

II Advent

“Christmas - Jesus, The Son”

Exodus 4:21-23, Matthew 2:13-14

Now as the children are dismissed for children's worship, please turn in your scriptures. We have two texts today, so you're going to need to put one finger in Exodus and one finger in the book of Matthew. So we'll be in Exodus chapter four, verses twenty one to twenty three. Grab that, put a bookmark in there, put your ribbon in there, and then also turn to Matthew chapter two, verses thirteen to fourteen. We continue in our series in advent where we're drawing out major themes, major threads of Scripture that we don't just look at the event of Christmas itself, but rather how Christmas is really and truly a culmination of God's plan to save humanity and restore the earth over the course of all of history. So we start in Exodus chapter four, verse twenty one to twenty three.

And the Lord said to Moses, when you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh. All the miracles that I have put in your power, I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go. Then you shall say to Pharaoh, thus says the Lord, Israel is my firstborn son. And I say to you, let my son go, that he may serve me. But if you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son.

Now we turn to Matthew, chapter two. This is the event immediately following the wise men visiting Christ, and they are actually the they in this story, as we're about the beginning, as they are departing, this next event happens.

Now when they, the wise men, had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, rise! Take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt and remained there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child to destroy him. And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet out of Egypt I called my son.

This is the word of the Lord. Let's be seated, please.

Now, as I said, we are this Advent series looking at the big strands, the big movements of redemptive history and showing how they all reach this culmination point in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, in the coming of Christ the Son. And so we read this story from Matthew. Now, technically, this is not a Christmas story. This is this text in Matthew is kind of Christmas adjacent. Okay. And it's really the aftermath of the Christmas story. And yet it tells us something about Christ that reframes how we understand the birth and what it means for Christ to come as the son.

So I want to look at this question. What does this mean? Christians say this regularly. We talk about Jesus being the son. What do we mean by that? I think we kind of say, well, it's obvious, isn't it? Don't we? And we know it means that he's God. And yes, that's true. And we'll come back to that in a minute. But I want to point out that that's actually not the first meaning for the idea of the Son in Scripture. And so to understand this, we need to go back. We need to scroll back into the Old Testament and look and see where this this theme, this thread of the son and really an expectation of the son comes from. And to do that, we have to understand something about covenants. And so that takes us back to Exodus chapter four. Okay. And so the first thing we have to understand is this to understand how Jesus is the son. We have to understand how covenants make families. Okay, covenants make families. You may remember when we talked about marriage a couple of weeks ago in Ephesians. I talked about how there's really two major metaphors that's used to explain the covenants of the Bible, and that is they're both family metaphors. One is the husband and the wife, and one is the father and the son. Okay, so as a matter of fact, this is something important. Some of you this kind of clicked when we were talking about this a couple of weeks ago. All of the men here in this church, if you are in Christ, guess what that means? That means you are also a bride of Christ. Okay men, you are all a bride of Christ and yet ready all of you women here If you are in Christ by faith, that means that you are also Son of God through covenant. Okay, so this challenges both of us in terms of the metaphors here. Okay, men, you are metaphorically, you are typological. You are spiritually bride of Christ women, you are typologically, spiritually, metaphorically, um, Son of God. But what? What does that mean? And we have to understand

covenants to understand that. So what is the covenant then? If we want to understand how we are sons, how we are bride?

Okay. If we want to understand that, then how do we understand it? We have to understand covenants. And what we see in the scriptures is that from a very early point, all the way back in the garden, when God made humanity in his image, part of the reason for making humanity was because God wanted to be in relationship with humanity. I don't want to say that's the only reason. And yet, for us as humans, we have to remember as we image the God, as we image the Creator God, we are imaging him and he is a relational God. And so are we made relational and he wants to be in relationship with us. But God sets aside from the very early point exactly how he will be in relationship with us. And we call those relationships covenants. Okay, covenants. They are binding. They are created by God. He affirms them. He binds us to himself. He binds himself to us. And then he brings about the fruition of the covenants. That's what it means to be in a covenant in the Scripture. Notice actually what happens here. Moses doesn't explain. He doesn't haven't even explained to him why it is that he should tell Pharaoh. Israel is my firstborn son. Moses already understands the context of it. It's not immediately clear to us. And yet, as we look across Scripture, it starts to become clear. What does it mean for Israel to be first born son? It means that Israel is the people of God that God has set aside through covenant to bring redemption to the whole world.

Of course, this is going all the way back to his covenant with Abraham, right? Remember in Genesis twelve he promises to Abraham. Kings are going to come out of you. I'm going to make a nation out of you. You're going to have a whole land that is your land. And all of this is the key for us. All of the families of the earth will be blessed through you. You see, God sets Israel aside. But it was never just for Israel. It was so that all of the families of the earth might be blessed. As a matter of fact, that's the conceit behind the Exodus. Yes, it's that the people are crying out to the Lord. And yet what does the Lord say? What does it say? In Exodus two, the Lord heard their cries, and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He hears the cries. But they're not just cries. He's not just showing sympathy towards people. He's hearing the cries of his son and he's responding.

Now we need to get a couple of things clear. First, about covenants. The first one is this covenants, as I already said, are always made by God. They're unilateral. Okay. You can't find covenants in the Bible where the people of God say, hey, we've got an idea. Lord, why don't we enter into a relationship? And here's what the terms will be, and here's what the blessings will be. That actually doesn't happen in the Bible, because all of the major covenants that we find in the Bible from Adam before the fall to Noah, to Abraham, to Moses, to David, and then in the New Testament, to the New Covenant, all of them are made by God to humanity. He unilaterally makes them. They are his idea. He's the one who sets out the stipulations and the blessings and all the things that we should can encourage, be encouraged by and experienced and expect in the covenant, not us. We receive the covenant that he has laid out for us. The covenants are not our idea. They are God's idea. And this brings us to the second point about the covenant that is key here.

God is the superior party in the covenant. We are the inferior party. God is the greater King. We are the lesser kings. We see this right away in the garden. God makes the earth. He forms and he fills it. Then what does he do? He puts Adam and Eve there and he says, go be little kings. Fill the earth. And what? Subdue it. That language of subduing, having dominion over. That's kingly language. But they can only be kings insofar as they are following the king in heaven who made them?

So you see, God is the greater king. We are the lesser king. We actually see these covenants all over the ancient Near East. This wasn't something that was merely in the Bible, though. Having these relationships between humans and gods like this, we have a laid out, you know, covenant like this, a document, like a constitution. This is, as far as we know, unique to Scripture. And yet we see great kings and lesser kings entering into relationships all the time. And what's interesting is that you'd have the greater king, who's usually some kind of imperial king, and he would come to the lesser king who's on his borderland. And he would say to him, here's the deal. I'm going to make a covenant with you. And they even called them covenants, treaties. And they would come in and say, I'm going to do this. I'll protect you. I'll give you water. When there's when there's drought, I'll give you food when there's famine. I'm going to put garrisons on your borders. And people won't. If they invade you, it'll be like they're invading me. You will pay taxes and you'll send your young men to be in my armies. Okay, but if you don't, I might withdraw my protections. I might withdraw the resources that I send you.

We find these covenants all over the Old Testament. It seemed to be something that was in the air. So much so that I would argue that in Genesis fifteen, when Abraham is about to go into this covenant, remember this and remember he slaughters the animals, and he does it in just the right way and he lays them out. It seems like he knows what's about to happen, because it says a deep darkness in a sleep fell upon him. I think this is the Bible's way. As with Jonah, who passes out in the bottom of the boat when he flees the Lord, or as Adam passes out as the Lord approaches him to take the rib out of his side. This is a way of us seeing Abraham knew what was about to happen a God. Okay, I know it's the God, but for him as he's learning, a God is about to enter into covenant with him and it's overwhelming. You see, even in those ancient Near Eastern treaties, the greater king would say at the end of the treaty, things like this. If they attack you, it'll be like they're attacking me. As a matter of fact, I will be a father to you, and you will be a son to me. And it's a terrible hand to lay a hand to. It's a terrible thing to lay a hand on the Son of God.

So that brings us to Exodus four where Moses is told to send Israel to Pharaoh, who, by the way, if we read Egyptian literature, we know that Pharaoh would have said, you think your Son of God, I'm Son of God now he means it in a different way because Egyptian kings, unlike the other kings of the ancient Near East and the rest of the ancient Near Eastern world, if you died as a king, you'd become a deity. Egyptians were unique, okay, mostly unique in believing that their kings were already deities on earth. And so to have Moses come to Pharaoh, who is both Son of God and God Himself, and say, Israel is my firstborn son, thus saith Yahweh. What does Pharaoh say? He says what you're doing is akin to two kids in a playground having an argument about who's dad can beat up the other one's dad. Okay. And as a matter of fact, that's what happens in Exodus, isn't it? As we look at the plagues and then finally the Red sea event, what we see is Adonai, the Lord conquering the entire Egyptian pantheon of gods on their own home turf. He's going to their own stadium, the stadium of the frogs and the flies and the Nile and the, uh, the livestock and the sun itself in the sky. And what is he doing on each one of these instances? Like Elijah at the top of Mount Carmel, with the priests of Baal having a battle using lightning when Baal is the lightning god. Right? What is he doing in each place on their home turf, in their home stadium? He's blowing them away because they're learning who true God is, and that they ought to never mess with the son of the true God. You see, to understand how Israel is, son, we've got to understand covenants.

But that now raises another question, because as we look at the story of the Old Testament, okay. And this is many ways you'll hear me say this from time to time. This is how the Old Testament works. If you're trying to figure out how's the Bible work, this is how the Old Testament works. It is an account of what happened to the Son of God. Why didn't they succeed? Is it because they kept getting harassed by Egypt? And we actually find, as we read the story? As a matter of fact, no, Egypt wasn't their biggest enemy. Assyria wasn't their biggest enemy. The Lord can turn away Sennacherib like that. Okay, the biggest threat to the Son of God, Israel, is found in themselves. The biggest obstacle to them succeeding in the mission of the son is themselves. As a matter of fact, in the Exodus story, we see a perfect example of this, don't we? Here, Israel has just watched their dad beat up the other guy's dad on every in every place, okay? Everywhere. He could beat him up. He won. He beat Amunra, he beat Anubis, he beat all of the major gods and goddesses of Egypt. And now they finally have arrived out in the desert where back in Exodus four, it said, this is what the whole point is for them to come out and worship me, and God comes to meet them on the top of Sinai. And before he can even send the revelation of himself found in the law down to the foot of the mountain, they've already engaged in pagan worship. Okay, as soon as they get free. As soon as they get free, they forget the God who called them out. And the Lord. But the Lord gives them mercy, doesn't he?

This is really the story of Israel. Israel has been given everything. They've been given the law. They've been set aside as the sun. They've been given prophets in case they don't understand the law, to help them understand the law over and over and over again, God is showing that even if I give humanity everything, humanity can't save itself. That that is one of the main functions of the Old Testament I can give you. People might say, well, God, we didn't know what you wanted us to do. Okay, here's the law. But God, we didn't have the we didn't have anybody to explain it, like in our own lives and make it practical to bring it down to earth. He goes, okay, here's some prophets, but, Lord, Lord, we didn't have a good king. Okay, here's a king. Okay, but what about when we mess up? How do we get forgiven? Okay, here's the sacrifices. Okay. At every point at the foot of Mount Sinai, as soon as they leave Mount Sinai, the Lord has mercy on them. They go out into the wilderness. He gives them magic bread from the sky. And when they get tired of that, he gives them quail. And if they get thirsty, you can hit a rock in fresh water will spring out of it. And what do they do? They give

into the temptation of returning to Egypt, so they can have the steady meal that is provided to them by their slave masters. But then they get to the land because the Lord still shows mercy to them. They finally get to the land. A land that is really a new Eden. The Lord is saying, let's put you back in Eden. Maybe that's the problem, right? Egypt is too dirty and dusty. I'm going to put you back in Eden. A land flowing with milk and honey that has grapes the size of softballs. Now you'll have success. Just drive out the nations in front of me, and they can't even complete that duty.

You see, at every point along the way, Israel keeps showing how no matter how much you give to us humans, we will not succeed in what the Lord has called us to. You have to be careful not to come down too hard on Israel. I think if we're honest with ourselves and we read these stories, we realize that they are quite practical. They seem quite familiar to us. We too, have seen great victories over enemies, only to find ourselves despairing and depressed. As a matter of fact. I mean, can I tell you this is something pastors talk about. Be careful. If you preach a really great sermon or you have a really great event and a lot of people show up. Be careful. So often a kind of spiritual depression follows it with the temptations to find hope and satisfaction somewhere other than in the Lord.

We all have that temptation. Or when the Lord is providing for you and things are just going along smoothly. Have you ever found yourself just longing for how it used to be before you came to Christ in faith, a kind of desire to go back to those old slave masters because they can give you a steady diet. I had more control over my life, it seemed like back then. And you long for that time before you were a Christian. Or maybe you've been given a really good task to do a really good work of ministry and love and care, and you just can't quite finish it because you get distracted by other stuff. You're also just kind of a little bored with it. Maybe you get lazy. Maybe you're afraid you just can't quite finish the thing the Lord's called you to do. You see, when I see the stories of Israel in the Old Testament, I don't go - How could they? How could they not do the right thing? Right? I know all too well why they fell short, right? So often the story of Israel is the story of ourselves. We see it right there in the very next person to be called son. In the Old Testament, Israel is son because Israel is covenant child of the Lord. But then in the Davidic Covenant, when the Lord says, let me give you a king, let me give you a guy, I'm going to make him a Bible writer. He's going to write Psalms. He's going to be a man after my own heart. I'm going to tell him. I'm going to promise him that I'll be with him till the end of the age and with all of his sons.

Notice we even get the father son language here in second Samuel seven, after the Lord has set aside David to be his king. Look at what he says. I will be to him a father. This is just like those ancient near Eastern treaties. This is just like what we see elsewhere in Scripture. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. And when he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the son of men. But I will never, ever forsake him, says the Lord to David and his son. And yet immediately afterwards, what does David do? He starts to get bored with military service. He starts to stay home when the king should be out in the field, he starts to have dalliances with his soldiers wives who are left at home, including Uriah the Hittite. Notice, by the way, righteous, loyal Uriah the Hittite, not even an Israelite, but rather a sojourner who's come in, who's converted into Israel. And David takes his wife in an adulterous relationship and then arranges to have her faithful, loyal husband who's acting like a king, not like David to have him killed. Thus beginning a cycle of sexual sin and death of a son that continues on to Amnon, his son, then onto Absalom his son, and then into kings. The Book of Kings with Adonijah. This loss of a son due to the previous sexual sin. You go. David, what were you doing? And yet, at the same time, we can kind of relate, can't we? You've been giving it all. You've been told the Lord will be with you, and so you just get complacent. This is how the Old Testament works. That in each covenant, Israel, even the best of them, like David or Solomon, each one, each son, falls short of the covenant that God has made with them. And that's where we learn. We don't need just any son. We need the eternally begotten son.

That brings us to Matthew two. Now Matthew is a gospel writer, isn't like the other gospel writers, is he? If you've read all the Gospels, you know they all have their kind of their own, uh, feel they're all giving off their own interests, their own focal points. You know, Mark is kind of the just the facts, ma'am kind of reporter. Luke is the physician. You know, he's kind of the erudite, has a Gentile audience in mind. John is a theologian sitting at the end saying, okay, well, let me tell you how. Let me tell you how I saw it happen. Okay. And then you've got Matthew. And what is Matthew doing? Matthew is taking the Old Testament and showing how it inevitably ends in the Christmas story and the Easter story. Okay. Matthew is writing probably to a Jewish audience who already knows the Old Testament, but in doing so, he's giving away the truth. And this is that

the Old Testament is a Christian book. The Old Testament is a book about Messiah. I sometimes hear Christians say, well, the Old Testament is the Jewish Bible and the New Testament is the Christian Bible. Don't ever say that around an apostle like Matthew. He'd say, are you serious? The Old Testament is the book about the son. The Old Testament is a book about Messiah. As a matter of fact, you don't even know who Messiah is. That is Christ unless you go back to the Old Testament. And so Matthew is opening up and telling the story about Jesus in light of the Old Testament. And notice how he tells the story about Jesus's family fleeing the destruction again of Herod. Egypt now has become a place of refuge because of how the seed of the serpent has laid hold of the Judahite king, King Herod. And so now he goes to Egypt. But let's listen to how Matthew says it.

He says he went to Egypt and then he came out of Egypt. The son came out of Egypt. He cites Hosea eleven one, the prophet who's reminding us of the Exodus in order to tell us what the restoration will look like. But notice what he says. Matthew is telling his Israelite audience he walked the path with us. He did the walk that we did. He came out of Egypt like we did. And if you can continue reading in Matthew, he goes on, he says, he came out of Egypt. And some people say, well, obviously Matthew doesn't understand how the Old Testament works because it's Israel who came out of Egypt. And look what happens next in Matthew's account. He came out of Egypt and then he goes through the waters. You know, Paul calls the Red Sea event. He calls it the baptism. Okay. In first Corinthians ten he says, all of our fathers were baptized in the water and the cloud talking about the Red Sea. Notice how Matthew, using the same theology, says, the son came out of Egypt. He went through his baptism. When he emerges on the other side, what does the Lord say of the son? When Jesus emerges out of the waters, he says, this is my son. If you could put italics on Greek, okay, if you could take that old text and you could hear the tone, they're saying, I'm convinced he's saying this. This is my son. Who? I believe this is my son. What happens then? He comes out just like us. He came out of the water and he goes into the desert for forty periods of time. But he succeeds where we failed. He resists the temptation. He doesn't long to go back to Egypt, but rather he goes boldly into Israel, declaring what? Repent and believe the kingdom of God is at hand. End. He did the Exodus. He did the wandering. He did the conquest. He walked in our footsteps. Matthew saying, here is the son.

You see, Jesus fulfills the promise of Old Testament Israel. Jesus is what Old Testament Israel was supposed to be. Now, I want to be clear about this for you. For you literary minded folks, let me just say this in two ways, okay? Jesus is a fulfillment of the metaphor of Israel. That's true. We could say metaphor is like Israel is like a picture or a metaphor, and Jesus fulfills that metaphor. But I just want to be clear. He's not just a fulfillment of a metaphor. He is the righteous Israelite. He's the one Moses was looking for, the one who would finally hear the law and obey it, the one who would finally run the race and get the inheritance, the one who would finally give true, faithful worship before the Lord without having a divided heart, but with love the Lord his God with all of his heart and his soul and his strength. A man truly after God's own heart. We finally have him here to receive the inheritance of Israel. That's why Matthew and Luke are so interested in genealogies. They want to show us Jesus isn't just a guy who did it right. He's in the line of Abraham. He's in the line of Moses. He's in the line of David. Okay? He is the culmination of Israel running the race, receiving the award, the covenantal blessings of the father. And yet Jesus is also so much more as a son. Okay. What we've been talking about right now is how Jesus is the son as a human covenant partner with the Lord.

Remember, covenants make families. God has entered into a relationship with humanity. Jesus is the faithful human covenant partner. So we can say Jesus is Son in the sense that he is the faithful human covenant partner with the Lord. But we can also say more, can't we? And this is what we usually mean when we say Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus is actually divinity, right? Jesus is God. He's not just someone who is made a son through the covenant contract, but rather he is naturally son as second person of the Trinity. So in his divinity he is son. And that's what we mean when we say eternally begotten, not made. Israel is made okay. Jesus is not made. He is the eternally begotten son in his divinity. He is son, and in his humanity he is his Son. And it's important that we recognize that he is both because he is so much more than just a faithful Israelite, and it's because of that relationship that we too can be called sons of God. If we are in Christ, we are in the son. If we are in Christ by faith, we are now adopted. We are made sons, and we get all of the full benefits of sonship.

So I want to talk just briefly here as we close about three ways that this new status of sonship really does just transform everything. It transforms everything. It transforms first of all, how's this for a small first point, it

transforms our relationship in our understanding of the cosmos itself. If you've received the status of a son, you have been adopted as a son. Then your sonship transforms your status within the universe.

To illustrate this, let me just do a little imagination game. Imagine how you would actually live your life, how you would wrestle with the problems that you would face, that you're facing in life, how you would struggle with your insecurities, how you would deal with your cares and your concerns and your failures. If you really did believe that you were Son of God, if you really did believe that the Creator God who's made everything and yes, that includes all of the other things you think would really make you happy right now. The one who made that is your father, and he loves to give to you generously. Imagine how that would change and just reframe everything, including your own failures. Imagine that when you repent, you're not coming to God and he's responding to you as if he's like a scold. Right? Here you come again. There's Scott, there's Scott. With all of his stuff. Keeps messing up. Okay? Okay. Jesus, I hear you. I'll forgive him. Imagine if it's not like that. Imagine that when you come back after your failures and that that imperishable seed of faith blossoms again, and you repent, and you come back to him, and the door opens as you enter into the heavenlies. He runs out to you like that father in the prodigal Son story, and he hugs you. And while he's gripping you close to his chest, he turns his head and says, kill the fattened calf, the son's back. That there's not even a doubt about his love for you at any moment. Imagine. Imagine if the God of the universe felt that way about you, how that would change the way you live. Apostle Paul puts it this way in Galatians. He says, don't you know you are sons God has sent? It's not just kind of intellectually. God has sent a spirit of sonship in you so that, like Jesus, you can say ABBA. And then he translates it for us. Pater ABBA, father, and talk to God that way. ABBA, father. Remember how Jesus tells us to pray in the Lord's Prayer? Does he say pray like this? Okay, dear Father of Jesus, hallowed be your name. You notice he doesn't say that. What does he say? Our father. Okay. Avon. Our father. Hallowed be your name. The same is true here. We can cry out. ABBA, father! So you says Paul, are no longer a slave, but a son. And if a son, then you're an heir. If you are in Christ by faith, that means you have received a spirit of sonship. You are now a son. Stop acting like a slave. God receives you as a loving father. He's not a master to rule over you with scolding and anger and disapproval. He is a father who loves you and loves to welcome you back in your repentance. So live like a son.

So firstly, it transforms our relationship to the universe.

Secondly, it transforms our relationship to other believers. Okay. It means that when we are in a crowd like this and you're surrounded by all these people, even looking around during the service, right? You can't stare at the pastor all the time. You can't look at the screen all the time. You're looking around and you're seeing each other. The way that we are made sons transforms our perspective on one another, because we see within each one of us what we see. We see the markings of the father. It's interesting when Paul talks about the church in first Corinthians one, you remember how he describes the church. There's not many wise, not many noble, not many wealthy, not many cool, not many hip, not many popular. Okay, that's the way it's always been. Israel was told God didn't pick you because you're the greatest nation. Lest you think that you somehow earn this status. Moses says God picked you because you were the least of the nations and he just loved you. And that's true of you sons. He didn't pick you because you were the best. He didn't pick you because you were the greatest. Jesus says, I came for the sick. I didn't come for the healthy. I came for the sick. But I love you. You're my sons. I'm bringing you into the family. I have a good friend who moved away far out of the country. I don't see him very much other than every once in a while, like in a decades level basis. But his son lives in the United States, and I see his son a good bit. And when I see him, I see his dad's facial features, and I see his ticks and his personality. And there's something about seeing his son, right? That reminds me of my friend. As a matter of fact, I kind of feel like his son is kind of like my adopted son. Right. And it doesn't matter. It doesn't have to do with who he is or what he does or how good he is at his job. Right. It's just because he's my friend's son. We need to remember that when we are with our brothers and sisters in Christ, we're not here to look for just affinity groups. People who are like us, who we already like, who we already have. You know, we laugh at the same jokes and watch the same shows on Netflix or whatever. That's not the job of the Christian. The Christian is to have your sonship transformed the way you see those around you to be looking for those who maybe aren't like you. I mean, I get it. Briarwood is a wonderful resource. Church. As a matter of fact, you can come in here and you can find a nice place to just sort of live your life, and it can be really comfortable. And, you know, that's great. That's a blessed thing to have good friendships that are old friendships and to be well supported. And yet, let me also encourage you as you come in here on Sunday morning, as you're around the church, look for people you don't know. Look for people who

the only thing you have in common is that you bear the image of the father in heaven, of whom you are a son, right? And it's going to be embarrassing. You're going to say, you know, like big churches are. You're going to say, hey, are you new here? And they're going, no, I've been here for two decades. And you're going to say, okay, well, okay. Sorry, sorry. Just go ahead and deal with the embarrassment. Let me, just let me just give you a blanket absolution of that embarrassment, okay? You're being called to go out and do this. Find those you don't know. Say hi to them. Invite them in. Ask them. Hey, are you in a congregational community? Would you like to be in one? We have great ministries here. We've got the ballet, we've got the school, we've got campus outreach ministries that are dedicated to going out and serving the area around us, bringing in sons and discipling them so that they might grow in the knowledge and love of Christ and interesting and unique ways. Campus outreach is a great example of that. A ministry out of this church started, and coming out of this church that is evangelizing and discipling college students, drawing them in to the kingdom looking for sons. They're out there looking for sons. It's a matter of fact. There's a luncheon right after this service, and I have been told it's an open luncheon. So go down there and find out more about them after this service if you're interested in that. But the point here is this let's exercise our sonship by seeking out one another and showing one another the love that the father has for us.

Lastly, I just want to end with this sonship transforms our expectations about the future. You see on that first Christmas that we are anticipating in this advent season, on that first Christmas when God became incarnate in the virgin womb. And it was important because he's a real Israelite, he's a real Son of Israel, a Son of God. When that happened, we got our first glimpse of the future inheritance that awaits us in Christ Jesus. And that is the whole world. You know, when you read the Beatitudes, the sermon on the Mount, it says, blessed are the poor in spirit, and blessed are the meek, and blessed are the peacemakers. Don't say, oh man, I should really work harder at being a peacemaker so I can get that. What Jesus is laying out for you are the characteristics of being a son. And what do they get? They get it all. They get his kingdom. They get peace and victory. They get the whole earth right. That's what the Beatitudes are offering us, because that is what is offered the son. And if you are in him by faith, you to receive that great cosmic inheritance. There was a kind of movement over the last twenty years that's been here at Briarwood as well, has kind of work, theology, movement, where we've been trying to help people get a better understanding of their jobs and the dignity of the job that they have and what it means to work not just to make money, but to actually have meaning in your work, whether you whether you're, you know, working on an assembly line or you're the mayor of a town or a governor or in the military or a plumber, whatever you're doing, how do you find dignity in that? And one of the diagnostic questions that people would ask is this if you were, let's say you were to win the lottery. Okay, let me make this work for Briarwood, because none of you are playing the lottery, right? Let's imagine a friend of yours buys you a lottery ticket as a Christmas gift. Somebody at work, they slide it under your door. You can't deny it. It's now yours, okay? And you win. So? So you wake up tomorrow and you've got billions of dollars in your bank account. What do you do in regards to work? Do you still go or are you like, man, I'm out of here. And the work theology movement was trying to say, listen, your work should have value beyond just whether or not you need the money. You should be doing it because you feel a calling to it. And that might be the most mundane job in the world. But there's still a calling and there's a value to it. I want to take that diagnostic, though, and twist it a little bit as we think about the inheritance that we have in Christ.

Okay, let's use that same analysis, though. You wake up in the morning and you've got a billion dollars in your bank account. How is that going to change the way that you relate to those around you? If you go out to eat, you know, you go to get brunch to celebrate with your friend, but they come up short on splitting the bill. You know, they're short five bucks. Are you going to go - Come on, man, you're ripping me off. Are you going to say that with a billion dollars in your bank account? Are you going to come to church and are you going to say, you know, really, does it have to be ten percent? Couldn't it be can we round up like nine percent nine point five? Are you going to do that when you have a billion dollars in your bank account?

You know when somebody is in need, when you hear about a ministry that should be supported, when you hear about mercy that's being given. Are you going to be thinking about how to abundantly bless someone? Or you kind of think about how little what do I need to do to jump through the hoops so that I could say that I had been generous? Right.

You see, your inheritance in Christ is giving you the thing that every billionaire would buy in a second if they could. Life everlasting. You don't die. No death, no disease. You get to live in the constant presence of the glory that you're looking for. When you're going out and buying all those things and trying to get all that

pleasure and all that, that glory you're looking for. When you do that, you're going to get it directly, forever and ever and ever. Okay. That's the thing the billionaires want to buy with their money, and it's already yours in Christ. How does that transform the way that you think about the world around you? Wonder if you actually realize that your life is not a zero sum game. Or rather, to put it in another way, that if you had those billion dollars in your bank account, you could actually just be freely generous with everything because you've got so much more.

See, this is what it means to be a Son of God. This is what it means to be a member of the creator's family. This is what it means to be a recipient of the inheritance alongside Christ. Sonship transforms everything.

Let's close in prayer.

Heavenly father, as we anticipate the coming of the son, Lord, I pray that we would find our hearts lifted, made generous and extravagant as we as we just reflect on the incredible work of redemption that has been accomplished for us on our behalf in Jesus Christ through his birth, his life, his death, his resurrection, conquering Satan, sin and death, and his ascension. Where even now we see the Christmas story is not over because he sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, testifying on our behalf. Lord, bless us. Draw our eyes to you in Christ's name.

Amen.