

In Christ

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[0 : 00] This is a sermon from King's Church West London. The Apostle Paul wrote letters to various churches around the Mediterranean bases.

One of the letters that he wrote, which is included in the New Testament, speaks about how to live out their faith in Jesus Christ, was to a group of believers in a city called Ephesus.

So we are going to spend a little while over the next weeks and months looking at this letter. And we're going to find out what it's all about. Now, the title that we've given for this preaching series is a very easy one to remember.

It's just two words, in Christ. Okay, two words, in Christ. And the thing about that is that that is really what this letter is all about, is that what it means for us to no longer be away from Christ, but to be included in him.

Now, I should say as one point of thing, it's not what does it mean for me to be in Christ. It's what it means for we, for us to be in Christ.

[1 : 33] He writes it, this letter, to the church. And it is really indeed a letter about the church and about what it means. And we'll get into that over the next few weeks and months.

But he really speaks about what has changed in us. And here's just a real quick summary of some of those things. It says that we're no longer dead in our sins, but we are alive in Christ.

It says we're no longer cut off from the people of God, but we've been reconciled to him in Christ. We're no longer slaves to our old way of life, but we have been empowered in him and have an indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

And we're no longer naked and helpless, but we are clothed in Christ with the full armour of God. So that's some of the themes that we're going to look at over these next weeks and months.

Now, but one of the things that you might be thinking is, you've said weeks and months, but how long is this going to be? Well, I'm going to show you something. Now, when I was a relatively young Christian, I read these books here, these tomes here.

[2 : 49] Now, this, friends, is the written words of a man named Martin Lloyd-Jones. And he preached on the book of Ephesians between 1954 and 1962.

And this is a written copy of all of those sermons. Okay? So if you think that we maybe pad this out a little bit and go on a bit on about it, it could be worse.

All right? We could do it for the next, we could do it till 2034. Okay? So just, now, me and God, we're not Martin Lloyd-Jones, so, you know, bear that.

We'll take that with a pinch of salt. But what it does mean, what it does mean is this. It means that there is no way that over, I can't quite, I think it's about 12 weeks.

Over 12 weeks or so, we can plunge the depths of the wisdom that is contained within this letter. Martin Lloyd-Jones, I'm sure, would probably say he couldn't even manage it in eight years.

[3 : 47] And we're not Martin Lloyd-Jones. Right? So what I would say to you, in fact, I want to make a bit of a deal with you, a bit of a contract. I want to say, if we promise not to go on about this for eight years, I want you to make a promise to me.

At some point, I would ask you to read this letter. Take an hour. Take a bit of time. Put your phone away, outside. Read this letter and really think about it.

And just think, what does this mean? What does this mean for me? What does this mean for the church? Dwell on it. Meditate on it. Think about it. Feel free to do more than an hour. Feel free to do many hours. But I would ask you just to take that little bit of time out.

So I'm going to take your silence as a sense that you will keep your part of the bargain. And we have a deal there. Now, as all the letters of the New Testament, you've got to remember that they are written for us, but they're not written to us.

Paul, the apostle, wrote this specifically to the people in Ephesus. And he answers some particular things that are going on there. Having said that, some of the truths that come out of this book are universal.

[4 : 57] And they are definitely for us. And we can certainly gain from them over the next few months. So, without further ado, I'm going to read the opening section.

So, Ephesians chapter 1, verses 1 to 14. The words should come behind me. If you have a Bible, then please turn to that place. Now, I'm going to stand.

I'm just going to stand here. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God. To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ in accordance with his pleasure and will.

[5 : 58] To the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the one he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood. The forgiveness of sins in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us.

With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment. To bring unity to all things in heaven and earth under Christ.

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him, who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will. In order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guarantee in our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession.

To the praise of his glory. Well, can you see why we chose the title, In Christ? In that little opening fray, in the opening few sentences there, that appears by my count about 13 times.

[7 : 13] And this acts as like a sort of a summary of the whole book and it'll work out various things. But in Christ is now what we are. Now you might be surprised to hear that that whole section, and in fact the whole of the first chapter in the original Greek, was actually one sentence.

This is one flow of ideas that comes out through Paul into who we are in Christ. Now obviously when you translate into English you can't really do that, it just wouldn't work as a sentence.

And as I say, I only read about half of it, half of one sentence. But nevertheless, that is what we have here. But in that opening sequence, I want to just pick out a few themes that I want us to focus on today about who we now are in Christ.

And here they are here. So I'm just going to tell you them and then we'll speak about them. So it's that we are chosen, we are adopted, we are redeemed, and we are sealed. So the first is this, chosen.

So I'll read verse 4. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. Now do we have any philosophers here?

[8 : 31] Anybody who's read some of the great philosophy works, love to think about philosophical things. If that's not you, don't worry, it's not really me either. I'm not really into all that sort of stuff. But I do happen to know that one of the things that philosophers do talk about a lot is whether or not we have free will.

Whether free will is a real thing, whether we have real choices to make or not. And some philosophers believe that we are part of a much bigger plan and that we are kind of working them out.

Now that might not be God as such, but we are part of a bigger plan. But really, the plan that these philosophers tend to focus on isn't really about God's benevolent plan for us.

But it's more to do with our genetics, our culture, the society that we live amongst. So you might think that you have free will, but in fact when you drive, you think I'm going to go to the supermarket.

And when you turn into Liddles instead of Sainsbury's or Morrison's instead of Aldi's, you might think that you're making a decision. But in reality, you might think that you are exercising your free will by going to these places.

[9 : 38] In reality, you're not. There's a whole load of really deep things inside you that have forced you to make this decision. Whether that's your parents, your family, the culture in which you live, the genetics which you live amongst, which make up who you are.

And in reality, so this point of view goes, you have no free will. You are just a pawn. And me and Becky, we've been watching this TV show called Capture.

And basically the premise of it is that there's this really scary AI called Simon Says. And basically it predicts that what we will do according to all these things with a terrifying degree of accuracy.

And basically it decides who to kill on that basis. So this point of view that we have no free will, it sounds quite depressing in a way.

We think that we get up and do various things. But so says this point of view, we don't have any free will. A much more optimistic point of view is a bit more like the American dream.

[10 : 49] The future is what we make. In fact, any fans of Back to the Future here? Yeah, Back to the Future. The closing words of Back to the Future from Dr. Emmett Brown, who might be my favourite film character of all time.

The future is what you make, kid. So let's make it a good one. Right? That sounds a bit more like it. I prefer that to the previous one. That sounds like we've got a bit of agency.

The decisions that we make really matter. That they're important. The future's in our hands. But let's not be too hasty. Actually, when you think about it, that's actually a little bit of a scary thought as well.

Now, I'm not a political guy. Particularly, I don't have really strong political opinions. And even if I did, I wouldn't use this platform to talk about them.

But it couldn't have escaped your notice. It certainly didn't escape mine. That on Easter Sunday, the message that came from the elected American president was something along these lines.

[11 : 54] Today, a civilisation could well be destroyed. So he said. And due to this, I'm sure you know the background. There's a crisis in the Middle East, in Iran.

And then, to close his message, he said. This is Easter Sunday, bear in mind. Praise be to Allah. That was his Easter message to the good people of America.

Now, I'm not going to go into the rights and wrongs of his saying that. But nevertheless, that is human beings making decisions which could have terrifying consequences for people.

So that's what having actual free will potentially could mean. It's not necessarily good news. So what does the Bible say about free will?

Well, the Bible has a much more nuanced view on this subject than I think anything you'll find anywhere else. If you ask the question, do my decisions matter?

[12 : 55] Will my decisions be judged? Or is there a bigger plan that God has put in place to work out all history?

The Bible says, yes. Both of those things are true. The things that you do and say really do have real consequences.

Yet, nevertheless, God has worked out a plan through all history that will have a conclusion with his glory. Now, the Bible never doesn't say that in those terms.

What does instead? It tells stories about how that is true. Remember the story of Joseph in Genesis. Remember that story? Maybe the most dysfunctional family of all time that he comes from.

His father, Jacob, was a mummy's boy who was shown favoritism by his mum. And as such, he fled the family. And he himself had a family of 12 sons.

[13 : 56] And he spoilt his youngest son at the time, Joseph. So he was a spoiled brat who used to torment his brothers by flaunting the favoritism that he was shown in front of them.

Of course, they sell him into slavery. And this whole disastrous sequence of events takes place where he's taken as a slave into Egypt. And he's accused of something he didn't do.

He's thrown into jail. He's eventually released from jail and vindicated and becomes actually prime minister of the whole of Egypt. Well, his brothers come back. And they're terrified that he's going to kill them because of the things they've done to him.

And he says to them, you meant this for harm. God meant it for good. All this terrible behavior that I, Joseph, and you brothers did over those years.

We sinned against one another. And yet God meant it for good. God's plan weaved into history to bring about something so much better than we could have meant.

[14:59] Another example. Amongst the prophets. Deep in the prophets. The prophet of Habakkuk. So Habakkuk received a warning from God that because of the Israelites' sin.

Because they'd done so terribly, he was going to punish them by sending the Babylonians. To punish them by defeating them in battle. And then in turn, God was going to punish the Babylonians for what they do to Israel.

Well, hang on a second, God. You just sent the Babylonians in to punish Israel. And then you're going to punish them for what they did as part of your will? Yes.

Because they had free will. They had the choice to do these things. Even just taking it right up into the New Testament. Remember Peter's sermon at Pentecost.

Here's what he said. I'm going to read it. Acts, just one verse. Where's it gone? Acts 2.23. He was talking to the crowd. This man, Jesus, was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge.

[16:10] And you put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But hang on, which one was it? Was it God's plan or foreknowledge? Or did we do it by nailing him to the cross?

It was both. We're responsible. We're responsible. And God has a plan. Look again at verse 4. He chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

You might look at your life and think about the journey that you took in coming to God. Maybe it's a journey that you're still on today. God chose you before the creation.

It might look to you like you made decisions here. You made a step of faith there. And do you know what? You did. That's the thing. You absolutely did. But God chose you before the creation of the world.

Isn't that good news? Isn't that reassuring to us that actually it doesn't all depend on me and the things that I do going forward?

[17:13] I am responsible. Absolutely. But at the same time, God has a much bigger plan, which I'm included in because I've believed him.

Isn't that good news? Just read a few words from later on in the book, chapter 2. It's by grace you've been saved through faith. This is not from yourselves. It's the gift of God.

Hallelujah. He had a plan for us. He's working out that plan through us even today. A verse that we often go back to and rightly so is reassuring is Romans 8, 28.

It says, all things God works for the good of those who love him. That's a reassuring verse, isn't it? We can say, you know, yeah, we love God. He works for the good of those who love him.

But we often don't finish the verse. Should I finish the verse for you? It says, those who have been called according to his purpose to be conformed to the image of his son. Why does God work everything to good for those who love him?

[18:25] So that we would be conformed to the image of his son. Let's look back at verse 4. He chose us before the creation of the world to be what? Holy and blameless in his sight.

Who was holy and blameless in his sight? Jesus Christ. The purpose which God has chosen us and called us is to be like Jesus.

I sometimes hear people say that what they try and do every day, kind of driven people, people who try to seize the day. They say they want to be the best version of themselves every day. That's okay.

That's not a bad thing. I would just develop that and change that a little bit. To be the most Christ-like version of yourself every day. Which is, by the way, the best version of yourself, just in case you're wondering.

That is our goal in him. Now, I've dwelt on this one a little bit longer than I will the other points. Because it underlines everything else.

[19:26] That God is looking to us to make good decisions, to follow him with everything that we are. But he's also got our back.

He's also covering us. He's also holding us in his hands. We can be reliant on him and not on ourselves. So what has he chosen us for? Verse 5.

Adoption. Adoption's a beautiful thing. I dare say there's people in here who were adopted.

Who've maybe adopted others. Certainly all of us, I think, have witnessed adoption. And seen it in others. Even if we haven't experienced it in our own family life.

And you might ask the question, Why would a family adopt a child? Why would they do that? It's a good question to ask. Is it because the child is particularly cute?

[20 : 25] Particularly gorgeous? And just think, I just want to have this little kid in my life. So beautiful. I don't think that's the reason. Is it because at some point maybe, thinking ahead.

Thinking about old age. I need somebody to look after me. I need somebody to pay the way. You know, this kid looks pretty bright. He's going to be successful. I'm going to bring this kid in.

And look after me when I'm an old man. I don't think that's the reason. I don't think you've got any reason to suspect any child to be any more successful than any other. Certainly at a very young age. So why do they do it?

Why do these parents who adopt children do it? Well, I've never adopted a child. But I think the reason is because of the desire on the part of parents to pour their love into a child who, for whatever reason, hasn't been able to be loved in the way that they should be by their biological family.

It's an amazing, wonderful, perhaps the best picture that we have of what God does for us. We're not adopted by God because we're really good looking.

[21 : 36] Thank goodness. No, because we're particularly intelligent or successful. God does it simply because he wants to pour his love into me and you. Why does he do it?

Verse 5. In accordance with his pleasure and will. Which is just a way of saying, because he wants to. And that's it. He wants to adopt us. And so he does.

Hallelujah. As I was thinking about this, I was thinking, you know, but the funny thing is that adoption, unless is adopted as an only child into a family, it's actually really complicated because there may well be other brothers and sisters there.

And I was just reminded, you know, many of you know Dave and Libby Hill who were part of us for a long time and they've since moved away. And they adopted Jaila into their family, but of course they had three biological kids already.

And one of the things that really struck me with that adoption was how well the other three incorporated them into the family. I didn't, I mean, I don't see the inside of all of their lives, but I didn't get the feeling there was any kind of like, oh, why is this person coming to our family and jealousy or anything like that?

[22 : 49] And I just thought, and that's an amazing thing, isn't it? That's a wonderful thing that they've done that and they've been able to incorporate her so well. And it just made me think, you know, Jesus, Jesus was the son of God, is the son of God.

You know, but it wasn't just that he, he allowed us to be adopted into the family of God, if you like, with him. But actually, it was him who went and caused our adoption to take place.

It was him who laid down his life so that we might be incorporated into the family of God. No jealousy from Jesus, the true son of God. In fact, quite the opposite.

In fact, he willingly and recklessly even shares the inheritance which only he has as son of God.

You know, an illustration that's often used when talking about adoption in the ancient world, in the Roman world, is the fact that lots of Roman emperors were actually adopted.

[24 : 04] So, Augustus was adopted by Julius Caesar. He wasn't his natural son. He was adopted and he obviously took the role as emperor in time.

You know, he was brought into the family of the emperor and he became emperor himself. Now, that's an okay illustration but actually I think it falls down a little bit because the fact is that all these all these families and these aristocratic Roman families, they were all quite closely related.

So, it wasn't like Octavius was like taking his summer urchin off the street and brought in as emperor. He was, you know, he had a pretty nice life anyway. It's a bit more like this.

Imagine if the Roman emperor during Julius Caesar's days, imagine they're at war with some Germanic tribe on the Danube and they capture a slave of these barbaric, one of these barbarian tribes.

They capture him, they bring him back to Rome and he is adopted into the family of Caesar and he is made emperor. Because you see, the Bible doesn't show that we were kind of friends with God, that we were his mate and he just decided to lift us up another few levels to be the family of God.

[25 : 18] No, no, completely the opposite. It says that we were enemies of God, we were far, far away from him, we were like a slave to his enemies as we were slaves to sin and death.

We weren't even his enemies, we were slaves to his enemies, we were far from him and yet he took us and he chose, he took us out of that place and brought us into a place of adoption alongside Jesus himself, the sons of God.

Now, just on that, this thing about sons of God, where does it say that? Let me find that. In verse, excuse me, I've lost it.

Ah, yeah, in love he predestines for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ. Now, just a little comment on that. Some of you might think to yourselves, he adopts us to sonship? Wouldn't it be good if Paul here could use a little bit more inclusive language to be sons and daughters of God? Now, just on that, I want you to know that here, Paul is using inclusive language and here's the reason. It's because in that day, in Roman times, and actually up until really quite recently, daughters couldn't inherit.

[26 : 32] The inheritance always went through the son. Okay, so if, if, yeah, so if there was, if there was, you know, I don't know, seven daughters and one son, the son would inherit all of the estate.

Okay, that's just how it was, right? I'm talking a lot about telly today, but my wife's watching this show. If anyone made me flee a room, by the way, put on a period of drama.

Okay, so she's watching this show, it's something like, I can't actually remember what it's called, something like called the Bennett Sisters or something like that. And, and basically it's a story about these four sisters in some, some Victorian posh family.

And basically there's no son to inherit. So it's all about their adventures of trying to get husbands so that they can keep on living their, you know, their lives and not have to, you know, do anything demeaning like work for a living or anything like that.

And, and, and, and, and, and so it was the same even in Victoria, Britain relatively recently, but certainly in Roman times, girls couldn't inherit. Now what Paul is saying here, speaking to a church of men and women, he was saying, you are adopted to sonship.

[27 : 40] So you, Devi, are a son and you, Sue, are a son of God. I know this feels a bit weird, but nevertheless, it's true, at least in terms of legally before God, men and women.

So this friends is radically inclusive. So don't for a second feel, ladies, if you ever look at the language of this feel, oh, I'm kind of excluded from this. Absolutely not. And, and by the way, it's probably worth remembering that a little bit later on as we get later into the chapters where there are some verses where you probably could be a bit more justified when we talk to some of the marriage stuff.

So in a second, oh, is there a little bit of sexist language in here that we need to talk about? What I want you to remember, when we look at that, we will talk about that. What I want you to remember is that Paul, in his society in which he lived, was radically inclusive and showed an equality between men and women that would have been unheard of at the time.

So I'll leave that for a few weeks for us to, to get into that. So we're adopted as sons. We're adopted to what?

Sonship through Christ. So what did sonship through Christ look like? What does sonship mean? Imagine somebody who's really, really important.

[28 : 54] Say a president or a king. Imagine what it might mean to be a son of that person compared to just anybody else.

Well, it means access, doesn't it? You know, the stories of the American presidents in the White House, some of them are amazing.

Like lines of people queuing up to get into the president's office and then a little kid, five, six, seven year old, marching past them, bursting in and being welcomed in. Why? Well, obviously because he is the president's son.

He's welcomed in at all times. Imagine if there was a president or prime minister today and they were doing a public hearing and you decided to sprint towards that person as fast as you can, your eyes fixed upon them.

What do you think would happen? I'll tell you what would happen. One of the goons would burst out of nowhere and you would be taken out. But imagine that you are the president, the prime minister's son.

[30 : 01] What do you think would happen? The goons would put their guns away and they would let that child give their dad a big cuddle, wouldn't they? That's the access that Jesus had.

Do you know, Jesus used a term that nobody else in the Bible would have dared use when he spoke to his father and prayed. He called him Abba Father. That's an Aramaic term which means dad or daddy.

A close, intimate term that even some of the heroes of the Old Testament, Moses, who saw God face to face, David, the writer of the Lord is my shepherd.

They wouldn't have dared to use a term like that. Jesus did. And do you know what? We're given the same access to the father in Jesus Christ. We are welcomed as children into his presence. That's what we're adopted into. We're redeemed. Can you just tell me the time? It's eight minutes past. It's okay. We're redeemed.

[31 : 05] We're going to skip forward. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins. Do you know redemption? Do you know what that means?

It means to be bought. It's like a trade, like a financial trade. So the picture that Paul is looking at here is the slave market. Slavery was very much a thing in Roman times.

And he's speaking about how we were once slaves and we've been bought through Jesus. Here's what it says in Romans 6, verse 7. Though you used to be slaves to sin, you have been set free from sin and are now slaves to righteousness.

That's interesting, isn't it? The Bible says that we were slaves and we're still slaves. We have a new master. But what a master.

Righteousness. I think slavery is quite a difficult concept for us to really get in terms of imagining it for us just because it feels so alien to who we are and where we are in society.

[32 : 14] But I think a closer picture to maybe imagine when we talk about slavery is maybe addiction. You know, if you're addicted to heroin or other hard drugs, there's a sense in which you are enslaved, isn't there?

That you, if you've ever been addicted or know anyone who's addicted, there's a sense in which you actually cannot physically, you cannot help but be drawn to some of these terrible things that people are sadly addicted to.

It dominates the life of addicts. C.S. Lewis wrote that as believers we should be addicted to righteousness.

What does that mean? We'd be addicted to righteousness. Well, there's a psalm. Psalm 119. It's actually the longest psalm in the Bible. I'm not going to read the whole thing. I'm just going to read one little bit of it. But I would, again, just ask you to dwell on this.

C.S. Lewis said the people that wrote this, because it was written by many different people, they were addicted to righteousness. It says, here's what it says, Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord.

[33 : 23] Blessed are those who keep his statutes, means his laws, and seek him with all their heart. They do no wrong, but follow his ways. You have laid down precepts that to be fully obeyed.

Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying your decrees. Then I would not be put to shame when I consider all your commands. I will praise you with an upright heart as I learn your righteous laws.

There's almost a sense of desperation in that psalm of people who just want to be close to God, want to obey him, want to be addicted to righteousness. And I would encourage us to do the same. Addiction is pretty much always a bad thing, apart from addiction in this way. To feel that sense of pleasure, of doing the right thing in God, of following him faithfully, that is a good thing which will never do you harm.

So how have we been redeemed? Well, we've been redeemed by his blood. We have been bought by his blood.

[34 : 25] You know, it amazes me how often the concept of one person laying down their life for another is a recurring theme in popular culture in films and books and this kind of thing.

And it's just because it's so moving, isn't it? When you see somebody go, I'm going to lay down my life for you. I'm going to taste death instead of you.

It's so moving and I just, I bought in a couple of books that show this quite well. Any Charles Dickens fans here? A Tale of Two Cities.

So, A Tale of Two Cities tells a story of two people. Sydney Carton, the rake, the bounder, the cad, that's kind of Dickensian language, the scumbag, the, well, I won't say anymore.

He's a terrible man and it tells us, and also, of Charles Darnay, a good man, a good husband, a man who works hard, does his best wherever he goes and they bear an uncanny resemblance despite the fact that they're so unlike each other in character.

[35 : 32] Well, the story goes that Charles Darnay, the good man, he is sentenced to death in the French Revolution. He is sentenced to the guillotine. He gets head chopped off. But Sydney Carton, despite his terrible ways, he breaks into the prison.

He disguises himself as Charles Darnay and he goes to the guillotine instead of that other man. He dies so that the other man might live.

Isn't that moving? A bit too high, bro? Well, Harry Potter. What's Harry Potter about?

Well, you know what it's about, but Harry Potter survives an attack by the dreaded Lord Dumbledore, sorry, Dumbledore, Voldemort, Lord Voldemort as a baby, defenseless little child.

And when Dumbledore explains to him what happened, here's what he says. Your mother died to save you. If there's one thing Voldemort cannot understand, it is love.

[36 : 48] He didn't realize that love as powerful as your mother's leaves for you its own mark, not a scar, no visible sign to have been loved so deeply. Even though the person who loved us is gone, it will give us some protection forever.

Now, if you know the story, you know that Mrs. Potter does die and she is gone. Here's the good news of the gospel.

Jesus laid down his life for us, but he did not stay dead. He came back to life. He is alive today and he is calling people to himself.

And friends, the love that he has for us, the blood that he shed for us does protect us. It does give us protection from sin and harm.

but more than that, it gives us the right to walk through death into eternal life, into an eternal kingdom that God is building on this earth.

[38 : 02] So I want to pause for a moment just as we finish. So a moment of prayer. Lord Jesus, I want to thank you that we are indeed found in Christ, not through our own works, but through the gift of God.

You've given us your inheritance through your own pleasure and will, not from any good thing that we have done, but from the good things that Jesus has done.

He did indeed lay down his life for us and he did indeed take it up again when he walked through death into eternal life and hallelujah, we get to follow him. We get the full rights of son, access to the father and eternal life.

Lord, we pray that today we would start to take on those heavenly blessings which have been given to us in Christ Jesus. We pray we'd realize your goodness.

We pray that we would respond to your goodness in new levels of faith and thanksgiving. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for all you've done for us.

[39 : 15] Hallelujah. Amen.