



Following Jesus

Part 8 – Leads Us to a Heart for Adoption

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We've been in Branson for the last couple of days and had the opportunity to come here and speak here and then Kanakuk found out I was going to be here and asked me to speak to the Link Year students for a day. This past summer, my wife became a small group leader with seniors in our youth ministry. When she found out we were coming here this weekend... We have fall break in Oklahoma; the whole state takes off Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday this week. She said, "Hey, let's bring my small group" and I said, "No, I prefer not to." So, we brought 17 high school seniors with us this weekend. It's been good. It's been fun. I had to correct them a little bit yesterday, which Meredith doesn't like, but I had to do that. So, they'll be here for the 11:00 service.

When you think through this series of *Following Jesus*, this is kind of the conversation the high school kids and I have had this week. What does it mean to follow Jesus? When I hear a title of a series *Following Jesus*, my mind thinks that's the series to end all series. If we get that one, what else is there to preach on? If each of us are following Jesus and each of us are listening to him and believing him and obeying him and walking after him and our feet are like the hind feet of an animal and we're following behind Jesus on that pathway, then we don't need to teach on giving anymore, right? We don't need to teach on any other behavior modification. Worship would just naturally happen. People would just be obeying God and we would get it.

But, I'm afraid, in the world that you and I live in, there is a branch of culture that is trying to shift and shape Christianity into you and I worshipping a white, above-middle class Jesus. We've made him look just like us. By the way, I would say to you that Jesus looks a whole lot more like me than he does you. I know Megan Kelly said that Jesus and Santa Claus were both white. She is an intelligent person who got it wrong. He was middle-eastern.

When we try to make Jesus look like us... the reason we do that, by the way, is because that's who we are most comfortable with. We want to be around a Jesus that we're extremely comfortable with. But when you look at the Bible, it is so clear to me that Jesus never had one public relations class, not one time. He would gather the crowd and then he would drop the hammer and bring the correction and the crowd would get smaller and smaller.

Thirteen years ago, when we started our church and God blessed it and it bloomed and it grew, we had one of those series that changed everything, kind of like *Following Jesus* ought to change everything for the church and trajectory of its people.

The series we were doing was called *FAQ*. It was a frequently asked questions series. We thought it would be a good idea to submit to the congregation to ask any question they wanted to ask and the pastor would deal with that subject matter. It's not really all that intelligent, quite honestly, when you think through it. So, you ask whatever you want and the pastor will preach a sermon about that.

The very first card I read... I don't remember the exact words because it scarred me, but it was something like, "How come I've never heard you speak about orphan care?" To just be honest with you, I laid the card down and thought, *This is going to be harder than I thought*. I thought somebody was going to launch a 12-foot arched softball into the plate for me to hit, and the very first one I read was "How come I've never heard you talk about orphan care?" I thought, *I never heard anybody talk about orphan care*. And I grew up with some great pastors. I went to seminary. I got multiple degrees in Bible and in Greek and in Hebrew and in evangelism and church growth. I've studied and been around the best of the best and I can't figure out why I've never heard one on it either. So, the answer is because I've never heard one.

But, something happened in me and I thought that was actually a really, really good question. I sat down and over a period of 90 days (this was years ago) I re-read the whole Bible. I began to circle, underline, highlight in different colors like an ADD person would do. I found there are four things in the Bible that are repeated over and over and over again. Four things that God values greatly. I want to say to you today, in this series, that if you and I follow Jesus, we will ultimately value what he values. That's part of following Jesus, right? And surrendering and submitting to him. Following Jesus really comes down to what is he saying and will I listen and am I going to obey him?

Quite honestly, we live in a culture where Christianity would be hard-pressed to define what it means to follow Jesus. If we were to ask Christians today in Christendom to just define what it means to follow Jesus," there would be millions of answers to that question. When it ought to be simple that quite honestly, I'm going to look to his word, listen to the Holy Spirit, and then I'm going to live it out and I'm going to learn from it. That's what it means to follow Jesus. But when we follow Jesus and when our feet end up like hind feet behind his feet, following him down that pathway, we end up valuing what he values.

So, I started studying the Bible and I found these four things. In fact, I found a stat too that rocked my world. Just write this one down if you would: 143,000,000. I want you to think through that number for just a second. There are 143,000,000 orphans in our world today. It's hard for us to grasp numbers that big, isn't it? Let me just help you with an illustration. If you were to take children and put them hand in hand, shoulder to shoulder and line them up, there would be about 1,700 children per mile. What I want you to know is that string of children, equaling 143,000,000, would go around the Earth at the equator three times. That's what I want you to think through.

Maybe you still don't understand. If you were to get in your car and drive across the equator of the Earth at 60 miles per hour, you would pass 1,700 orphans a minute. If you drove mile after mile, minute after minute, 24 hours a day, week after week, month after month, you still be driving after two months.

Now I want you, in your mind's eye, to look out the windshield of your car. I just want you to envision the face of one of those orphans. I want to ask you this question today: How long would it take for a normal Christian who is following Jesus to pull the car over and help just one of those children?

I want you to see today, as we jump into the scripture and we look at these four things that God values... Is it possible that you and I have missed some things that are high on the priority of God's priority list and we haven't even thought about them? Is it possible? I want you to know that it is possible. It certainly was possible for this young preacher and it changed my world, it changed my life, and it changed my perspective about Christianity.

Let me give you the first thing I found in scripture when I read the Bible over and over again.

1. God values marriage and family.

You see that over and over in the scripture. In fact, let me just say this to you. When I heard that number of 143,000,000 and began to process that and tried to visualize that and tried to illustrate that and tried to explain that, I've got to be honest with you, part of my questioning was "God, where are you?" I don't know if any of you have ever asked God that question, but I'll just admit to you that I ask that question on a regular basis. I've asked it during the last two debates. "God, where are you?" What has happened in the last eight years that we've ended up in the cesspool of the options we have today called presidential candidates? If I'm offending you today, I'm just saying to you that you're offended by Jesus. When you look at what's happening, you just have to, if you're honest... and maybe you're not critical like I'm critical, but in my critical mind, I look at some of these things and go "Where are you, God?"

In this process of this orphan care, I felt like God prompted me and said, "Hey, perhaps a better question is what do I have to say about it? Not just where am I, but what do I have to say about it?" That's the reason I went to the Bible to answer this question of what does God have to say about it? I found this first thing. God values marriage and family, which is why your church does what it does, right? The Marriage 911, the Twolgnite marriage, and all of the conversations you all have monthly about marriage.

The Bible begins with a marriage and it ends with a marriage in The Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Our relationship with Jesus is compared to that of a husband and a bride. He wanted us to get this and to understand this and he told us to address him as Father or as Abba or as Daddy. So, marriage and family are valued by God; it's how he chose to help us understand how to relate to him. I don't need to spend a whole lot of time on that today because, Woodland Hills Family Church, you get that one. God values marriage and family.

2. God values children.

You see this over and over in the Bible. Psalm 127 says, ***3 Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him.*** We don't always feel like they're a gift, but they are always a gift and they are always a reward from the Lord God Almighty. Words that the Bible uses to describe children are gift, reward, blessing, inheritance.

But those aren't the words our culture would use to describe children today. In fact, the words that our culture uses are weight, cost, burden, inconvenience. You may say, "I don't think that's what the culture thinks about children." Let me just help you with that one. What is the first thing you think when you see a family that has six or seven children? Do you think, *Man, their quiver is full?* You don't think that. You think something different. In fact, what you want to say to them, if you had the courage to say it, is "You know how that happens, don't you?" You would have this conversation with them because our culture has led us to believe something about children.

There's a story in Mark where the people are bringing these little children to Jesus to have Jesus touch them and to have Jesus bless them. The disciples rebuke the children and rebuke the people who were bringing the children. You know the story. Jesus said, **"Let the little children come to me, for such is the kingdom of God."**

There's another story in the gospels in Luke 9 where the disciples were fighting with one another and arguing with one another about who was going to be the greatest and who was going to be the best and who got to sit next to Jesus when the whole thing happens and the kingdom ends. Jesus took a little child, knowing their thoughts... The Bible says he took a child, sat the child in his lap, and said, ***"Whoever welcomes one of these children, welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me also welcomes my Father."***

Jesus cared a whole lot about children. He valued their lives. When you think through the why of that, I think the answer is because he knew what you and I know today, which is we are sending messengers into a land that we will never get to visit. We are sending missionaries into a mission field that you and I will never get to go to called the future, called the next generation, called tomorrow. We don't get to go there, but they get to go there and we're sending them and we're shaping them. The question our church has been asking for the last 13 years is "What is the message that we're sending with these missionaries into tomorrow and into the future?" God values children.

If I can just finish this verse in John 1: 12. ***But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.*** So, God values family and marriage and God clearly values children.

3. God values orphans.

In Deuteronomy 10, it says **17 "For the Lord your God is the God of gods and Lord of lords. He is the great God, the mighty and awesome God, who shows no partiality and cannot be bribed. 18 He ensures that orphans and widows receive justice.** You don't have to read far into the scripture to begin to find this theme that's all throughout the Bible. God has great, great compassion for the orphans and for the widows.

Exodus 22 says, **22 "Do not take advantage of the widow or the fatherless. 23 If you do and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear their cry.**

Psalms 27 says, **10 Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me.**

Psalms 68 says, ***5 A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling.***

Yesterday, I met a young man hanging around Kanakuk who I would guess is in his early 20s. He was telling me a story. He told me his dad was murdered this summer in a drug deal gone bad. The moment he said it, the Holy Spirit deposited this verse in my heart. I looked at this young man and I said, "I want you to hear God's voice today. He says he will be a Father to the fatherless. That's not a promise from this pastor; that is a promise from the heart of God to you today that he will father the fatherless."

John 14 says, ***18 "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."***

I found three points in the scripture about God and orphans and what he does with us as his children – those who are following after him.

- **God calls us to protect the orphan.** I've been to orphanages all over the world. Have any of you been overseas to a third world country and been in an orphanage somewhere. It doesn't take five minutes for you to see it. You just walk in and these kids jump in your lap. They just want love and attention, they just want a hug, they just want candy, they just want toys, they just want to be treated as human, and you see it. When you look into their eyes five minutes into the scenario, you see the need of the fatherless and you see the needs of the helpless.

I want you to hear me today. People refer to our church as the orphan care church or the adoption church or the fostering church. I want you to hear me today. People want to interview me on the radio and other places and they say, "You're the pastor who brought around orphan care." I just have to say to you that's just not true. That would be a good marketing campaign, but God has been caring for orphans since the beginning of time and he's been calling his churches and his bride to do that for a long time. Oprah didn't think of that. Bono didn't think of that. God Almighty said that he would be the father to the fatherless, so he calls us to protect them.

- **God promises to bless those who provide for orphans.** Deuteronomy 14 says, ***28 At the end of every three years, bring all the tithes of that year's produce and store it in your towns, 29 so that the Levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) and the foreigners, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied, and so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.***

Deuteronomy 24 says, ***19 When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow...*** He said leave it there. In other words, when you glean the crops... And he goes on in the next few verses to talk about olives and grapes and other harvesting things that when you harvest that, don't take all of

it; leave some for the orphans. Leave the corners of the fields for orphans and widows. Leave produce in the field to care for them. You and I are not agrarian; we're not an agrarian society and we'll talk about that in a moment. What I want you to see at this moment is that God promises to bless those who care for the orphans. ***...so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.***

- **God challenges us to the priority of caring for orphans.** James 1 says, ***27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.***

Here's what I'm afraid of in Christianity today... I'm afraid that the world has corrupted us to the degree that we don't even see some of the things that God says are a high priority in his heart and in his mind and on him.

I don't know if you're like I am. I turn the television on occasionally and flip channels and come across some religion channels and see people with either no makeup or just way too much makeup, which just make me think there is a word called *balance* in this. I would just say you ought to wear makeup. Just some, please, right? But you shouldn't need a putty knife to put it on. When you watch this process of religion on television, my heart gets troubled. In fact, I get nauseated at times; my stomach turns. But then I'll look at our churches and my church and some of the things that I'm a part of and I'll go, *Yeah, that's not good either. That's nauseating too; that's religion at its worst too.* But, occasionally, I'll look in the mirror at something that God has done in us and something that God has done through us and this subject is one of those things. I feel like *That's it; that's pure. That is undefiled. That is the very heart of God.*

So why did God make that statement in James? I wrote down three things in my early journey about why he made this statement and why he cares about these things.

- The first one is orphans can't repay. I think it's a big deal to God. If I were to go bless Joe White... I'm blessing Joe White because I love Joe White and I care about Joe White, but at the end of the day, Joe White can bless me back. He's got access to airplanes, camps, boats, and all kinds of things. Do you see the picture of what I'm trying to say? If I'm blessing somebody who can bless me back, then there can be an ulterior motive; not always, but there can be. I think part of the reason God says what he says in James about pure and undefiled religion is because they can't pay back.

- The second point I thought of is that they teach us about the love of God. Loving someone who is slow to love you back, loving someone who may be troubled to the degree that they have a hard time loving you back puts us in the shoes of the Father for moment for us to feel what it feels like when you love someone who is not responding with the love and how God must feel.
- The third reason I wrote down is it teaches us to be sacrificial. I think what God is doing in this whole following him thing is it's not that he just wants all these followers. I think he cares about us to the degree that he wants us to grow up. And orphan care is part of that process. When I care for someone else, it's not only about the someone else, it's about what God is doing in me. He's growing his children up and helping us in that way.

4. God values adoption and fostering.

God values those things, particularly adoption. You see that in the scripture. We looked at it a minute ago. Psalm 68 says, ***5 A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. 6 God sets the lonely in families, he leads out the prisoners with singing...***

Let me just ask you this question. Have you considered the fact that Jesus was adopted? Have you ever thought about that? On this Earth, Jesus Christ was adopted. His father, Joseph, adopted him. He was not the biological father of Jesus. In fact, when Matthew records the lineage of Jesus, he does not do it through his blood mother; he does it through his adoptive father, which I think is a point for you and I to pay attention to. In the heart of God, adoption is not plan B. In the heart of God, it's not something sub-normal. In the heart of God, this is something that he cares greatly about. Even though you might easily pass over that insignificant detail in scripture, I think it reveals something to us about the very nature of God. We all know God doesn't make mistakes and so if God doesn't make mistakes and this is the way God chose to do it, then I need you to hear today that it's not a backup plan. Adoption is not a backup plan. This footnote in history helps us see that for Jesus, it was not plan B. You know that Moses was adopted and Esther was adopted and Samuel was adopted. There are all kinds of famous people in the Bible you can read about who were adopted.

Again, people trying to make our church out to be this church... And God has done some incredible thing through our church. Seven years ago, we set out to say "We want to shut the DHS shelter down in Tulsa, Oklahoma." Laura Dester is the name of it. They just built it for millions and millions of dollars. We said we want to shut this shelter down. How do you go about shutting a shelter down? You foster kids, you adopt kids. You remove the need. You have Christian families who have said "I would be willing to take in a child in need of a place for weekend when a 911 call comes in and they've been removed from the home. I would be, as a Christian mom, as a Christian dad, as a Christians couple, as an empty nester, willing to open my doors and take someone in."

Branson is filled... In fact, one of my children said to me the other day... It's funny through the eyes of children. They said, "The average age in this place is old." The Landing helped a lot actually to bring that

down. But, when you think through that, the leaves are changing and we're just missing it. I wish we were here just a few weeks from now because the geography of Branson is so gorgeous, which keeps people like me lost the whole time I'm here. Every road curves... You can go north, south, east, and west and never turn. It winds you around through the beautiful leaves and the foliage and all that, but once you're looked at the leaves for a few minutes, God's like, "Come on; is that really what you want to do with your retirement? Get on a bus and go look at leaves?"

God's not done with you. Get on the bus and go to the northeast and see the leaves for one day or one week and then come back and get back in the game. You are an empty nester; put somebody in your home for a weekend, for a day, for a night, for a moment in order for them to be in a Christian environment. They may have nothing but a sack that has every possession they own in it.

We began to train families. We began to ask Christian families to get involved and to see the heart of God in this. Do you know that this year, that shelter will shut down, seven years later? Part of the plan was a process called 1/1/1. We said our church can't do this; we need every one church in Oklahoma to help one family adopt one child. That's how crazy simple this thing is. I don't know the numbers in your state or in your town, but what I want you to know is you are more than capable of leading out in this task. You're more than capable of taking care of this dilemma. Why on earth would you do it? When you follow Jesus, you begin to value what he values. You begin to prioritize what he prioritizes.

I want you to know today that the first century church opposed abortion. I don't know where you stand politically today, but I want you to know that it's very, very clear in history that the first century church opposed it greatly. They opposed child abandonment. They opposed deviate prostitution. They opposed human sacrificed. They opposed suicide. Why? It's because there was a high value on life.

I want you to hear me today, church, when I tell you that you can't place a high value on life, you can't be anti-abortion without being pro-adoption; it doesn't work. It just doesn't even make any sense. The first century church was not just anti-abortion; they were clearly pro-adoption and they took those children in. They not only created orphanages and homes; they created hospitals and schools and education centers to care for life because they loved life. They knew God valued life.

I would say to you that I just have a sneaking suspicion and hunch that Roe vs Wade will never be overturned until Christians begin to quit antagonizing abortion and start talking about adoption and becoming pro-adoption in the scenario that we will take care of these children. They are not unwanted. They are a part of the plan of God. God created them in his mind. He's the author of all of this and the author of salvation. We, as the children of God, would open our homes, would open our doors. The calling for the church today is certainly no less radical than it was in the first century.

Guys, I just want you to hear me say we can't have 150,000,000 orphans in this world and the churches in America do nothing about it. We can't. This cannot be the new normal. How on earth could we ever stand by and watch 25 to 30 thousand children a day under the age of five die from diarrhea. So that we know how to fix and we know how to solve and we can prevent while we stand in line and try to figure out which latte we want. This cannot be the new normal for Christianity. God's hear is for adoption and God's heart is for fostering and God is pro-life.

What if just 5% of the 400,000 churches in America created some sort of adoption agency, some sort of adoption ministry, some sort of fostering scenario, some sort of “Hey, let’s just go minister to the DHS workers who represent children.” How easy this thing is for us to deal with and to take care of this.

If got to just say to you that I feel, at times... Our church was just featured in that Outreach Magazine again. You may not even know what I’m talking about, but every year, they do this 100 largest churches, 100 fastest growing churches in America of all denominations. We’ve been in that magazine over and over again. I tell our staff... They want us to buy these plaques and put them on the wall. I said, “Hey, listen. I think being one of the fastest growing could be a disease.” You’ve got to hear me say that if you had an infant and I said to you, “Congratulation, your infant is going to be the fastest growing infant on the planet and in a few weeks, his arms will be nine feet long,” you would say that is a problem. That’s not healthy.

Sometimes, I think we look through these lenses into marketing the church. When Jesus shows up at a church, you don’t have to market it. The word gets out. It will travel. When Jesus sits down in a place, lives are changed and when Jesus sits down in a place, something happens that’s unexplainable. When Jesus comes and we truly begin to follow after him, then we are changed and, consequently, everything we touch and everything we come in contact with is changed.

Just quick concluding points and I’ll be done.

Caring for orphans through adoption or fostering is normal. It’s not an oddity. We ought to be cheering people on who grafts somebody into their family. We ought to be cheering people on who graft somebody ultimately into the kingdom of God. It is the right stuff. It is pure and undefiled. And if we are made in God’s image, surely we have some of his attributes in us and on us. I believe that adoption is the most beautiful manifestation of God’s unconditional love that there is. You picture yourself as an orphan whose father traveled the span of the earth to rescue and you see it clearly that it is normal.

We are a Christian nation today with unparalleled affluence. I don’t need to say anything else about that point. We ought to be doing something.

Orphan care will lead to missions. When we started this process in our church, some of our missions people felt like it was going to derail some of the missions. I said, “You’ve misunderstood the heart of God.” When you do orphan care, it leads to missions. You go see these kids and all of the sudden you care about that place. Families in our church who have adopted from all over the world now care and do mission trips to those places. We’ve had several of our staff members, by the way, step off of our staff team and are leading. One of our formers staff members who led all of our small groups is now the Chief Executive Officer of the 1/1/1 Initiative that I just mentioned a moment ago. Another one is the Chief Executive Officer of a group called Penny Jar Project, which is doing these concerts and Christian tours, getting sponsors and taking offerings to help people do orphan care around the world. It will lead to mission.

My vision, seven or eight years ago, when we launched into this initiative, was that we said we want to reach Tulsa, America, and the world. That's Acts 1: 8, right? Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, to the ends of the earth. We want to reach Tulsa, America, and the world. What God began to do in this process of moving into this was not only for us to reach Tulsa, America, and the world, but for Tulsa, America, and the world to be in the hallways of our churches. It wouldn't be weird to say "I'm from Guatemala" or "I'm from China," or "I'm from Ethiopia" in Tulsa, Oklahoma. When you walk into some of our preschool classrooms and some of our elementary classrooms in our churches, it looks like the U.N. and I think it's pleasing. I think it's very, very pleasing.

We started in this process and as we began to do this I thought, *Okay I'm going to teach on this*, and I started with one sermon in that FAQ series and then about six or eight weeks later, God had so moved on my heart in this subject and in this study that I launched a series on Easter Sunday a month or two after we did the FAQ sermon. All of my staff told me I couldn't do that. They told me it would be better for me to get up on Easter Sunday and ask for people to give 10% of something than to ask them to adopt a child.

We went for it and in the last seven or eight years, three hundred children have been adopted in our churches. Three hundred have been fostered and three hundred are in respite care. It's not clean; it's messy. We've had to hire psychologists who are therapist who understand helping children from hard places and from troubled things to come onto our staff to help these families who are taking care of them. We've had to create villages around each of these families who have taken in someone who has come from abuse or has come from a difficult situation. We had to not sensationalize it; we've had to say we've got to roll up our sleeves and help. It's got to look like the kingdom of God and it's got to look like the heart of God.

I'm trying to think how I can land this plane for you today because I've ventured off into territory that's not in my script. Let me just ask you this question today. How many of you are adopted? Okay, about eight or nine or ten in the room. Let me read you a verse of scripture in Ephesians 1. ***4 Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.*** His unchanging plan has always been... ***5 God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.***

Let me ask the question again. And if I ask it again and get just 10 or 12 responses, I'm going to go back to John 3: 16 and we're going to start over this morning. How many of you are adopted? It's the heart of God. We were orphans. We were left without a family because of our sin. He chose to send his Son that you and I may be grafted into the very family of God. It is the gospel. The plan that God chose to bring us into his family is adoption. He could have chosen any illustration he wanted, but that was the illustration he chose to send a message to you and me, his church and his bride, that if you follow him, you will value what he values.

Here's what I know. I believe with all my heart, because I feel at home at Woodland Hills, that God Almighty, if you'll listen, will prompt you, will lead you, will guide you, will help you, will resource you to make a difference in this issue because it is close to the very heart of God. I believe that with all my

heart. As I get ready to pray, I know that when I say amen, the church will be the church and the bride will rise up. He will have his bride. I want you to know today that in all the angst that's going politically on in our nation, this book doesn't ever talk about any of that. I think the concern is for the bride of Christ and the church. I think the choices we have today... I've sat down with Mr. Trump on a couple of occasions in room with ten people and I'm praying that he will come to God and he will know God. I'm praying the same thing for Hillary Clinton. I want you to know today that revival has never come through the White House. Republican, Democrat, or independent, it doesn't. It comes through the Church house and I think that you and I, if we were to look at what's happening in our nation, ought to look in the mirror and we ought to say, "Hey, I think God is trying to make it so unbelievably clear that a candidate is not going to save our nation. Jesus is the only one that can do that." We can't look to something else. And when we follow after him, he does in us what only he can do in us.

Maybe you're here today and you've never been adopted into the family of God. You don't have a relationship with God's Son Jesus Christ, but today you're here and it's not an accident you're here and the opportunity that we are about to walk you through to give your life to Christ is a divine appointment. I think for many of you in this room and the other room and watching online today, need to trust Jesus, you need to be adopted into the very family of God. Right where you're seated, would you just pray with me. I'm going to pray, one phrase at a time, and I just want you to repeat it after me in your heart and in your mind. I don't believe the words are magic, but I believe that if they reflect the will of your heart and the will of your life, Jesus wants to adopt you into his family. So right where you're seated, would you just say...

Dear God, I know I'm a sinner and today I ask you to forgive me for all of my sin. Jesus, come into my heart, come into my life to be my Lord, my Savior. In the best way that I know how, I turn my back on my sin and I trust you alone to save me, to adopt me. I receive salvation and I receive Jesus. In Jesus' name we pray and together we all say... Amen.