

Blessing # 1 Adoption

Ephesians 1:5

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, October 27, 2019

If you would, turn with me in your Bibles to the book of Ephesians, which is the book we are in this morning. As you're turning there, if you're joining us for the first time today, we're on the front end of a series on the book of Ephesians called the "All of God" series because that's what the book is about. It says that our salvation is all of God. Ephesians tells us that all the riches and treasures and blessings of the Christian life come from His hand and not from us.

As I just mentioned, this is a new series for us. We've been in it for about six weeks now. But just to give you some background for the book, if you looked at the table of contents in your Bibles, you'll see that Ephesians is the 49th book of the Bible. That's where it falls in the list. It is the 49th book of the Bible. And it falls into a section of the New Testament that is known as the "prison epistles," because Paul wrote these letters in prison.

Along with the books of Philippians, Colossians and Philemon, Ephesians is one of the letters Paul wrote from jail. Spurgeon said, "John Bunyan's book Pilgrim's Progress smelled of the prison because that's where Bunyan wrote it." Well, Ephesians smells of the prison as well. This book came to us from prison or else Paul was under house arrest when he wrote this.

But if you look in chapter three verse one, Paul alludes to this (in Ephesians 3:1), where he says, "For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles." That's an interesting phrase. It says a lot because it means that Paul was not a prisoner of the Jews or the Sanhedrin who put him in jail. He was not a prisoner of Cesar or Rome who held them in chains, he was a prisoner of Christ. He served Christ, ultimately.

He says in chapter 4:1, "Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord," because Paul understood what was going on here. He understood the bigger picture, and the bigger picture was that he did all of this for Christ. All the suffering and pain and humiliation of his arrests were done for the Lord and no one else.

To say this another way, Paul's salvation was all of God. It had to be because he was in prison. All the riches and treasures and blessings of the Christian life had to come from his hand and no one else because Paul was in jail. He couldn't do anything to save himself. If somebody said, "Paul, you could be saved if you could just go to church." Paul would say, "I can't go to church. I'm stuck here." If somebody said, "Paul, you could go to heaven if you would just go to the temple and offer sacrifice," Paul would say, "I can't go to the temple."

Several years ago I preached to a group of prisoners in South Dakota and I'll never forget that experience, because they all kind of filed in wearing the same clothes. They had blue jean jackets and sweatpants that said "inmate" on the side. And the guard gave us a squawk box, which was a little box you would pull or ripcord in case something bad happened. Then the guard went out the room and went down the hall and I thought, "Where are you going? Sixty to seventy of these prisoners are in here and just three of us."

But during that church service, I told them, “You guys can't go do good works outside of here. You can do them in the prison but you can't go anywhere. You're stuck in here. Your salvation has to be all of God because you have no other choice.”

It was the same way with Paul. You would think a man like Paul would never have to suffer. God would give him an easy life, but that was not the case. God gave him a hard one to remind him that his salvation was all of the Lord. Which leads us to what we want to talk about today. It leads me to our subject for this morning, because while we're not sitting in a prison cell like Paul was, I think many of us are sitting in a tough place today. While many of us in this room are not suffering the way he did, with chains on our wrists and shackles on our feet, we're suffering in other ways.

And what I mean is, I looked it up this week and according to a recent survey done by the government, one in four Canadians are depressed, which is 25% of the population. And a big portion of them are severely depressed, which means they're depressed to the point of paralysis. They can't get out of bed in the morning or do normal things.

This study also said 9% of the population are on antidepressants, which is one of the highest consumption rates in the world for the population of the country. Percentage-wise, Canada's behind only Australia and Iceland in its overall use of that drug. Because of this, suicide is the ninth leading cause of death in Canada, and it's the second leading cause of death for young people. It's frightening to think about, but more young people die from suicide than almost any other cause. It's like a plague.

And I mention that to say that we live in a country that is very depressed. While our economy is good, many of us live like we have nothing at all. And Paul would've identified with that. Maybe Apostle Paul would have really felt that struggle in his soul. I mean, he would wake up every morning with nothing to look forward to other than Christ. The world had nothing for him anymore. He was in chains.

And it might help you to know that if you struggle with depression, if this is a challenge for you, you're not alone. This is a struggle that Christians have endured for many, many years. Some of the greatest saints in church history were depressed and discouraged, and God brought them through it. I'll just mention a couple of them to you just as a setting for our passage today.

One of them is Martin Luther. Martin Luther lived in the 1500s, and God used him to start the Protestant Reformation to lead Germany and Europe out of the dark ages, but he struggled with depression. It was a real challenge for Luther. It got so bad that at one point, his friends were worried about him, they thought he might commit suicide. So they talked to his wife about it and she decided to go around the house and funeral garb. She went around the house weeping and mourning. Till finally, Luther said, “Well, dear, what's wrong? Who died?” And she said, “Well, according to Dr. Luther, God did.” And that got his attention, he snapped out of it. But he struggled with depression. It was a challenge for Martin Luther.

Another one who struggled with this was Charles Spurgeon. Spurgeon is known today as the “prince of preachers” for his ability to preach and teach the Word of God to people. If you counted up all the printed material from Spurgeon, it would come to more pages than an entire set of the Encyclopedia Britannica. He was a brilliant man, but in the midst of all the things he did for the Lord, he was depressed at times. In one of his sermons, he said,

Some years ago, I was a subject of fearful depression of the spirit. Various troubles had happened to me and I was also unwell and my heart sank within me. Out of the depths, I was forced to cry unto the Lord and under the pressure, I preached a sermon from the words, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” And I felt it. I felt to the full measure, the horror of a soul forsaken of God, and I pray that I will never feel it again.

We can mention other men who have struggled with this. We could talk about other godly women who have battled with this. But I bring it up to say that one way to get over depression is to look at what we're going to talk about this morning. If you struggle with this, one way to battle with this is to look at what Paul says in the book of Ephesians. If anyone knew how to overcome depression, it was Paul. If anyone knew how to battle discouragement and hard times, it was him, because he was in a prison as he wrote this.

If you look in the first verses of the book of Ephesians, here's what this prisoner wrote. Here's what this man who was struggling with discouragement said in Ephesians 1:1-5:

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

Just to explain that a little bit, if you notice in verse 3 (this is the opening verse of this whole section of Scripture), Paul uses the word “blessed” three times to show that you are blessed, blessed, blessed in the Christian life. God has given you so, so much in Christ. It doesn't sound like something a prisoner would write, but Paul says, “God has given you every spiritual blessing.” Which is important because Paul says, “You can enjoy these blessings in prison. They are spiritual. They are of the spirit or the inner man. They go with you wherever you go.”

And then he says, “The blessings are in the heavenly places,” which means you'll enjoy them in heaven. You'll enjoy them in this life and you can enjoy them primarily in heaven. And then in verse 4, he says, “They are predestined for you. God chose them ahead of time.” Then, if you notice in verse 5, he mentions the first blessing in the list: “In love He predestined us to adoption.”

Starting in verse 5, Paul is going to list blessings one by one in Ephesians chapter one. The first one he starts off with (maybe the greatest one of all) is the blessing of adoption, which is what we're going to talk about today.

J.I. Packer says that, “Adoption is the highest privilege in the Gospel because the trader is forgiven, brought in for supper and then given the family name.” Isn't that amazing? Paul is saying that this is what happens to you when God saves you; this is what happens when you believe: God gives you the family name, which is what I want to talk to you about this morning. One of the greatest ways to battle your depression is to remember the standing God has given you in Christ. He's adopted you. You have the family name now. Let's talk about that this morning.

If you're taking notes in Ephesians 1:5, we're going to look at three aspects to the blessing of adoption. That's our outline for today. That's what we're going to discuss. In Ephesians 1:5, we're going to look at three aspects to the blessing of adoption. Paul begins to spell out our blessings one by one and he starts with the miracle of adoption, which means you've been brought into God's family. That's what adoption means. It means God has made you a member of His family. You're one of His children now. You belong to Him.

I don't know if anyone here today has been adopted. My wife and I adopted our children. We'll talk about that in a moment. But the idea is you bring them in from the outside, which is a special thing. The Bible says God has done that with His family, with us, so you don't have to be depressed now. You don't have to be discouraged. You are part of the family of God.

Let's talk about that with three aspects to our adoption. The first one is that we are predestined to it. Like we talked about a little bit last time, the first aspect to our adoption that we read about in this passage is that we've been predestined to it. In the first century, in order for a parent to adopt a child, they had to predestine him or her. They had to choose the child ahead of time. The child didn't choose the parent. That's just not the way it was done. It's not done that way today. The child didn't look at a list of adults and say, "I want that one." No, it was actually the other way around - the parent chose the child.

If you read in verses 4 through 5 it says, "In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself." In Greek, it comes from two words "pro" – before, and "orizo" - to decide. It means "to decide something beforehand" or "choose it ahead of time," and the idea is that this is when God decided to adopt us. This is when He decided to bring us into His family: ahead of time. If you look up above this in verse 4, it says, "Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world." The word "before" is a time sensitive word there. It means God chose us before the world was created.

Now, some people hear a doctrine like that and get offended by it. But I want you to understand that's not Paul's intention here. He doesn't mean any offense. He's not trying to make you angry. He's simply trying to give you confidence in your blessings. This is where your blessings come from: they come from God and not from you. This is where your salvation comes from: it comes from His sovereign grace.

If you were explaining salvation to someone, or if I was doing it, I would start in time. I would start with the cross or the empty tomb or something like that, but Paul is writing to a church full of Christians, and he goes back before time to show us that this is all of God. "In love He predestined us." This was a loving act. This was a kind act from the Lord.

Just to give you some background for this, adoption had a very rich history in the first century. It was a very common thing in the ancient world. The Romans did it. The Jews were not really into adoption. They didn't do this, but for the Romans it was very common among them and it was one of the highlights of their society. The Roman Empire was a very dark place. It was evil. Adultery was common, violence was common. The respect for human life was about the lowest it could be, which meant the "power of the father." The father could do anything he wanted to the child. When a child was born, the father by law could kill it, beat it, drown it, or sell it into slavery for life.

To emphasize this, at the child's birth, imagine this, the Romans had a ritual whereby the nurse would place the baby at the father's feet. She would put the child on the ground, and if the father picked him up, it meant

the child was his. He was going to raise him and take him home, make him part of the family. However, if the father stepped over him, if he ignored the child, it meant that he didn't want him, the child was an orphan. At that point, the baby could be adopted. At that point, somebody could take the child to the local authorities and make them a member of their own family, which happened quite often.

There was another process whereby the adoptive father would meet the biological father in court and buy the child...literally buy the kid. The biological dad would name the price, the new dad would pay it, the court would make a note of it, change the child's name and break all ties to the original family.

God had the power of the father, He could have stepped over us, but He didn't. He adopted us. He went down to the courthouse and bought us back from our sin.

In John 8:44, Jesus said something interesting to the Pharisees that shed some light on this. He said, "You are of your father, the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father." In other words, the devil was the Pharisees' father. They were the devil's children. It doesn't mean the devil created them, because Satan can't do that. He has no creative powers. And it doesn't mean they're going to answer to the devil because no one answers to the devil. You answer to God. But it meant that they did the devil's will and in that sense the devil was their father. We were all that way at one time.

If you look down in Ephesians 2:1-2, Paul says, "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air." That's another reference to the devil there - the prince of the power of the air. You walked according to him; you did his desires. Paul doesn't say you are as bad as you could be, but he said you were dead to God. Somebody had to change that. Somebody had to step in and do something to get you off that path, and that is what God did. He didn't buy you back from the devil - that's where the analogy breaks down. That's called Origen's Ransom theory of the atonement, and it's not true. God does not buy you back from the devil, but He does buy you back from sin. He bought you back from your deadness in sins and trespasses.

First John 3:8 says, "The one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil." And that's what Paul is referring to here and he does it by the process of adoption. God went into the courthouse, put money on the table, and He brought you into His original family.

I read a touching story recently about a little boy who kept coming home late from school and staying out past his curfew, until one day, when he came home, nobody said anything. The house was totally silent. And his mother did not rebuke him, his dad didn't say anything. But when he sat down for supper, the boy noticed all he had was bread and water. That was his punishment for the night. Some of you parents may get an idea from that. All he had to eat was a slice of bread and some water. After a few moments of that, the dad started to cry. He took his plate of meat and potatoes and he handed it to the boy and he took the boy's plate of bread, and he took it to himself.

The Lord has done that for us. He has taken our plate, He has taken our place. Paul goes even further in saying that God has made us His sons. He's made us his children. Not only did He trade plates with you, He gave you a place at the table where you didn't belong before. He let you into the house. You were outside the

house, you were lost, dead, and He brought you in. Paul says, He did this in love. No other motive was given here than the fact that He loved us.

And I think that one reason so many of us struggle with depression is because we forget this, don't we? One reason we're so low and struggle with that is because we forget all God has done for us. We think He's left us as orphans. We think he's left us with nothing. We think we're thrown outside the house. I talk to so many Christians who say that, "I feel like God has abandoned me. I don't think He cares anymore. I feel so low." And I have to remind them, "He didn't abandon you, He died for you. He hasn't left you all alone, He has made you part of His family."

And to say this another way, one reason we struggle with depression is because we don't see where the problem lies. The problem is not out here, the problem is in here. The problem is not with others, primarily, in the world and those kinds of things, the problem is in our own heart. I mean Paul is writing from a prison cell and the first thing he thinks to talk about is blessings. I don't know about you guys, if I was in prison, the first thing that come to my mind would not be blessings. I would be writing a letter to get me out of here.

But the reason he's saying this is because the problem is in here. If we're depressed, we blame our husbands for our problems, or we blame our wives, or we blame our kids or our jobs or politics or the economy or whatever - when the Bible says the problem is primarily in our own heart.

In one of his books on the subject, Martin Lloyd Jones says, "The tragic fallacy of the last hundred years has been to think that all man's troubles are due to his environment. And that to change the man, you have nothing to do but change his environment." He says that's a fallacy, that's wrong because it overlooks the fact that it was in paradise that man failed. Do you get that? It was in the garden that Adam sinned when everything was perfect all around him. The problem is not with our environment, the problem is with us. I mean, all the serpent did in the garden was talk. It's all he did. All he did was present options.

And I have to admit when I read those statistics about depression earlier in Canada, I was shocked. I mean that just surprised me because Canada is a nice place. I like it here. It's beautiful, the people are friendly and we have free healthcare and doughnuts on every corner. I mean what's there not to like? I don't know how those two things go together by the way. Free healthcare and ... maybe if you eat enough doughnuts, you need the free health care. There's a conspiracy in there somewhere, I think.

Back to what I was saying, I see the wonderful place we live and I say, "What's the problem? Why are we so low?" The problem is not with our country, the problem is with us in our hearts. We live in a lovely country; we live in a great place. I talk to so many people that come in from the outside and they're blown away with how wonderful this country is. It's a spiritual battle. Now, I don't mean there aren't physical causes to depression because there are. If you have surgery or the doctor puts you on medication or physical things are going on, you can be depressed, you can feel low and that's not your fault. And I don't mean there aren't highs and lows in the Christian life. One thing about the Christian life is it can be very high and very low, but as you grow, it doesn't feel so low as much as you grow. You'll still have highs and lows, but God will get you through it.

My point is that God has done all this stuff in this passage so you don't have to stay low. God has done all of this in Ephesians 1, so you don't have to only have bad days. He's given you a way out of it and the way is to

look up, not to look in. The way is to remember all He has done for you and not to think of yourself. He's adopted you. He's made you a member of His family.

Which leads to another point we're going to talk about this morning, which is a second aspect to our adoption. The first one is that we are predestined to it. God has chosen us in love. He could have stepped over us but he didn't. He could have ignored us and just passed on by, but he decided to adopt us. By the way, I think we all understand this, but God doesn't need you. Do you guys get that? He doesn't have to have you or me, but in love, He did this because that's the kind of God He is.

Which leads to another point Paul brings up here - a second aspect to our adoption - and that is that we are adopted as sons. Not only has He adopted us, but the passage says that God has adopted us as sons. Which means that He has adopted us at the highest level as the highest ranking child of the family. I'll explain that here in just a moment.

But if you read in verses 4 through 5, it says, "Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons."

I want to draw your attention to that word because it's one of those words or phrases we often read in the Bible and we just overlook it. But the term "sons" here is an important one because it's not a term of sex as much as it is of status in the first century. It doesn't refer to gender - it does refer to gender, but not that as much as it refers to position. Sons were the only children who had a position in the family. They were the only ones who got an inheritance. The ancient world, like I just told you, it's very dark, and daughters often got nothing. They had no inheritance or very little. It all passed through the male child. Now, Paul's not approving of that here. He's just using it as an illustration.

One Bible dictionary said it this way, it said,

In the first century world, if a person died leaving sons, the sons inherited his property in equal parts. Daughters were provided with dowries, but they did not keep them. The dowries went back to the remaining male heirs in case the daughter was childless or divorced after marriage. If a man had no son, he usually adopted one to continue the family (that's why the process of adoption was used). And if he had daughters, he would marry them to the adopted son, in which case the share of the inheritance would fall to her, but only through him.

You see the idea there? The point is that this went through him. She did not get anything. The inheritance came through the son. Paul uses this here as an illustration to say God has made you sons, not by sex, but by status. He's given you an inheritance. You don't come into the family as a second-ranking member. You don't come into the family as someone who doesn't get it all. You get it all, you get everything.

I don't know how old everyone is here in the room, but if you're at the end of your life and you become a Christian, you get everything at that moment. I don't know what you've done in your former life, but if you trust in Christ today, you get all of this now. That's the idea here.

Just as an example of this, my wife and I adopted our two little boys several years ago in the States. They were not born to us. We adopted them and brought them into our home. I can't even tell you how much joy

we get from them even when they break stuff (and they break a lot of stuff). They come over to your guys' house, I tell you we have church insurance. If they break something, it's covered, it's fine.

But we didn't do it through the Roman system (praise the Lord). Nobody put a baby at my feet or anything like that. I'm so thankful. That would be really weird. But we did it through an adoption agency that did several things for us like background checks and setting up the meeting with the birth mom. After we brought our children home, the state of Indiana where we adopted them in the States, sent us a letter- a "Decree of Adoption" as it is called- that said the following:

Jeremy and Katie Cagle shall hereafter occupy the same position towards Jeremiah and Jason as they would occupy as their natural father and mother. And the boys shall, for all intents and purposes be considered their natural children, and shall be entitled to the same rights and privileges to which they would be entitled to if they were natural children.

If you notice, you see the word "natural" several times in that document to say that, "These children belong in your family and you are to treat them that way," which we were happy to do. That's exactly what we wanted to do. Paul says that God does the same thing with us. He does the same thing when He adopts us. He treats us as natural children. He treats us as if we had never sinned at all. We're brought in at the highest level, we're given the highest ranking member: a child of the family. Our inheritance doesn't pass through someone else, it doesn't go through other hands, it goes straight to us.

I think some Christians come into the Christian faith and they think they're like stepchildren or something. They think, "I can be saved, I can be in the family, but I'm not where everybody else is." Paul says that you are exactly where everybody else is. They come in and say, "Well, maybe I can be part of the family if I just do X, Y, and Z. If I just go to church a hundred times or give \$1,000 away." Paul says, "You come in immediately and you're a son right away." Which is another reason you shouldn't be depressed, you shouldn't be discouraged because God has given you this as well.

Charles Spurgeon said, "If you're not in hell, then everything is mercy." Amen? "And if you're a pardoned sinner, then you have no reason to complain, and you have more than just being a pardoned sinner - you're a son." Jesus was the perfect Son of God, He's made you sons.

As I mentioned my boys a moment ago, they're pretty young; three and five years old. But I love that age because if they're depressed about something, I can fix it right away. Candy, right away. Toys, you know, if it's really bad, I give them a root beer float, which is disgusting. Those things taste like a burnt Tootsie roll, but they like them. And Paul says, "God's given you something so much bigger and better than a burnt Tootsie roll. He's given you the rights of sons."

Which leads to one more point to consider this morning, one more aspect to our adoption. The first one is that we are predestined to this. God chose this for us. He could have stepped over us, but He didn't. He could have passed us by and left us as orphans, but He brought us into the family, picked us up off the ground, and took us down to the courthouse. Secondly, the second aspect is that He made us sons. Paul says, "Not only are you adopted, you're adopted at the highest level. You're given the same thing as everyone else in Christ."

Which brings us to one more point to consider this morning. One more aspect to our adoption, and that is this; we're adopted through Jesus Christ, Paul says. We're predestined to adoption, we're adopted as sons, and we're adopted through Jesus Christ, which means that all of this is possible through Him and Him alone. You're not adopted through your good works or your good behavior. God doesn't look down the tunnels of time and pick out the most wonderful people. That's not the idea. This comes through Jesus Christ. If you want to know how to receive all this, you get it through Him.

If you read in verses 4 through 5, it says, "In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself." If you notice the word "through" here, it's a preposition. It's actually the 16th preposition in the sentence. The idea is that as Paul is describing salvation to us as he's describing the blessings of the Christian life. He's stretching the boundaries of language to do it. He's searching for words and he turns to prepositions and he just fires them off one after another.

And this one here, the word "through" is a preposition of entrance or motion. In other words, when you go through something, you enter into it. When you go through a door, you enter into a room. When you go through a town, you enter into the new place, and Paul says, "Through Jesus Christ, you enter into a new relationship with God. You are adopted. He's the door that opens all this for you. Through Him, you get a new position with the Father. Before you were dead, before you were lost, before you were enslaved - through Him, you're a son now."

Five references to Christ are here in this passage to show you the importance of Christ. You see His name in verse 3, verse 4, and verse 5, over and over and over again, because this is all about Him. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus made it possible for you to be a child of God. You couldn't have all this stuff without Him, that's not possible. But through Him, all of this is yours now.

To explain that a little bit, Jesus was the perfect Son of God. He had a perfect relationship with the Father. Throughout all eternity past, He never sinned, never broke the law, never did anything wrong. And on the cross, He offered to take your place. On the cross, He was beaten and bruised and crucified so you wouldn't have to be...so He could take Your sin on Himself, pay the price of it, and give you all of this.

Athanasius in the fourth century said, "He, Jesus, became what we are so that we might become what He is. He became a man so that we might become right with God." Jesus was right with God, He became one of us, so we might be right with God, and become a member of His family.

I was talking with someone the other day, actually yesterday, we were talking about some denominations that deny that Jesus was the Son of God. Well, the question comes up, if that's the case, who died on the cross? Just another man? What good is that? Another man is a sinner. Another man has broken the law. That doesn't help you. You need the perfect Son of God to die in your place, and you have it.

And so the question you have to answer this morning is do you believe that? Do you understand what this means? Have you passed through the Saviour? Have you walked through that door? Some people get hung up on the word "predestination" and they worry about what all that means. But let's just backtrack, Paul says, "Through Christ, you have all of this, so have you come through Christ." If you have passed through the Saviour, does it help you to get out of bed in the morning? Does it help you to fight your depression? Does it help you to have joy? It should. That's why Paul puts it in here. Paul's writing from prison. He's

writing from a dark place and he's giving you all of this so that you can come into the light. Is it helping you to do that?

It's been said that Jesus rose from the dead so you can rise from the bed. Amen? He rose from the tomb so you can rise in the morning. Is He helping you to do that?

The Jews have a tradition that says that when Satan was thrown out of heaven, the demons asked him, "What do you miss the most about that place?" And he said he missed the singing. He missed the joy because there is no joy in hell. There's nothing to sing about...nobody sings there.

I don't know if some of you feel like that this morning. If some of you feel like you have nothing to sing about because you feel like you have no joy. If that's the case, I want to encourage you, you have joy all throughout this passage. You have something to sing about over and over and over again in the book of Ephesians. You can't defeat depression on your own, but you can defeat it through Him. You can't get over it yourself, but you can get over it through Jesus Christ. He will carry you through it and you can trust in Him today. Let me pray for you that you would and the Lord would bring you up out of the pit if you're there.

Father, we thank you Lord for the words of Paul here in the book of Ephesians. And I don't know where all my brothers and sisters are at this morning with discouragement. We talked about discouragement today. There's lots of applications we can make to a chapter like this one. But one of those is just the overwhelming sense of joy we read as we encounter this passage.

Lord, I pray that our church would have that this morning. I pray we would walk away from this place with a sense of joy of what you have done for us freely through Christ. What god in human history has done all of this for his people? What god of the Greeks or the Romans or the false religions today would do this - bring us into his family, through the death of his son? Lord, you are an amazing, amazing God, and we worship you this morning for that. We thank you for what all we have in Christ.

If there is anyone here today who has not come through Christ, I pray, Lord, this would remind them of what they're missing. I pray this passage would just remind them of what they don't have, and they would come to the Saviour this morning and be saved and become a child of God.

Thank you, Lord, for what we've read this morning. We look forward to learning more from Your wonderful Word next week, and we pray this all in Jesus' name, amen.