CRAIG SMITH: Well, welcome back to week number two of our Identity Theft series. I want to start this morning with a truth that really kind of sits underneath everything we’re going to talk about through this series, and this is the way I want to say it. What we do is a result of who we think we are. Okay? What we do is a result of who we think we are. Now, I realize that might be a little abstract, so let me try to make it a bit more concrete and say it this way. Couch potatoes don’t run marathons. Okay? There’s nobody rounding mile 25 in a marathon who’s thinking to themselves, “I am a couch potato.” If you self-identify as a couch potato, you don’t get out and run marathons.

Now, people who thought of themselves as couch potatoes might end up running marathons, but between the couch potatoedness and the marathon runnerishness, an identity change has happened. Something’s happened that changes the way they think about who they are. Does that make sense? And it might be slow. It might be that they move from “I’m a couch potato, I’m not a runner, but you know, maybe I could go for a jog.” Then, that one jog turns into a second jog, and they began to go, “Well, you know what, maybe I am jogger, but I’m not really a runner. But maybe I could jog a little bit more. And it turns out, actually, you know what, actually, maybe I am a runner, but I’m not a serious runner. But maybe I could run a little more. You know, maybe I am a runner, but I’m not a marathon runner. I’m going to up it. And you know what, maybe I am a marathon runner.” See, what’s happened is there’s been a change in who they think they are.

What we do is always a result of who we think we are. What that means is that every behavior that we struggle with, ultimately comes back to some sense of who we think that we are. Every behavior we struggle with is either traced back to a lie that we have believed about ourselves or a truth about ourselves that we have failed to embrace. That’s why this identity theft stuff is so important. See, if we understand who we are in Christ, we will naturally begin to live in light of that truth. On the other hand, if don’t know who we are in Christ, we will naturally tend to live in a way that that’s inconsistent with what God says about who we are. So if the identity theft happens, if we allow the world, if we allow Satan to steal from us the truth of who we are, we’re going to live in exactly the way that he says we ought to live. But it’s not the way God says that we ought to live and it’s not the way God says that we have to live, if we understand who we are. That’s why this identity business is so important.

So, if you’ve got your Bible, if you want to grab one from the seats in front of you, I’d love to have you turn with me to the Book of Ephesians. We’re going to be picking up where we left off in Ephesians. We’re actually going to be looking at verses 3-14 this morning. When you find the Book, if you look at verses 3-14, you might go, “Whoa, that’s a lot of words.” It’s a pretty big chunk of Scripture and you might wonder why I didn’t break it into multiple messages. There’s two reasons why I didn’t break it into multiple messages. One of them, sort of technical, and that is that in the original Greek, verses 3-14 are actually one sentence. Technically speaking, this is what we, in the academic circles, call a big honking sentence. Okay? It’s very precise. Don’t worry about it, if that doesn’t make any sense to you. It’s just a massive, massive sentence and that leads to the second reason why I didn’t break this up which is that this one sentence, like all good sentences, really only has one idea in it. Okay? So there is just one truth here that we need to take hold of, that God wants us to walk out of here this morning understanding.

So, we’re going to pick up where we left off last week in verse 3, “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.” Just as a quick reminder, two things we said last week when we touched on that verse, the first is that Paul identifies here where all of this is true. That is it’s in Christ, which means in a relationship with Jesus. If you have a relationship with Jesus by faith, everything Paul is about to say is true of you. It’s not option. It’s not a potential. It’s not something you can work towards. It’s simply what is true of you because of who and whose you are, if you are in Christ. If you’re not in Christ, none of this applies you. And you need to go back to the basics and
make sure that you’re in a relationship by faith with Jesus. But if you’re in that relationship, this is not options. This is reality. This is identity for you.

The second thing is that he talks about having every spiritual blessing. And I said last week, some things that that’s not, that we sometimes... We don’t experience every spiritual blessing because we’re looking for the wrong things, but these are spiritual blessings. We said what that was not, but we haven’t really said what it is yet. And what Paul begins to do now is to unpack what he means by these spiritual blessings. He says this, verse 4, “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 - to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves.”

Now, there’s a lot of stuff going on there but there’s one word in particular that I think most people tend to fixate on, one word in that sentence that when I read it, you probably went “Whoa,” and what word would that be? It’s that predestined word. Here’s the thing. The word predestined actually occurs not just once, it occurs twice in this big honking sentence we’re looking at this morning. That presents a dilemma for me as a preacher. Because on the one hand, I think it’s important that we never skip over or even skim over what God thought was important enough to include in His word. On the other hand, I also know that the conversation about predestination is both complex and it’s emotional. Because of the complexity and the emotion involved in it, what happens is that as soon as we start talking about predestination, that kind of ends up on center stage. The word predestination gets most of our attention and it becomes sort of the main focus, but the reality is it’s not the main focus here. Predestination is not what should have the spotlight. It should not be what’s center stage. There’s something else that should have center stage here, but the conversation about predestination tends to like, you know, kind of hog the spotlight.

So that leaves me as a preacher going “Okay, what do I do?” I don’t want to just skip it over but I want to make sure we keep the main thing the main thing. So, here’s what I’ve decided to do. Today, I’m going to keep the focus on the main thing, okay? But if you’re really interested in digging into this predestination stuff, which I do think is important to understand properly, if you’re interested in digging into that a bit more, tomorrow at 11:30 a.m., so hopefully during about lunch hour for most of you. In fact, can we go ahead and put that up, yeah. If you want to go to facebook.com in the Mission Hills Church part of Facebook, I’m going to do a Facebook Live event and I’m going to just geek out on predestination and election and foreknowledge and all the philosophical and theological ram... So, if you want that, I’ll give you more than you can handle. Because I do think it needs to be dealt with, but I want to make sure that what we deal with this morning is the heartbeat, and the heartbeat here is not predestination.

The heartbeat this morning is this business of adoption to sonship. That’s where God’s heart is in this passage, adoption to sonship. Just so you know, even though it says sonship, the reality is that what Paul is talking about here refers to both men and women, anybody in Christ, male or female, has access to this adoption business. That’s just sort of the way that they talked about all mankind. In today’s language, we might say adoption as sons and daughters. In fact, there are some translations that do that. I think that’s perfectly appropriate because clearly what Paul is talking about applies to all of us who are in Christ. What he says applies to all of us is that we are adopted. We are brought into God’s family, and not as servants but as legitimate children.

But the other thing that the word adoption highlights is not just that we’re in this family, if we’re in Christ, but it also highlights the fact that we weren’t born into this family, that this is not our natural family, that God’s family is not where we started out. We had to be moved from our old family into our new family. And what Paul says a little bit later, and I don’t want to jump ahead too much, but I think it’s important to understand what he’s getting out here is in Ephesians 2:3, Paul describes it this way. He says that when we’re out of Christ, before we came to Christ, we were by nature deserving of wrath, deserving of God’s punishment. Literally what he says though is we were by nature children of wrath. And he’s identifying our natural family. He’s identifying the family that we were born into because of Adam and because of our own choices. We’re born into a family where we’re deserving of condemnation, but we’re not alone in that family.
He actually goes on to say that we were under the control of the authority of the prince of power of the air, which is a euphemism for Satan. That’s the natural family that we are born into the authority of Satan. We’re born sort of enslaved by sin and by Satan. But now what Paul says is that in Christ, you’ve been adopted into a very different kind of family.

Now, adoption varies a little bit from culture to culture. It’s important that understand adoption in the way that the original audience would have thought about adoption. And it’s interesting that the Roman view of adoption, and Ephesus was part of the Roman Empire so I’m certain that that was the way they thought about adoption, the Roman view of adoption was different than the way you and I think about it in a couple of significant ways. The first one is this. In our culture, when we think about adoption, adoption is primarily for the benefit of the child, right? It’s to find somebody who doesn’t have a family and then to bring them into a family. But in Rome, adoption was primarily a benefit for the father of the adopting family. It wasn’t for the child. It was for the adopting father and it was a way of securing an heir to continue the family line. Does that make sense?

What would happen was a father that... You know, he had resources, he had a heritage, he had a legacy and he wanted that family line to continue, but if he didn’t have son, he would adopt a child and bring them into that family so that his family line could continue, so that everything could stay inside the family line. The legacy would continue. Now, that’s different, right?

So for the Romans, when they read about this adoption business, they would have naturally gone, “Okay, so this is to God’s benefit? That’s interesting. How is it to God’s benefit?” Well, we’ll just put a pin in that for a second.

The second thing that was sort of different is that in the way we think about adoption, primarily, it’s orphans who get adopted, right? It’s kids who don’t have families who get adopted. I mean, at the very least, it’s a child who was born to parents that really don’t have the ability to take care of them. And so its primarily...it’s about orphans.

But in Rome, it was very rare for anyone to adopt an orphan. It just didn’t happen. You didn’t adopt orphans. This father who needed an heir didn’t go looking for an orphan. He actually went looking for a child in another family. You might go, “Why would you do that?” Well, because he wanted an heir who had some respect. He wanted an heir who had some value, right? What would typically happen is they would look around and they’d find a good family who had already had a son, so that family had an heir, and then maybe they had a second son, so they had like a back-up heir, right? But then they had three or four sons, and you know, there’s very little chance that that third or fourth son is ever going to actually end up inheriting anything. And so then the father who needed an heir would go and he’d say, “I would like to adopt your third son.”

It wasn’t an orphan business. It was somebody who was already part of a family. And what that meant and this is very important, that meant was that the first step in adopting somebody was that you had to start by securing their release from their natural family. You with me? You couldn’t kidnap the kids. So what you had to do was you had to go and you had to pay a price to get that kid released from the natural family, and only then would they be available to be adopted.

When we begin to understand that, some stuff that Paul says here becomes very, very interesting. Because God did that for us. We had a family. It was just a horrible family. We had somebody who was in authority over his. We were his. And the first thing God had to do was secure our release before he could adopt us. God paved the way for adopting us. And this is what’s interesting. God paved the way for adopting us as his children by giving up His own son. That was the price that was paid. That’s what Jesus did. Jesus went to the cross to pay off our sin, to pay off our debt, to secure our release so that God could then adopt us.

But understand, from a Roman perspective, what Paul is saying here, it doesn’t really make any sense. It’s mind blowing. What you’re telling me, God already had a son, and then He paid the price to secure our release by giving up, by sacrificing His own son? If He already had a son, why would He need to adopt any more children? If He already had an heir, why would He be interested in adopting any of us?
And that’s the second thing that’s so interesting. Because Paul tells us exactly what God’s motivation was. He says this, he says, “In love He predestined us to adoption.” That was the motivation. God sacrificed His own son in order to purchase us so that He could adopt us because He loves us. From a Roman perspective, that was mind blowing. From a Roman perspective, it was about the father and what the father needed. But if the father already had a son, he wouldn’t need us, so why would he do this? And Paul’s answer is He did it in love. That was the motivation.

Try to put these pieces together. God did not need to adopt us. He wasn’t lacking anything. He had everything He needed. He didn’t need you. You didn’t really bring anything to table. I didn’t bring anything to table that God was looking for. God did not need to adopt us. And on top of that, adopting us cost God an incredible price. The price for adopting us, from setting us free so that he could bring us into his family, the cost was unbelievable. It was the sacrifice of His own son.

How do you put those two together? How do you put it together that God did not need us and He paid this incredible price to be able to adopt us? How do you reconcile those two thoughts? The answer is, the only possible conclusion, is that God loves us beyond our ability to understand. I want you to sit with that for a second.

Because I think one of the dangers, especially if you spend much time in church at all, is you kind of get into this place where if somebody tells you God loves you, and you’re like, “Yeah, yeah, yeah.” That’s a tragedy. And I know how easy it is. I mean it’s like God loves people. Of course, He does. That’s His job, right? I mean firemen put out fires, bakers bake things, God loves people. That’s just what he does, right? We just hear it and it washes over us. It goes in one ear and out the other, but I want you to make sure you get this. God did not need to adopt us. Adopting us cost Him a price beyond our conception and yet He did it. Why? Because He loves you. And it’s not an abstract, generic kind of love. It’s a profound, deep love.

Yet, the reality is that you and I question that love all the time. I know I do. Maybe not consciously, but it feels like every time that we experience something that doesn’t go quite the way we were hoping, every time we don’t get from God exactly what we wanted, every time circumstances seem like, you know, they’re kind of spiraling out of control, our response is to wonder. Does God really love me? Does God really care about me? Because we think if He really loved me, then He would have done what I wanted here. And if He really loved me, He would have taken care of this. We question, we’re tossed back and forth by every wind of circumstances, rather than resting in the secure knowledge that we are loved, because of what He went through to adopt us into his family in the first place.

Hear me on this. You were picked. You were pursued and you were purchased. That is how much God loves you. You were picked, pursued, and purchased.

I don’t know what junior high was like for you guys. But my guess is that almost all of us can remember that moment when you’re standing in a line with a bunch of other people, and somebody’s standing in front of you and they’re picking teams. Makes everybody feel warm and fuzzy just to think about it, doesn’t it? Do remember the anxiety? And I remember, I wasn’t usually the first one picked, which meant that I had enough time to kind of go, “Man, I hope I’m not the last one.” Because being the last one, it’s not any fun. Being the last one, you know, you’re like, “You didn’t really pick me, you just settled for me, right?” But we want to be picked. We want somebody to go, “You, I want you.” We want that moment.

Listen, God didn’t just pick you. He didn’t just look and go, “Yeah, you.” He also pursued you. In other words, God looked around at the line up and He went, “Where is she? She’s not... What do you mean she’s at home? Well, hang on here, I’m going home.” And He goes to your house and He knocks and He goes, “I need you, I want you. I’ve picked you.” He didn’t just pick us from the line in front of us. He pursued you. He went looking for you when you weren’t looking for Him. And He purchased you. Bringing you into the family cost an incredible price. Why? Because He loves you.

Feel that. Don’t just let it come and go. You were picked, pursued, and purchased because you were loved. He did it He says
because of His pleasure and will. God takes pleasure in you. I know for me, that’s a hard one to take on hold. Like I, kind of, in theory, like, I’m okay with the whole He loves me business. But the idea that He takes pleasure in me, I mean, you’re trying to tell me that He likes me? Apparently. He did it according to His pleasure. God doesn’t just love you, He likes you. He takes pleasure in you.

Remember, He took pleasure in you. He picked, pursued, and purchased you before you did anything that made you worthy of it. That’s what that predestined word means. That’s why it’s so important. We can only really think about predestination in light of this understanding of God’s love. Because the reason that God says that we have been predestined for adoption is because He wants to emphasize the security of it. He says He predestined us. He decided long before we were born, long before we did anything, long before we responded or not to any of the leadings of the spirit or what God...before all of that, God said, “I’m looking for you, I’m pursuing you, I’m purchasing you.” The predestination word is intended to emphasize the security of it.

You didn’t earn your way into adoption. And because you didn’t earn your way into adoption, you don’t have to worry about being disowned from the family, being kicked out of the family because of things you do along the way. God wants you to rest in the knowledge that you have been adopted into His family, and from that position in the family, you receive not only status as members of the family but you receive all the other benefits that come from that. And he begins to unpack those. He says, “In Him, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that He lavished upon us.” That’s one of those spiritual blessings. You have redemption which means that you have been bought with a price. You’ve been paid for. All of your sins, all of the wrong things that kept us as natural members of that other horrible family, He says, “It’s gone. It’s paid for. It’s covered. It’s not who you are anymore.”

He did it not because we earned it but because of His grace, that undeserved kindness, which He has given us freely in the one that He loves. He says that he has lavished it upon us. I love that word lavished. I mean, it’s not drips and drops of grace. It’s He’s dumped grace on you. He’s drenched us with grace. He’s also given us not only redemption, but He’s given us redemption along with all wisdom and understanding, and made known to us the mystery of His will according to the good pleasure which He purposed in Christ to be put into effect when the times reached their fulfillment to bring unity to all things in Heaven and on earth under Christ.

These are other things that he’s given us. He says he’s given us wisdom. Wisdom is the ability to know what’s important and what’s not. We have true insight into what really matters, which leads to understanding because it allows us to change the way that we begin to live when we know this matters. We begin to orient our lives around what really matters as opposed to what the world says matters, and so we have understanding. And in the process of doing that, He gives us insight into the mystery of His will which is ultimately to bring unity to all things.

Now, we’re going to continue to talk about that mystery of unity, because Paul continues to talk about it in this Book, but let me just put a pin in it right now, because it is important to understand. He says, “As you have wisdom about what’s important, and understanding about how to give your life, one of the things that God begins to do is to show you what He’s doing.” He begins to give you insight into this mystery that ultimately is the unity of all things.

And the reason it’s a mystery is it doesn’t look like everything is coming together right now, does it? It doesn’t look like we’re experiencing unity. It doesn’t look like God’s bringing things together. It kind of looks like it’s going the other direction, doesn’t it? I mean, there are exceptions. I mean, at least in the Republican Party, there’s clearly a lot of unity happening, right? Now, the reality is everywhere we look around, it looks like things are falling apart, and that’s why God calls it a mystery. Because it means that He’s doing something under the surface, that we may not see unless we begin to have this insight that He gives us.

We’re not any better at it in the church. I remember several years ago, I was driving through to a speaking engagement in Kentucky and we stopped at a stoplight, in this little Kentucky town. And I looked up, and right next to me was the First Baptist Church. And then I looked over on that corner and I saw the United Methodist Church. And then I looked over this corner right
here and there was the Second Baptist Church. That was the actual name, Second Baptist Church. I’m pretty sure the Second Baptist Church did not get started because the First Baptist Church was full up. It was probably more like there was an argument over the color of the carpet, and now there’s a Second Baptist Church. And then, I kid you not, I looked over this way and there was a Presbyterian Church. It was like dueling churches on each of the corners. I was like what would Sunday morning look like in that kind of context? *There’re thousands of denomin...there’s over 200 denominations of Baptists alone. It doesn’t look like we’re getting unity.

But what God says is, “Yeah, but I’m doing something under the surface.” And the more you understand this mystery, the more you begin to not only appreciate what I’m doing, but the more you get to become part of it. He says, “In Him, we were also chosen having been predestined,” again to emphasize the security of this, “having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will.” He says nothing is happening that’s getting in the way. Nothing is happening that’s blocking God’s desire to bring things together, in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of His glory.

What he’s doing now is he’s beginning to illustrate this mystery that God is bringing things together even though it might not look like it on the surface. When he says, “We who are first to hope in Christ,” he’s talking about himself as a Jewish person. You may remember, we talked last week about the fact that until Jesus came, there were basically two classes of people. There were the Jewish people and there were the Gentiles. The Jewish people, they were people of God. The Gentiles were the not people of God. When he calls himself part of that we, who were the first, he’s talking about himself as a Jewish person. They were the people of God. They were also the first ones to trust in Jesus.

The first apostles were all Jewish. The first Christians were all Jewish. But now, those who were first are not the last. And he’s writing to a group of Gentile believers. He’s writing to Greeks and Romans and he says, in verse 13, “And you also, who were once the not people of God, you also now are 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 guaranteeing our inheritance, until the redemption of those who are God’s possession to the praise of His glory.”

There’s a lot of spiritual blessing in this. Let’s just make sure we don’t miss some real quick. The first thing he says is that we have hope. I say that because at the beginning of the passage, he says, “He chose us in Him to be holy and blameless.” How many of you feel holy and blameless right now? Okay. But it’s going to happen. That is what God is doing in you. That is where God is moving you. If you were trying to be holy and blameless, you’re going to be consistently failing, but God says, “I’m going to get you there. Relax. Trust me. Let Me work in your life. Stop trying to earn what you couldn’t have earned. Stop trying to make sure you stay inside the family, because you’re afraid you’re going to.... You know what, no, no, understand who you are. Let Me begin to do in you what’s going to happen, and there is genuine hope of the transformation that you long for. It will happen. There’s hope.”

In addition to hope, he says there’s redemption. He says all the stuff that kept you out of the family, it’s covered. It’s taken care of. If you’re in Christ, it’s all paid. Relax. You’ve been redeemed. You’ve been bought with a price. He says you have wisdom. You can begin to understand what really matters and what doesn’t, which leads to understanding. You can begin to live your life revolving around what really counts versus what doesn’t. He says you have knowledge that God’s in the business of doing something and you can begin to see it. You can also begin to participate it.

He also says that we having a sealing by the Holy Spirit. He says we are sealed by the spirit, and that language again, it has to do with security. It has to do with certainty. That secure language there, the seal language, it’s the language that was used for a king and the signet ring that he would write a scroll and then he would drop some wax on the edge of it and then he’d take that ring and he would seal it. And it was his way of saying, “This is mine. The contents of this belong to me.” It was his way of saying, “Back off. Hands off. This is mine.” And Paul uses the same language to say that when we come to Christ, we’re given the Holy Spirit. The person of God Himself enters into us and begins to transform us, but it’s not just that we have power, we also
have security because this is a promise. God says, “If you’re in Christ, you are mine, and no one can take you away. You’re mine.”

In that lies the one heartbeat of God that we have to take hold of today. What God is saying through this entire sentence basically just boils down to this. God wants you to know that your adoption is secure. You’re not in a trial period, you hear me? You haven’t been brought into the family and put on notice. Let’s see how it works out. Okay? If you were adopted, if you are in Christ, if you put your faith in Christ, you are in the family. You are a son or daughter of the King. It is who you are. You’re not on a trial period. God wants you to know that your adoption is secure, and then, He wants you to begin living in light of your new identity.

As I began this morning, I said everything we do is a result of who we think that we are. If you think that you are something other than God says, you are going to continue to struggle living in a way other than you know that you should, because you haven’t take hold of your identity. On the other hand, if you take hold of the identity of who you are, as secure in your adoption as sons and daughters, you will find yourself beginning to be able to live in all the ways that you’ve longed for but have never been able to succeed at. Because who we think we are ultimately dictates how we live.

So I challenge you with this: What am I struggling not to do? The reality is we all have those things, right? We have things that we wish weren’t a part of our lives. We have things that we go, “I don’t want to do that. I don’t want that to be part of me but I can’t seem to break the habit. I can’t seem to get out of it. I can’t seem to set myself free.” You don’t have to set yourself free. You’ve already been set free. If you’ve got something you’re struggling not to do, what you need to begin to ask is this, “What lie about who I am can I trace that back to?”

I’ll tell you one of the most consistent ones to me, and I can’t believe that still happens but it does, I still hear people who are in Christ, believers, followers of Jesus Christ, I still hear them talk about themselves this way. They say things like, “Well, I’m a sinner.” Um, no, not according to God’s word. I challenge you to search God’s word. You will never find a place anywhere in the New Testament where a Christian, a follower of Jesus is described as a sinner.

Now, the New Testament says we sin, absolutely. In fact, it says if you say you don’t sin anymore, you’re lying to yourself. But He doesn’t call us sinners. He doesn’t say that’s who you are. What it calls us is, as we saw last week, saints. But listen, if you walk around going, “Well, I’m a sinner,” you know what sinners do? Yeah, they sin. As long as you think of yourself as a sinner, you’re going to keep behaving that way. But what you’ve got to recognize that has happened is you’ve suffered identity theft. Because that’s not what God says. God doesn’t call you a sinner in any way. He doesn’t say that’s who you are. Yeah, you do that, but it’s not who you are. Take hold of who you are and you will see that everything else begins to fall in line.

Conversely, you can flip it around and you can say, “What am I struggling to do? What things to I know I should be doing, should be part of my life?” Maybe, it’s generosity. You know, maybe it’s sacrificial love, maybe it’s reading my Bible on a regular basis. Whatever it is that you know I want that to be part of life, but I’m struggling to actually do it, I’m struggling to get that habit going, and then I would ask you this question: What truth about who I am that I’ve failed to embrace can I trace that back to? What truth about who God says I am in Christ have I just not grabbed a hold of, and how is that affecting the way I live?

God longs for you, to understand that your adoption is secure, that you are a son or daughter of the King if you are in Christ, and to get busy not trying to earn your way in, not trying to hold on, but just getting busy learning to live in light of who you are.

The reality is that’s a hard thing for us to grasp. I think we struggle to believe that God really did that for us. But today is the third weekend of the month, and here at Mission Hills, what we do on the third weekend of the month is the clearest reminder of the reality of what I’m saying. We remember when we take Communion, when we take the Lord’s Supper, we remember the price that He paid. We remember He picked me, He pursued me, and He purchased me, and I need to rest in that.

When Jesus gathered His friends on that night before He went to the cross for us and He broke the bread, He said, “This is
My Body, I’m breaking it for you. Because I picked you, I came looking for you, I’m purchasing you.” He took the cup, and He said, “This is My Blood. It’s poured out for you. Not you generically, you, individually. It’s poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.” If you trust in Jesus by faith, you’re part of a new family. You’ve been bought with the blood of the legitimate Heir because of how deeply you’re loved.

In just a moment, the ushers are going to come forward and they’re going to pass out these elements. My encouragement is that you, as you take the cup and as you take the piece of the bread, you just spend a couple of moments thanking God for having picked, pursued, and purchased you, and asking Him for the strength to trust in your adoption and to begin living in light of it in whatever ways He speaks to you. After you’ve had a moment to do that, go ahead and eat the bread and drink the cup, and remember how deeply you’re loved.

Jesus, thank you. It is, in fact, hard for us to wrap our heads around that You loved us enough to do this, but it’s a fact of history. It’s not a matter of opinion. It’s a fact. And the only way to put all the pieces together is to acknowledge that we must be loved, and this is the deepest possible proof. Help us to rest in your love and to begin living in light of who we are as your sons and daughters, in Jesus’ name. Amen.