



# Welcome Home



(From the sermon on October 11, 2015)

## A Place to Grow Up - a Study

We are children of the God of the universe!

He has loved us into existence and has extended that love into eternity by taking our imperfections and atoning for them Himself – through His Son, Jesus.

So what now?

*“We are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.”* **Ephesians 2:10** NLT

The writer of the passage above (Paul) was not content to ride that gift on its own merits through life. He describes us as God’s masterpiece – a new creature in Christ – one that has a purpose now that we are made right with God. This newness is now a platform to do what God wanted us to do all along. The wonder of this purpose is found in our giftedness by the Holy Spirit that now lives in us. So why aren’t we seeing everyone who professes belief in Christ doing great and wonderful things?

Our pre-Christ past! Yep, we are saved from eternal destruction but not from ourselves. We’re still heaven bound but limited in the blessing category. Our past has a hold on us!

Whatever damaging things we’ve experienced in the world may be keeping us from being the servant that the Lord has planned for us; one that blesses Him and the rest of our earthly existence.

We seemed to be trapped, though, in a life of shame, frustration, hurt, abuse, rejection and disappointment. If we’re not careful this grimy grip of worldly weight will manage our thoughts, decisions and disposition until we have no life left. That’s not what the Lord had in mind.

Listen to Paul’s philosophy about dealing with these trappings of our past.

*“I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.”*

Philippians 3:12-14

## Welcome Home – A Place to Grow Up

Steven Curtis Chapman has written a song, *The Glorious Unfolding*, which speaks to the human heart and God's overriding purpose in our lives:

Lay your head down tonight  
Take a rest from the fight  
Don't try to figure it out  
Just listen to what I'm whispering to your heart  
'Cause I know this is not  
Anything like you thought  
The story of your life was gonna be  
And it feels like the end has started closing in on you  
But it's just not true  
There's so much of the story that's still yet to unfold

And this is going to be a glorious unfolding  
Just you wait and see and you will be amazed  
You've just got to believe the story is so far from over  
So hold on to every promise God has made to us  
And watch this glorious unfolding

God's plan from the start  
For this world and your heart  
Has been to show His glory and His grace  
Forever revealing the depth and the beauty of  
His unfailing Love  
And the story has only begun

And this is going to be a glorious unfolding  
Just you wait and see and you will be amazed  
We've just got to believe the story is so far from over  
So hold on to every promise God has made to us  
And watch this glorious unfolding

Of this glorious unfolding  
We will watch and see and we will be amazed  
If we just keep on believing the story is so far from over  
And hold on to every promise God has made to us  
We'll see the glorious unfolding  
Just watch and see

This is just the beginning of the beginning

## Welcome Home – A Place to Grow Up

God wants us to live beyond our failures and fallings. He wants us to grow up in Christ!

*“...let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God.” **Hebrews 6:1** NIV*

Did you know that God has also made provision for our stumbling to help us walk again; our falling to help us get up; our brokenness to heal us and place us in positions to finish the race? Yep, He gave us Christ in the flesh after His resurrection – the Body of Christ, the church!

*“So Christ himself gave [gifted leaders, speakers, motivators, shepherds and teachers] to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teachings and by the cunning and craftiness of people in the deceitful scheming.” **Ephesians 4:11-15** NIV*

The Body of Christ should be our home. This is the place where we are nurtured and fed to grow out of our infancy and into adulthood. Where once we needed milk before we were able to feed ourselves; we needed someone to wipe our mouths and our behinds before we figured out how to do it on our own; we needed to get our balance so we could walk; to grasp the language in order to speak it; to learn from our mistakes so that we could avoid the same ones over and over again. This is home, because in *this* home we are given grace to fall and be forgiven, and when we become adults we learn to offer the same grace to those we're responsible for.

This is why we have the church. The church is the Body of Christ made up of believers in Him, Jesus, who care as He cared, forgive as He has forgiven and loved as He loved.

Welcome home, sinners. We are you. And we can show you the grace that we have come to know and give you the chance to live and fail and still be loved just as we experienced when we came home.