practice in Christ. That's the outline of the book of Ephesians. Ephesians 1 through 3 give you your position. They tell you that God has predestined you, He has made you alive in Christ, for by grace you have been saved. And then the next three chapters, chapters 4 through 6, tell you your practice of that position. They tell you how your position in Christ fleshes itself out in your marriage, in your home and your work life.

One author I read said that the first half of the book gives you your riches, and the second half of the book gives you your responsibility - how you should spend your riches in Christ. But if you notice the order here (this is important): the riches come first, the responsibility comes second. Your position comes first and the practice comes later.

I meet so many people who say, "I became a Christian in order to have a better marriage, or I became a Christian so I could have a better home." And when they don't get it, they leave. When it doesn't happen right away, they're out the door. Or they say, "I became a Christian to be a better husband, to be a better person. This is a self-improvement project for me."

Paul says that it doesn't start with you. The Christian life is not all about you. It's not focused on your practice first; it's focused on your position and your position is all about what God has done. Jesus didn't die just to make you a better person, He died to make you right with God. Amen? The problem is your relationship to Him. He didn't die to fix your marriage or your home primarily, He died to fix you. You are the problem, He is the solution.

We get this backwards a lot. So many people think if we just fix the outside stuff first, if we just fix the practice, if we fix our marriage or our home, then everything else will follow and we'll be Christians, but the Bible never says that. It says, "You have to fix the person first, and you have to do that by pointing him to God."

In his book "Basic Christianity," John Stott says,

"In the beginning, God ..." Those first four words of the Bible are more than an introduction to the book of Genesis. They supply the key, which opens our understanding to the Bible as a whole, and they tell us that the religion of the Bible is a religion of the initiative of God. God is always there in the beginning. Before man existed, God acted. Before man stirred himself to seek after God, God sought after man. In the Bible, we do not see man groping after God, we see God reaching man.

And you can say it this way, the Bible says from start to finish, that our salvation is all of God. I remember talking to an older man several years ago in Illinois who said he was witnessing to someone in town. (We lived in a pretty rough town there). And he was witnessing to a lost person, and he told him that he just needed to go to church. That's what he needed to do to be saved. He said, "You just need to go to church."

My friends, can I tell you something? Can I tell you the devil goes to church? Can I tell you Satan loves to go to church and he is not saved? It takes more than that to be a Christian. It takes more than that to be right with God. You need a new position. You need a new standing with Him, and that only comes through the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen? So you have to start with Him, which is the message of the book of Ephesians. That is what this book is all about, especially what I want to talk to you about today.

So if you would read Ephesians 1:1-6. Starting in verse 1, it says,

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

Our focus for this morning is in verses 5 through 6, but just to kind of build up to that, I've told you before that Paul does something interesting in the beginning of Ephesians. He does something unusual because he gives us the longest sentence in the Bible. He starts writing a sentence in verse 3 that goes all the way down to verse 14 without a break or without a pause. It's got over 200 words in the original Greek and more

commas and semicolons than I could even count. Many of your English translations have a lot of different sentences. They break it up, but in Greek, this is just one long run-on sentence.

The idea is that Paul often dictated his letters to a scribe when he wrote. He would speak out loud while somebody copied it down. As he's describing our position in Christ, as he's describing the blessings that have come to us from the Lord, he gets so excited that he just keeps going and going. He gets so worked up, he keeps talking and talking. The scribe keeps writing and writing until he gives us this one long run on sentence. Preachers love to get going, don't they? They love to get excited. And this is what he does here. This is Paul's excitement.

And he starts in verse 3 with this, he says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." Paul says, "That is your new position in Christ. That is where you stand with God now. You are blessed." I don't know if you came in this morning thinking you were blessed. Paul says you are. If you are in Christ, you are privileged through what He has done for you.

And to explain that, he says in verse 4, he says, "You are chosen." And in verse 5, "You are predestined," because that's where your blessings begin. They come from the sovereign choice and predestination of God. Verse 5 says, "This is to adoption. In love He predestined us to adoption," which is actually the first blessing in the list. It's the first of seven or eight that he puts in here, but this means God has brought you into his family. That's what the word adoption means.

If you are a Christian this morning, if you have trusted in Christ, you are in the family of God. You weren't born into that. That's not the way this works. You weren't given these blessings at your physical birth, but at your spiritual birth through the Lord Jesus Christ, you have this. In other words, this is where the change in your position takes place. It takes place through adoption where you come into the world in one family and you go out in another one.

You come in as a Jones or a Davis, and you go out as a Rogers or a Moore. It's the same way here. You come in as a part of the world, you come in as a part of the family - we could say a family of Satan. You're lost and dead to God and you go out as a member of God's family and you're alive in Christ. Paul says that adoption is where blessings begin.

What we are going to talk about this morning if you look in verses 5 and 6, is that as a result of this, you should praise Him, which is the next point in this passage. As a result of what God has done for you and the great change in your life, and the blessing you brought in with you this morning (the text goes on to say), you should give Him glory. If you look in the very end of verse 4, it says, "In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace."

Praise is the proper response to your adoption. You should give glory to God. God thought of it, God did it, God deserves the glory. He changed your position, He changed your spiritual status, He changed your family, so He gets all the credit.

It's been said that praise is our way of reaching up to God while He is reaching down to us. This chapter is about God reaching down to you and as a result of that, you need to reach out to Him and thank Him and give Him glory.

It's also been said that we should be so full of Christ that if a mosquito bites us, it should fly away singing, "There's power in the blood." I think a southerner wrote that. That sounds like something from my neck of the woods, but people should see that in us. They should see that we're full of Christ and they should feel the power in the blood. That's the idea here, and it should make them sing over it.

People should see the change in you, and you should see the change in yourself, and have no response but to sing. Even if you're tone deaf like my grandfather, you should still sing. Just don't lead the choir.

The story is told of the time Louis the Great, the King of France died and the nation through a funeral for him. They gave him a big send off and they buried him in a gold coffin worth millions of dollars. And they held an ornate service in the cathedral of Notre Dame. And as the people came into the cathedral, they found that everything was dark and the whole place, except for one lone candle on top of the coffin to symbolize that the light of France had gone out, the great King had died. And if that wasn't unusual enough, when the service started, it got even stranger because the minister walked up to the candle and he blew it out. And he said into the darkness, "God alone is great. God alone is great."

Friends, that's what Paul says in this passage and that is the point of the book of Ephesians. God alone is great. Our salvation starts with Him. He is the one who did all of it. As a result, we need to praise Him for it. We give Him all the glory. And that's what I want to talk to you about this morning.

So if you're taking notes in Ephesians 1:5-6, we're going to look at three more aspects to the blessing of adoption.

As you know, we started talking about adoption a few weeks ago during the sermon hour. And I preached on it two Sundays ago, then I got sick. And Andrew Larson was with us last week. If you didn't get a chance to hear the sermon last week, that was excellent, wasn't it? He preached from Lamentations 3, it was incredible. He did a great job. So please go online, you can hear that.

But now, we're going back into adoption again and talking about how it should lead you to praise. As you look at the blessings in this chapter, what should you do? How should you respond to this? Paul says, "You need to praise God for it. You need to give Him glory." As you look at your adoption and how he brought you into His family and took you out of the world, and gave you life in Christ, what should you do? You should worship. You should give Him honour.

And he explains that with three more aspects to the blessing of adoption. The first one is the motive of our adoption. As Paul explains the blessing of adoption, he gives us the motive of our adoption or he tells us why God did this. If you think about it, if you were God, you created a people and they rebelled against you, what would you do? You would destroy them. You would be done with them. God saves you, and the question is why? And Paul says, "It's because of His kindness." That's the motive of our adoption. God did this because of His kindness.

If you look in verse 5, it says, “In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself [and here's the phrase] according to the kind intention of His will.”

I told you two weeks ago, just to explain this a little bit, that adoption was one of the few positive things in the Roman Empire. It was one of the few shining lights in that culture because Rome was a dark place. It was pretty evil. Adultery was common, violence was common, respect for human life was low. But adoption was the one thing that kind of stood out from all of that. It was the one beacon of hope in a depraved world.

A child's father had “power of the father,” which means that he could do anything he wanted with the child. He could kill him, beat him, drown him, or sell him into slavery, and he could do that all throughout the child's lifetime. This was one of the bizarre cultures in Rome, but the father had that type of power for life. He could kill his adult child legally.

To demonstrate this, to show this power at the child's birth, the Romans had a ritual whereby the nurse would place the baby at the father's feet. She would put the child on the ground and if the father picked him up, it meant that the child was his and he would raise him. But if he didn't, if he stepped over the child, it meant he didn't want him. The child had no family and at that point, he could be adopted. At that point, somebody could take the child to the local authorities and bring them into their own family which included another lengthy process where the adoptive father would meet the biological father in court and buy the child. Biological father would name the price, the new father would pay it, the court would change the child's name and break all ties to the original family. And here with all of this in mind, Paul says, “God did that for us. The Lord did that for us when He saved us. He adopted us, He bought us back from sin. He didn't step over us, He didn't walk on by, He picked us up off the ground, brought us into His family.” And if you're wondering why, verse 5 says, “Because of the kindness of God.” According to the kind intention of His will, there's no other reason.

God didn't look into the orphanage of humanity and pick out the cutest babies (not to break your bubble on that). He didn't do this because of you and me, He did this because of Him. He is kind. He's a kind God. In Greek, “intention” means “wishes” or “plans.” In other words, it was God's plan to do this. This was His wish all along, to adopt us like this and bring us into His family. That's a reference back to verse 4 which says, “Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.” God chose us because He is kind. He predestined us for that reason. Some people look at the doctrine of predestination as a bad thing. They look at God choosing us as evil or something like that, but Paul doesn't see it that way. He says, “God did this out of kindness.” You couldn't adopt yourself, so God did it for you. You couldn't pick yourself up off the ground and bring yourself into His family. You couldn't reach up to Him, He first had to reach down to you, and this is what He did.

In Greek, “kind” means “good pleasure” or “delight.” This means it was God's pleasure to do this. It was His delight. God loves to save sinners. It's one of His favourite things to do. Luke 15:10 says, “In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” And you can imagine if there's that much joy among the angels, how much joy is there among God? If the angels get a thrill out of watching men come to Christ, how much more does God get that? Our God is a kind God.

I read somewhere this week that God created the world in a single word, but He had to kill someone to save us. And that's what He did. He killed His one and only Son. He sacrificed His beloved, and he did it because

He's kind. It was His good pleasure. I wouldn't do that. I mean, I don't know about you guys. I wouldn't give my son to save sinners. God did it because He's that kind of God.

We don't talk a lot about the kindness of God today. It seems to be a forgotten doctrine, but this was a revolutionary thing in the ancient world. The ancient gods were not kind. They were brutal, they were savage. Plato, the philosopher said, "Our gods are worse than our men. The morals of our deities are lower than the morals of our people." You can read the stories of Zeus and Aphrodite and the Greek gods. You can go even farther back to the Canaanite gods of Baal and Ashtoreth and all those things. They were cruel. They were horrible. Paul says essentially that the true God is different from that. The true God is kind. He shows mercy, He is gracious, He saves sinners. Zeus never lifted a finger to do anything for anybody. God gave His one and only Son.

To explain that a little, R.C. Sproul tells a story of the time he taught a class which had three assignments in it. They had three papers to turn in and if any of the papers were late, they got an F on it. That was their punishment for the late paper: they got no points at all. So on the first two papers, some of the students turned them in late and R.C Sproul forgave them. He let it go. He didn't punish them. But on the last paper, he said, "That's enough. If you've turned the paper in late, you get an F on it, period. No questions asked."

As you can imagine, an uproar went up from the classroom, protests began. One student was particularly irate. He was incense and he kept saying, "That's not fair, Dr. Sproul to treat us like that. That's not fair." To which, R.C Sproul replied, "You want fair Mr. Jones, well, I see in my notes here, you turn the first paper in late as well. You get an F on that paper too." He says, "You want fair, you want justice? I see you turn the second paper in late as well. You get an F on that one. I was offering you grace, but you wanted justice. I was offering you kindness, but you wanted fair."

The point Paul's making here in this passage is God is offering you kindness, isn't He? God is offering you mercy and grace, which should lead you to worship. That's Paul's main point in this particular text. It should lead you to praise Him. I mean, nothing should make you sing like the mercy of God. Amen? Nothing should make you praise Him like studying all of this. He gave His one and only Son for you, He put him to death on the cross, He did more than step over you. He stopped and picked you up, brought you into His family and you should say, "Hallelujah!"

Some of you have adopted children in this room, and you'll know it's the happiest moment in your life, isn't it? I remember when I adopted our little boys, I couldn't stop singing. I would be driving down the road and singing, and I don't normally do that, or I'd be walking around the office and just burst out in song. But why was I singing so much? Because I was happy. I was overjoyed. The Lord gave me this little life to raise.

Listen, friends, you should have more joy than this because you've been on the receiving end of the adoption. You see that? You've been adopted. God brought you in. He took you home when no one else wanted you, and He put a roof over your head and accepted you all because of Christ. It should cause you to sing.

Thomas Watson said, "Praising God is one of the highest and purest acts of religion because in it we act like the angels do," and God has given you every reason to do that today. He's given you every reason to act like the angels and sing and praise Him because He's been kind.

Which leads to the next point to consider in this passage, another aspect to our adoption that we're going to talk about. The first one is the motive of our adoption. Paul begins by telling us the motive behind all of this, why God adopted us - and the answer is because He's kind. It was His good pleasure to do so. No other reason - because that's the kind of God He is.

It leads us to another point, a second aspect to our adoption, and that is the purpose of our adoption. We start off with the motive. Now, Paul gives us the purpose of our adoption. And the purpose was so we might praise Him. Just to go ahead and tell you that, God did this, as we already said earlier so you would give Him all the glory. Adoption was his idea in the first place, all the glory goes to Him.

If you read in verses 5 through 6, it says, "In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace." That's one of the really neat phrases in the book of Ephesians, and we'll talk about that in a moment: "To the praise of the glory of His grace."

However, if you back up a little before, you will notice that Paul is giving us this long sentence with over 200 words in it and it's a little hard to read from verse 3 to verse 14 because it takes so many twists and turns. The reason is because of the prepositions. If you count from verse 3 just to verse 6, there's 18 prepositions in this sentence...18 different twists and turns, and the reason is because as Paul is describing this new found position in Christ, as He's explaining what God has done for us, He's stretching the boundaries of human language to do it. He's searching for words and so he turns to prepositions, and this one is the preposition "to" in verse 6. "To" - it's a preposition of direction or momentum. When you go to something, you head in its direction, in its general vicinity. And Paul says, "God adopted you to the praise of the glory of His grace." In other words, God adopted you to point you in the direction of praise. That's why He did it. He adopted you to point you in the direction of glory.

When you think of adoption, your knee jerk reaction should be to glorify God. When you think of salvation, your first response should be to praise Him. And it's even more than that. If you notice this phrase "The glory of His grace," it's a Hebrew expression, which means, "His overwhelming grace, His lavish unending grace." The point is that not only has God been gracious to you, but He's been overwhelmingly gracious to you. Not only has He been kind to you, but He's been lavishly kind over and above the top.

One commentator said in this passage, "Paul desires to draw attention not only to the attribute of grace, but to the boundlessness of it." This is boundless grace. This is infinite grace. John 1:16 calls it "grace upon grace," which is a phrase that means as one grace leaves, another grace enters. Like the waves of the ocean, one wave stops and another one begins. This is grace that is sufficient for you in Second Corinthians 12:9. It's all the grace you should ever want and Paul says, "It should lead you to praise God for it."

It's one thing to adopt a child, but it's another thing to adopt a child who doesn't deserve it. We adopted our little boys when they were a few days old, so it wasn't even on the radar as to whether anybody deserved anything. It's one thing to adopt a child in infancy and it's another thing to adopt a child that has spit on you and struck you in the face. God did that and Paul says here, "It's because of His overwhelming grace."

The word “glory” has a rich meaning to it because it means heavy or weighty. It means that God's glory has a certain heaviness to it. It has a certain weight to it that you feel. When God's glory enters the room, you know it. You don't leave unchanged. It strikes you.

Several years ago, I had the privilege to preach at a funeral for my cousin who died in the army. He was killed in the war in Iraq. And so they did a special service for him with all the military precessions and ceremonies. And one person who showed up was a four-star general. Kind of wanted to tell you guys this story because it's Remembrance Day weekend, and also it fits into this passage.

But this four-star general, I remember this, he sat beside me on the stage during the funeral and someone told me he was the highest ranking member of the army I would ever meet. He had four stars on his shoulder. He actually gave me a medal. I wanted to show you guys this. He said I did a good job for the funeral, so he gave me a medal of excellence. I still have it in my office. I've never done a pushup for the army, but I have a medal. I thought that was the neatest thing. It really means a lot to me.

I bring him up for this reason - I'll never forget what it was like to watch this general walk into a room full of soldiers because the air went out of the room. I mean, every time. I'm thinking, do you ever get used to that? But every time he would walk into a room, the soldiers would drop whatever they're doing and come to attention straight up, rigid, every single time. They did this because he had a certain glory about him. He had a certain weight to his presence. Wherever he went, you felt him around the room.

Our adoption is grace on such an astonishing level, grace in such a lavish way that it should take the air out of the room.

I think so many times we don't worship like we should because we forget this. We don't praise and sing like we should because we don't remember how gracious God has been to us. He didn't adopt you when you were a cute little baby, he adopted you when you were hitting Him in the face. He didn't adopt you when you were innocent, He adopted you when you were guilty and in sin. This is why we get the Christian life so backwards. This is why we say, “I became a Christian so I could have a better marriage, or I became a Christian so that I might have a better home.”

This text says that you should become a Christian because you're a sinner, and you are wrong with God. It starts with Him, it doesn't start with you. It starts with the broken relationship you have with the Lord of heaven and earth. And the fact that you will go to hell if you don't make that right through Christ. He's been gracious to you. If you're in Christ, He has forgiven all your sins, and He should receive all the glory. This is so much bigger than our marriages in our homes, even though that's very important. This is so much bigger than our self-improvement projects. This is about the Lord of heaven and earth.

If you study the history of the church, you'll see Christians really got this from the beginning. We have always had a musical religion. If you go back to the book of Acts, you can see instances of the apostles singing even when they're in prison. Remember that? Those stories? They're in jail, they're locked up and they're singing. I don't know what the definition of crazy is, but that's crazy. But they did that because of the grace of God, and that grace went with them into the prison cell.

And you go into the catacombs in the third and fourth century (this is really neat) - but if you go to the tombs under Rome today and those parts of the world, you'll see that the church would meet in the tombs during persecution because the Romans and Jews would leave them alone there, and they would meet among the tombs and they would sing. We have artwork on those tombs today that showed the things they would sing about. We sang in the middle ages. We sang during the Reformation. We sang during the Great Awakening. We sang in the 1800s and the 1900s, and we're still singing. It hasn't stopped. You came into church today singing, you're going to go out singing because of the grace of God.

This is why we sing, this is why we do it - because of what God has done for us in Christ. We do it to the praise of the glory of His grace. His grace is heavy, His grace is weighty, His grace is amazing, and we give Him all the glory for it. Amen?

Which leads us to one more statement Paul makes here, one more aspect to our adoption. The first aspect of our adoption is the motive of our adoption. Paul begins by telling us the motive of all of this, why God adopted us. He did it because He was kind. He did it because He was gracious to us. Bringing us to a second aspect to our adoption which is the purpose of it. The purpose was to lead you to praise Him, so you would recognize his kindness and His grace and give Him glory for it, for He deserves it.

We have one more point in the passage here - one more aspect to our adoption - and that is the cost of our adoption. It kind of wraps up Paul's thought here on the topic of adoption, but after giving us the motive of it and the purpose of it, Paul finishes by giving us the cost of it. He tells you what this will cost you if you trust in Him. And the answer is nothing because it's free. This is a free gift because God paid everything. On the one hand, it'll cost you everything because you need to repent, forsake the world, trust in Christ. But on the other hand, this is a free gift.

If you read in verses 5 through 6, it says, "In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved."

If you notice, there's a couple of statements in here to highlight the freeness of our adoption, the cost of it. And one, is the word "free." Verse 6 says, "Which he freely bestowed on us." It means what it says, "God did this free of charge without any payment from us." It cost Him a lot. It cost Him the blood of His one and only Son, but it cost you nothing because Jesus paid it all. He took care of everything.

The word "bestowed" comes from the word "for grace." This word could literally be translated "with which He freely be graced on us" or, "which He freely gave us" as a gift of His grace. Not only is salvation free, it's a free gift. Not only is it a gift, it's a gift of His grace.

And then finally, Paul says, "Which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved," which is another way of saying "in Christ." "The Beloved" is another way of saying in Christ, which is why it's capitalized in your Bibles. But the idea is that God loves you through Him. God forgives you and adopts you through Jesus Christ. And the point is that all of this is free. It costs you nothing. Salvation is all of God, it starts with Him and He finishes it.

I was thinking about this and I remember in the elections, there was a big debate going on as to what actually the word “free” means. You guys remember that? A lot of politicians were promising free things. And then the response from one side of the other was that there's nothing free, somebody is paying for it. And then they had a big debate about that.

The point they were trying to make with each other was there's nothing free. Paul says, “This is free.” The cost is already covered. The price has been paid, the debt has been taken care of through Christ on the cross, and you can come to Him today through faith.

Warren Wiersbe said, “We cannot make ourselves acceptable to God, but He by His grace has made us acceptable in the beloved.”

And the question you have to answer today is, do you believe this? The question you need to wrestle with in light of all this, is will you accept His free gift of grace if you have not done that yet? Will you trust in Him? Will you give Him your faith and be saved or will you not? It's not easy to do this, it's a humbling thing. If you accept this, this means you can't take any credit for it. All the credit goes to Him, but this is how we are saved. This is how we go to heaven, through a free gift. And so, will you accept it and make it your own today?

The story is told of the time Abner Nash, the governor of North Carolina in the 1700s who went to visit a young man in prison who was on death row to give him a pardon. He wanted to give him a free gift of grace. And when he arrived in his cell, the young man yelled at him and cussed at him and threw him out. And later on, a jailer asked him, he said, “What did you do that for? Why did you cuss at the governor? Did he come to give you a pardon?” And the young man, the prisoner said, “That was the governor? I thought he was a preacher coming to preach at me. What have I done?” And the point is, he rejected his free gift. He threw out his only hope of salvation.

Friends, you don't want to do that this morning. You don't want to reject Christ.. You just need to believe. You need to trust in Him. Do that and give Him praise. Do that and He will turn your life around and get all the glory. Let's pray to Him this morning.

Father, we thank you Lord for what Christ has done for us in this passage. I feel like we can never do justice to a text like this, and never get to the bottom of it. But Lord, we thank you for what Your Son has accomplished in our adoption. Lord, I thank you for the believers in this room who can read all of this and they can in humility say, “Wow, this is me, this is what You have done for me, Lord.” And as a result, they want to praise You.

Father, thank you for the depth of our salvation. Thank you for the clarity of it. There's so much detail in here to describe how much you have done for us through Your Son. Lord, I also pray this morning for any who have not accepted this free gift that they would do so today. They would know that the gates of heaven are open wide through Christ, and they would not leave until they've made this Saviour their own.

Thank you, Father, for the glory of Your grace. Thank you for the weightiness of it, for how it blows our minds. Lord, it causes us to praise. We rejoice in what You have done for us, Lord. We give You all the glory and we're going to sing about that now. Would You be glorified in it, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.