The Great Adoption

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Preacher: Tyler Neighbors

[0:00] If you have your Bibles, go ahead and turn to Exodus chapter 2, verses 1-10.

Hold your place there for a while as the kids are leaving for Children's Church. Thank you, Edgar, for your prayer. As many of you know, this is an issue that is very close to my heart.
And it's a blessing that I get to be able to stand up here and talk about the biblical foundations of adoption. And the adoptions that we still see in Christ Jesus even to this day.
One of the biggest issues that we highlight on a day like today, which is Sanctity of Human Life Day, is the issue of our culture trying to place a value on human life.
And culture has fallen drastically short of fixing that value because we already have a fixed value in being created in the image of God.
[1:14] It is an incalculable value that you cannot put a worth on. Now, unfortunately, in our culture's desire to define a value for human life, it has led to a string of depravity in our society that can only be redeemed through Jesus.

So I said this earlier, my greatest hope is that from today is that you don't hear me trying to push for a certain political movement, that you don't hear me saying we need to go up to the Capitol and demand new legislation.
That's not the answer to our problem. The answer to our problem is Jesus. Because at the root of this, it is a sin problem. Now, society will tell you that the value of life is strictly circumstantial.
What determines the value of life? Some will say, well, the family made the best choice for their financial situation. Talking about the issue of abortion here.
Well, the pregnancy wasn't planned. I'm too young to have a child. A child is going to be born with a disability. Or the famous phrase that we hear so often, my body, my choice.
[2:36] Regardless of how or when life was conceived, regardless of the circumstances that might have surrounded that conception, circumstances do not determine the value of human life.

But in the all about me culture, it is our feelings and our circumstances that are going to determine morality. That is what is being pushed.
According to God's word, though, which is the authority that we all stand on, a life in the womb is already being knit together in the image of God by his sovereign hand for his glorious purpose.
Even before time began, one of the passages that we're going to read today, even before the foundations of the world, Paul says that God had already predestined us to be adopted for his glorious purpose and to show his grace.
So your circumstances, they are not the determining factor if you are trying to figure out what your value is, nor is the stage of life, whether you are still in the womb or you're days away from the tomb.
[3:46] Your value is fixed because of the image that you were created in, which is God's image. You've been made by God and you have been made to be loved by him and enjoy him forever.

Unfortunately, this cultural push for convenience and dodging the consequences of personal choices, that's really what a lot of this amounts to, has made abortion the hot topic.
It's made it one of the defining platforms in every election that we see. And people believe that Roe v. Wade, the overturning of that, that that was a major victory for pro-lifers.
And while I can tell you that this was a victory for states' rights and it has allowed states like Oklahoma to be a safe haven for children that are still in the womb, it was not a complete victory for life.
You can still go across state lines to get abortions. You can still order your abortion pills online to be delivered to your house. Depending on what company you work for, they'll even pay for you to go across state lines to get your abortion or as culture has decided to call it, your medical care.

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[5:00] For me, the overturning of Roe v. Wade has really shined a spotlight on the bigger problem that we have in the U.S. and in the world today. There is no love for life because there is no love for the author of life.

When a world rejects God, when a world openly rejects God, you cannot expect them, you cannot force them, and you cannot legislate them to value the things that are made by Him or in His image. Now, if you're here today, and more than likely, there is somebody here that has, but if you are here today and you have had an abortion, maybe you were complicit in the act.
My disdain for abortion should not be equated as a devaluing of you as a person because you also were made in God's image.
You were created to be loved by Him and Christ can redeem. There's no sin that you're going to bring to Him that He's going to say, that's too much for me.
[6:05] No one is beyond the redemption of Christ, no matter what your sin is. Truth is, your gospel story is going to be the exact same as everyone else's. You were made in God's image, you sinned, and Jesus can redeem you.

That is the foundation of the gospel story being played out in everyone's life that calls on the name of the Lord in faith. Now, the world will tell you, as Terry was talking about in his testimony, that there is such a thing as an unwanted pregnancy.
And I'm sorry, this is kind of a long introduction. We will get to Exodus here in just a minute, but I want to say two statements that I believe refute that. Concept of what's called an unwanted pregnancy.
The first is this. There is nothing that happens outside of God's sovereign control. If you are here, it is because God has deemed it so.
Every child that is conceived and yet to be conceived is wanted by God. The second is that there are more people on the adoption waiting list than there are abortions in a year in the United States.
[7:21] In 2023, there were over 500,000 abortions in the United States. And you want to know how many estimated people there are on the adoption waiting list?

Two million. Two million people are waiting to welcome a child into the home. So this concept of an unwanted pregnancy or an unwanted child doesn't exist.
We're going to dive deep into the biblical foundations of adoption this morning. And last year, I preached on a similar issue again on the Sanctity of Human Life Day. And if, again, I want to repeat this same phrase.
If you hear from me today that if you're a Christian that I think you should pursue adoption or at least in the ministry of it, if that's what you're hearing, that's because that's what I'm giving to you. I truly believe that that is the cause of every Christian, that we should all be involved in the adoption, foster care ministry or the ministry to the orphans. And my greatest desire, again, from this morning is that you will see Jesus.
[8:37] If you are here and you are lost, that you have not had a relationship with Christ, my greatest desire is that you would see your need for that today. And if you are a Christian that is here today, my biggest takeaway that I hope that you will leave with is that it's time to get involved in this ministry.

Now, from a biblical perspective, this is our main idea for the sermon today. That God's greatest deliverances are through adoption. So if you would stand with me as we read Exodus chapter 2 verses 1 through 10.
Starting in verse 1, Now a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him three months.
When she could hide him no longer, she took for him a basket made of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the riverbank.
And his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him. Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river while her young woman walked beside the river.
[10:00] She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her servant woman and she took it. When she opened it, she saw the child and behold, the baby was crying. She took pity on him and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children.

Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you? And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go.

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So the girl went and called the child's mother and Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Take this child away and nurse him for me and I will give you your wages. So the woman took the child and nursed him.
When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses because she said, I drew him out of the water.
Y'all can have a seat. This is the word of the Lord. Our first truth that we want to look at today is that God uses adoption to avert disaster.
[11:06] So we've talked about a lot of the reasons why culture says it's a good reason to not carry on with the pregnancy. You know, from economic reasons to not being married to the circumstances of the conception.

But I can guarantee you that none of those reasons include an all-powerful dictator putting a genocidal hit order out on every male baby in the nation.
I mean, talk about circumstances not being ideal for a pregnancy. pregnancy. I've seen lots of people stress over pregnancies that were not considered opportune at the time.
But this mom and dad had a child while the most powerful world leader had legalized the murder of every baby boy amongst the Israelites.
On top of all that, while most parents, you know, they have the privilege of being able to play with their children, delighting in their noises, their coos, and their cries and showing them off to all their friends, this mom and dad had to hide them.
[12:11] He probably never went outside. The crying and all the fun noises, they were quickly hushed for fear that someone would notice and throw this baby into the Nile.

Now, the natural instinct of every loving parent, this is just the baseline instinct of every loving parent, is to keep your children alive. Now, I will say from experiences, your kids get older, that seems to be harder.
But, man, Moses was born into a culture that sought his death. How could God bring about good and his glory from this story?
And in the most unlikely way, you know, God has pieced our family together in a more marvelous way than I could ever imagine. God had such better plans in mind.
And I'm so glad that he did. Through adoption, God has greatly enriched the lives and we are forever blessed because of it. Now, God, in the most unexpected way, he uses adoption in this story to bring about his glory.
[13:31] in desperation, this mother makes a basket or in Hebrew, the word is to bought. I believe that is how you pronounce it. Feel free to correct me afterwards if I didn't pronounce that right.

But this word in Hebrew, it's translated to mean ark. It's the exact same word that was used for Noah's ark when God commanded him to build the ark to save his life.
So when Moses was placed in the water that was meant for his destruction, the ark that his mother had constructed had preserved his life until his new mother, the daughter of the very man that ordered his death, adopted him, raised him as her own so that Moses would one day grow up to be the deliverer of God's people.
God always has a way of turning the worst situations around for his glory. And this time it just happened to be through adoption that God raised up a deliverer for his people.
And you know, this isn't the first time that God or the only time that God has done something like this in his word. If we look back through God's word, were it not for adoption, Esther's cousin Mordecai would never have raised Esther to be the God's God-fearing woman that would one day stand up to the mightiest king on earth and reveal Haman's plot to destroy the Jews while they were in captivity.
[15:00] Through adoption, God raised up another deliverer. Were it not through adoption, Joseph, the father of Jesus, could have decided to walk away, to let Mary be disgraced publicly and probably executed for a perceived act of adultery, but through adoption, Joseph took Jesus as his own.

And again, the greatest deliverer was raised up for God's current people and the future household of faith that he would build. So our worth, church, is not determined by our circumstances.
The reasons children are aborted every year are usually centered around personal problems like we mentioned earlier. and in God's word, we've seen a son born in the midst of a genocide.

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We've seen a daughter brought up during captivity and a virgin who could have faced public shame, but through God's sovereign hand, he has used adoption in a very functional and unexpected way to bring salvation to his people.
Now, this is certainly not the end of this, though. These are all foreshadows of the greatest adoption that God would one day perform. when he would pay the greatest price for our sins so that we could be adopted when we call on his name.
[16:23] Church, adoption is a beautiful thing. I know that you have heard me speak on this before, but adoption can be defined simply as this. You are taking someone that is not your family and you are welcoming them into your family.

You are making them your family. You're not simply inviting them. You're not simply, sending them an invitation. You are legally, intentionally, and purposefully choosing someone and making them your family now.
We'll get to more of what that process looks like later, but first, I want to look at what God has done for us. God has used adoption in the past to bring salvation to his people through deliverance and God is still using adoption today.
This is our second point. God uses adoption to save the lost. God and turn in your Bibles to Ephesians. Chapter 1, verses 3 through 14.
Paul writes this in his letter to the churches at Ephesus. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundations of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.
[17:47] In love, he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace with which he has blessed us in the beloved.

In him, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished on us in all wisdom and insight, making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.
In him, we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.
In him, you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, again, to the praise of his glory.
The great lie that Satan will have us believe is that sin defines us. And there are two types of ways that sin can define us and that culture will seek to put a worth on us with.
[19:20] And that's sins that maybe you have committed in your past. Maybe an addiction or something that you have just lived in for so long. Or maybe it is a sin that has been inflicted upon you.

Trauma. Trauma has a way of defining a person. What I mean is that trauma affects people on a very profound level.
And if it's not dealt with, it will affect every area of your life. the way that you make decisions, the way that you process certain situations. It will change how you relate to people.
And yes, I've even seen it affect how people relate to a sovereign God that they might blame for the trauma that they have been through. We've seen it in our home with children, even though that they have been placed in a new environment because of the trauma that they have lived through.
They have certain behaviors. They have certain ways that they react to situations because that is how they have learned to survive over the years. We've also seen that letting our past vices define us has a way of affecting us as well.
[20:36] When we have lived in sin for so long, Satan will seek to make that a defining trait in our life. And even the world has a way of doing that without even knowing it. You go to any AA meeting where they're talking about their addictions.

They always start with my name is so and so and I'm an alcoholic. Doesn't matter how long you've been sober, how long you've been free from that addiction, you are still claiming that title over yourself to remind you of your past failures.

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And we do this with a lot of vices in our lives. And when we cling to those identities, whether it's past traumas or past mistakes, what we are doing is we are letting those wounds from a sinful world define us and affect the course of our lives.
But in the opening verses of Ephesians, Paul says something different. In Christ, because of what Jesus has done, we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.
We are chosen by him before the foundations of the world. We are called to be holy and blameless. He has predestined us to be adopted to himself as sons.
[21:51] And with that adoption, he has given us a new purpose in life. Through that adoption, we have redemption through the blood that was spilt for our transgressions. We have the riches of his grace.

And the Bible says he hasn't given it to us sparingly either. He has lavished it on us as his children. We have an inheritance that is waiting for us now in eternity. And to seal that hope so that God can always be reminding us of that promise that he has made to us.
He has given us his Holy Spirit. In Galatians, it says he's given us a spirit of adoption that cries out, Abba, Father. Church, we have a vivid picture here of adoption, of how God has saved us.
And it's not about being a better picture of our old selves. It's not about saying, I don't do these things anymore, but I'm still going to cling to them as a title.
God has given us a new identity, a new future, a new hope in Christ through this adoption. Now, Paul uses this metaphor of adoption.
[23:01] I think it's an interesting question to ask why the word adoption isn't really mentioned in the Old Testament and the Hebrew scriptures, although we see examples of it. And I think it's important to look at the culture that Paul was in at that time.

In the Roman culture, which Paul was well acquainted with, adoption was used by the upper class to ensure that there was going to be an heir to their fortune, to their title, to their estate.
So if a guy had a family, but there were no sons, or maybe the son that they had was not seen as confident or able, the upper class Roman family would adopt another son from another family.
Oftentimes they would adopt adults and make them their son so that they could have an heir that would ensure the continuation of that lineage and of their family prosperity.
It was a pricey thing to do as well. The family that was losing the son that was being adopted, they would want compensation for losing their heir too. So this was a financial transaction.
[24:06] It was a legal transition that had to take place. And with that adoption, the child or the adult, depending on who was being adopted, he would gain a new identity.

His life from the past was no longer what held him. If he was adopted out of poverty or wherever he was adopted from, he had a new life. He had a new destination.
He had a new father and a new inheritance that he really did nothing to earn on his own. See, back then, you know, childbirth, and again, this was something that was mentioned earlier, but in the Roman culture, childbirth was often unpredictable.
It was dangerous in many times. If a female was born into the family, sons were the desired child back then. If a female was born into the family, many times this child would be left outside the city to die.
Because again, they wanted heirs. The child that they had was not convenient or conducive to the value that they were looking for in their family. I wish I could say that culture has changed a lot since that time, but it really hasn't.
[25:21] Another reason that I think Paul looks at adoption as an example is for a spiritual reason.

Jesus spoke to this concept of being welcomed into the family of God. If you go to John chapter one, it says this, verses nine through 13.
The true light, which gives light to everyone, has come into the world. He was in the world and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own and his own people did not receive him.
But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. Who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
Obviously, when John's gospel came out, this was long after Paul's ministry. But the teachings of Christ were still very prevalent in Paul's time, and he did spend a lot of time around the apostles.
[26:26] So Christ has shown his apostles that becoming a child of God is a right that has to be given to us. It's an intentional act of the will on the father's part, and it is received by us through faith

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in Jesus Christ, his true begotten son that has paid the price for our redemption.

When God makes us part of his family, this is a great thing. When God makes us part of his family, he does not make us second class citizens, second class children. As we have seen from Ephesians, we have all the rights, all the privileges, all the inheritance that the rightful heir Jesus Christ has.
We've been made co-heirs with Christ. Now, what is it that God is adopting us out of, though? You know, a lot of people might think, why do we need this great adoption?
Well, God uses adoption to transfer our citizenship. And this is our third and final point that we're going to look at. He uses adoption to transfer our citizenship. Colossians 1, 13 and 14 says that he has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
So there's a theme in most of Paul's letters of before and after. You were once one way. You used to do these things. You used to live in these sins.
[27:59] But now this is who you are in Christ. You are different now. You are new. You are part of a new kingdom. kingdom. It's just like the Roman adoption that we were talking about.

The child that was adopted has a new identity, a new father, a new inheritance. Which they were co-heirs. Now, here's the beautiful thing about the adoption.
That God does for us, though. Or the Romans adopted out of need because they didn't have a suitable heir. God already had a suitable heir.
His perfect equal son, who is a member of the Trinity. You can't get any better than Jesus as far as a son goes. But God, out of grace, out of mercy, out of love, he has welcomed us into his family to make us co-heirs with his rightful begotten son.
That's good news. Our adoption is a transferring of citizenship from the kingdom of darkness where our sinful nature reigns and we were enemies of God. But now we are part of the kingdom of light.
[29:10] Where we are no longer enemies of God, but we are welcomed as his beloved children.
You know, when we adopted our children, this was not a word and name deal only.

We didn't sign the papers and leave them where they were. We didn't leave them in the system. We didn't send them back to their home where they came from. They became our children.
They have our name. They have all the rights, love and privileges as our naturally born children do.
And when I die one day, whatever I leave behind, it's going to be equally theirs, just like it is.
It are naturally born children. At Christmas, they are just as spoiled, rotten as any other child in our home. And I guarantee I promise you they are spoiled. They just spent a day at Nana and Papa's and we're still trying to undo the damage.
It's a new life for them. In a much better way, when God calls us into his family, the inheritance, the blessings, the love that we have, it is an eternal promise that is not going to wear out.
[30:20] Many people look at adoption and foster care and it scares them. And that's a that's a rational thing.

It is a scary. Venture to go into foster care because you never know what you're going to get. The brokenness that you see in children is real. The scars, the pain, the behaviors that they have that have been inflicted on them.
It's real. And Nicole and I went through this asking questions process, and maybe some of you are, too. You're asking yourself, can I handle this? Can I fix this problem?
And my absolute answer to you is no, you can't fix their problem. Only Jesus has the power to undo the curse that sin has inflicted on these broken lives. Only Jesus can heal their deepest wounds.
And you have been placed as that messenger. to proclaim Christ into their lives, to proclaim the ultimate healing that they need.
[31:23] So no, you don't have the power to heal them. But the one that you represent does and you can speak Jesus into their life. At our former church, we had a we had a family that was very dear to us.

They were foster parents. And they took in a young girl who had a pretty serious medical condition. It's called Marshall Smith syndrome.
It's a condition so rare that there's been no real research done on it. There's only 50 cases that have been reported worldwide. And because of this condition, she will probably not live to be nine years old.

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I've walked with this family through several difficult circumstances. I was there even when they took her off life support.
But God's grace has been sufficient and has carried her through all these times. And she's still here today. She's about five years old. And the family, knowing this background, knowing the brokenness that she was bringing, knowing the eventual pain that was going to come.
[32:44] They still made the decision that she is worth loving. That she is worth giving everything that they can offer to this child in her short time on this planet.

They did adopt her. They had to have the ceremony in the hospital.
The judge came and did it for them. It was a beautiful thing. And it's a beautiful picture of what Christ has done for us. He sees our brokenness.
He sees the way that we have grieved his heavenly father. And the father, knowing the pain that it was going to cost to adopt us, which would be the death of his begotten son, still had mercy and grace and said, I'm going to lavish the riches of my love and mercy on you.
And it will be at a great price. But he loved us enough to do that. He calls us holy and blameless. He leads us into the purpose of God's glory that was planned for us long ago.
[34:01] And it's all through this great adoption that we have been studying this morning. The greatest application that I can think of from the text, from what we've been studying today is that we need to treasure adoption.

We need to treasure adoption. And depending on who you are today that is here in this sanctuary, how this manifests itself in your life is going to look different.
If you are an unbeliever that is here today, someone that has never professed faith in Christ. You have not been adopted into God's family yet.
And my call to you today is this, that there is still a holy and perfect God that is still calling lost children to become his co-heir, to welcome them into his family.
He is still adopting to this day and he might be calling you today. Nicole and I had a girl in our home for about three months. She was a child in the children's ministry at a church that I had moved on from.
[35:21] And after she had left our home, Nicole and I kept in touch with her. She was 11 when she came to us. And even though she was not in our home anymore, she would still come spend holidays with our family.

She even spent a couple of years at the Baptist Children's Home in Owasso. And we got to watch her grow up during those years while she was in DHS custody.
After, as I said, years of being tossed around in the system, her attorney finally decided to push for permanency. And when we found out that that's what was happening, we got in touch with her caseworker and we said, we want her.
We will adopt her. Let her know that we are an option. And the caseworker did. And we got to talk to the young girl.
She was 16 at the time. And we told her. That the other option, by the way, that the attorney was pushing for, it was either us or go back to her father, her abuser, the one that had done nothing to change his circumstances, had done nothing in his plan.
[36:44] So we told this young girl that we will adopt you. You will be our child. You can take our name. You can have a future with our family.

But on the other end of this negotiating table was her father speaking lies to her, making her promises that to this day have not been fulfilled. She said no to us.
She heard our call. She heard our request, our pleas to not go back to this man. She chose to go back because of a lie that was never fulfilled.
I wish I could say that things have ended up well for her. But church. If you are here and you are lost today. The greatest liar, Satan, is telling you that you are fine the way that you are.
That maybe the burden that you bring to Christ is too great. That maybe you're satisfied in the life that you have right now. Maybe you are someone that thinks I'm too broken.
[37:58] There's too much baggage. I can't bring this to Christ. I got to get my life together first.
The adoption price has already been paid. Everything that needs to happen to make you right with the Lord has already been done and it has been paid for through the death of his rightful begotten son.

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You can be adopted today. You can be welcomed into the kingdom of light. And that is my plea to you. If you hear that the father is calling, don't refuse. Please respond in obedience.
He is drawing you today. If he is doing that, please respond. And we'll have a time for that in a minute. If you are a Christian and you are here today.
The application is going to look a little different for you. I think it's pretty easy. To be able to see that adoption is not a plan B for God. He has used adoption in a very profound way in the Old Testament, delivering his children from slavery and death.
And he is still using it today to save us from the eternal consequences of our sin. A loving God who owed us nothing. But the wrath that our sins deserved.
[39:13] But he's welcomed us into his household of faith. So our first response to this, it needs to be gratitude and humility. Humility towards God and towards those that haven't yet received this undeserved gift.

That we did nothing in and of ourselves to earn. And there's a practical response to this too that I want us to walk away with. As I said, unfortunately in our culture today and in many of our churches, adoption is seen as a plan B option.
Church, some of the most hurtful things have been said to us by well-meaning Christians. Through the adoption process.
And even after we had adopted Skylar and Nicole was pregnant with Titus, things were said to us like, Happy Father's Day for real this time.
Or, you're going to bond with your son so much more than your daughter. They said this right in front of her. Or my favorite is, Trust me, it's just different.
[40:32] Having had kids both ways, I can tell you with full assurance there is no difference. When I held Titus and Ruby for the first time, when I told the judge, Yes, they are mine now.

The pride and joy in both circumstances was indescribable. Church, God has done great things through adoption. And the Bible, it is a picture of what he is still doing when he welcomes new people into his family.
And when we welcome a child into our home, when we take up the cause of the orphans, we are living out that image in our lives. Now, it's not my goal to convince you that if you have not adopted, that you're living in sin.
That's not what I'm trying to say. So please, don't take that away from my sermon. But if you are a Christian, and I do want to encourage you with this, if you are a Christian and considering adoption, my first response to you is this, Yes, do it.
Jump both feet in, we'll think about it later, get the process started. It is a worthwhile endeavor. It is a picture of what Christ has done for us. And it will just richly bless your life forever.
[41:51] It's not a plan B. It wasn't a plan B for God with us or with anything else he did in the Bible. There are children in this world. There are children in this very county that need a home.

And the call to reach out to the least of these has been given to us as God's children, as those that have been adopted. My word of warning is also this.
If we will not take up the cause for adoption, there is a lost world that already has. There are plenty of people out there living an alternative lifestyle that does not match up with God's plan for marriage that have found adoption to be a very favorable way to rear children in this world, to raise them in an image that is contrary to the image they were created in.
So if you're wondering if somebody else will take up the cause, my answer is yes, somebody else already has. And we as a church need to take it back. Christian adoption agencies are even under attack with lawsuits because they seek to adopt out to nuclear families that fit the biblical family model.
They're being sued for discrimination and shut down because, again, that does not fit the world's narrative that wants these children. For some, maybe your ministry towards foster care and adoption or the orphans, maybe it's something else.
[43:23] Maybe you are in a position where you can't welcome a child into your home. Maybe you're somebody that needs to provide material support, prayer support, moral support, maybe babysit every now and then or something.

There are all sorts of ways that you can contribute to the case of the orphans. That's why we brought someone like Terry here today. His firsthand knowledge of how the Baptist Convention is doing that.

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He would be happy to tell you how you could contribute. But I can honestly tell you there is no better place to take in foster children to adopt than the local church.
When we would get calls, we would have children dropped off at our house within a couple of hours. We'd have to pick them up at gas stations, fast food restaurants, you name it.
If we got called, we had to be there to get those children. But every step of the way when we were at our church at First Baptist Prague, they were there. Leaving clothes on our porch, leaving gift cards in our mailbox, bringing food by our house, leaving off beds and mattresses for these kids to sleep on.
[44:36] And more importantly than all these things, they would love these children the way that Christ wants them to be loved. So much healing took place in the lives of our daughters and other children that were in our home because men and women of God were the hands and feet of Christ in their lives.

So if you have any interest in adoption, my encouragement to you is to pursue it. If you're wanting to know other ways that you can contribute, talk to Terry.
There's several of us in here that have fostered before. We'd be happy to tell you how you can help the case of the orphans in our community. but it's something that we are called to do as those that have been adopted through the grace of Christ.
And my final plea is this. If you are here and you are lost today, God has already paid your adoption price. And if he is reaching into your heart today and calling you, respond.
Become part of the family of God today. We're going to pray and we'll have a moment to respond if that is you today, please don't wait.
[45:48] Respond today. Catch us after the service. Come and talk to us. Let's pray. Father, we thank you that in your grace that you have called us to be your children.

Lord, we didn't deserve to become part of the family of faith. you didn't need us as heirs. Lord, you've already had a perfect son, but still through the death of your truly begotten son, you chose to bring us into your family of faith through adoption.
Lord, we thank you and we praise you for that. My prayer for every Christian here today is that they would treasure that adoption that they have in you. Lord, that the treasuring of that adoption would lead to action on behalf of the orphans that are amongst us in our community, in our county, in our state, worldwide.
Lord, that this would lead to action on their part. Lord, we thank you for the gift of the church that we can be your hands and feet. Lord, that we can see the brokenness of the world and Lord, that we can proclaim Christ into those circumstances because Lord, it is through your truth, through your son, Jesus, that they can be healed, that they can be loved.
Lord, and Lord, I pray that we would be your messengers to those that are living in darkness right now, to those that have yet to be redeemed.
[47:22] Lord, I pray that if there is somebody here today that does not have a relationship with you, that is still living in darkness, Lord, that they would see what you have done for them so that they can become your adopted children.

Lord, that they would feel your call on their lives. Lord, that you would draw them to yourself and that they would become new creations in you as children that you have called holy and famous.
I pray for all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

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