

CORNERSTONE

DISCIPLESHIP

GROUPS

ALREADY ACCEPTED | PART 3
PASTOR ANDREW BURNS
SUNDAY, AUGUST 9, 2026

Overview

Core Scriptures: Colossians 2:13–15; Genesis 1:26–27; John 5:39–40; John 17:23; Matthew 11:28–30

Overview

Pastor Andrew explored what it means to be not just justified before God, but fully welcomed into His family as sons and daughters. The sermon moves beyond the courtroom language of justification to the deeply personal reality of adoption, identity, and the unconditional love of a heavenly Father.

Main Takeaways

1. Acceptance by God is not earned through performance or striving — it is received by faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross.
2. God did not merely justify us and send us on our way. His heart was always to bring us into His family as sons and daughters.
3. Being created in the image of God means that family relationship was His original design from the beginning, not a backup plan.
4. Jesus referred to Himself as the Son of Man more than 80 times, deliberately identifying Himself as our representative man — the one who acted on behalf of all humanity.
5. God loves you with the same love He has for Jesus, and He is well-pleased with you on that same basis.
6. The motivation behind everything God did through Jesus was love — you are the object of that love.

Discussion Questions

Opening Question

Pastor Andrew began with this question from discipleship groups: When you first heard or were reminded that you are already accepted by God, what was your initial emotional reaction — relief, skepticism, or something else? Share with the group.

Section 1: The Finished Work of the Cross

Colossians 2:13–15 describes the record of charges against us being canceled and nailed to the cross. The sermon emphasized that this was nailed to the man, Christ Jesus — our sin bearer. How does it change your understanding of the cross to think of it in those personal terms rather than as an abstract transaction?

The sermon stated: “There is nothing to add or take away from what Jesus accomplished.” In what areas of your life do you still find yourself trying to add to or earn what Jesus has already secured for you?

Section 2: From Justified to Adopted

Pastor Andrew used the image of an orphan discovering that the judge finalizing the adoption is also the one who wants to love them unconditionally. How does this picture of God as both righteous judge and loving Father affect the way you relate to Him day to day?

Being welcomed into God’s family was not a new idea introduced at the cross — it was God’s original design from Genesis 1. Does knowing that this was always His intention change how you see yourself? Why or why not?

Section 3: The Danger of Religion Without Relationship

Pastor Andrew referenced John 5:39–40, where Jesus told the religious leaders that they searched the Scriptures but refused to come to Him. Is it possible to be very familiar with the Bible or very active in church and still keep Jesus at a distance? What does actually coming to Jesus look like in daily life?

The sermon mentioned a woman in the hospital whose greatest fear in her final hours was that God would not accept her. What does that moment reveal about how deeply the fear of rejection can take root, even in people who may have heard the gospel? How would you have responded to her?

Section 4: Loved as Jesus Is Loved

In John 17:23 Jesus prayed that the world would know God loves His followers with the same love He has for Jesus. Be honest — does that feel true to you personally? What makes it easy or difficult to receive?

Matthew 11:28–30 gives us a picture of the heart of God toward us. Jesus called His yoke comfortable, gracious, and pleasant. How does this description compare to the version of Christianity you may have grown up with or encountered elsewhere? What adjustments might that invite in your own walk with God?

Practical Application

This week, try one or more of the following:

Identify the performance trap. Pay attention this week to moments when you feel like you need to earn God's approval or make up for a failure.

When those moments come, pause and remind yourself that your standing with God is based on Jesus, not your performance.

Pray as a son or daughter. Before your prayer time each day this week, take a moment to consciously remind yourself of your identity — you are not approaching a distant judge, but a Father who is well-pleased with you. Notice if this changes how you pray.

Sit with John 17:23. Read this verse slowly each morning this week. Ask God to make the reality of His love more than intellectual knowledge — ask Him to let it become something you actually feel and live from.

Examine your relationship with Scripture. The sermon drew a distinction between studying Jesus and actually coming to Him. Reflect on whether your time in the Word is drawing you into relationship with Jesus or staying at the level of information. Ask God to make the Scriptures come alive as a witness to who He is.

Share the message of acceptance. Think of one person in your life who, like the woman in the hospital, may be living under a fear that God will not accept them. Pray for an opportunity to speak the truth of the gospel into their life this week.

Closing

The sermon closed with this image: Jesus weeping over Jerusalem — not over the city's architecture, but over the people He longed to bring into His family who would not receive Him. Take a moment before closing your group time to sit quietly with that image. He is not weeping over you in that way. You have received Him. Let that sink in.

Close your time together in prayer, thanking God specifically for the aspects of His character discussed today — His role as judge, as Father, and as the one who loves you with the same love He has for Jesus.

News & Events

Scan QR code for Upcoming Events, News, Giving and more! <https://linktr.ee/cornerstonejc>

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- September 2 & 20 – Communion
- September 13 – Intro to Cornerstone Life
- September 27 – Guest Speaker, Jeremiah Johnson

