

# Being Part of the Royal Family

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, I'm sure you know who this person is, once he's up. There we go. Who's that? Anyone know? Prince Harry. There we go. You see, he's very recognizable, Prince Harry of the British Royal Family.

And I don't know if you're interested at all in the British Royals, but if you've ever followed the British Royal Family, you'll know Prince Harry, the younger of the two princes. He's always kind of been a bit of a rebel.

He's never quite fitted into the royal mold. And yet, the thing about Prince Harry that impresses me, even though he might not be your typical prim and proper prince like his brother William, is that Harry has always, nonetheless, found time to be involved in good causes, in social work, in charities.

And he does a lot of it. He's always involved in it. In fact, he's now, right now, in South Africa, helping conservation societies, in wildlife conservation. He's always been involved in good causes, in social and charity work.

And I was watching some interviews of Prince Harry, and he was asked in an interview on TV why he does what he does, and what's his motivation to get involved in the charity and the good causes he gets involved in.

[ 1 : 0 9 ] And his answer was very honest. And that's another thing I like about him. He's very frank. He calls a spade a spade. He's very honest. And he answered, in terms of his motivation for his good works and charity, he said, talking about him and his brother as well, he said, the title we have before our name has a very big effect, and so you've got to use it.

He said, there's a lot of times, both myself and my brother, wish that we were just normal, that we were completely normal people. But we've been born into this position, and therefore we'll do what we need to do to make a difference to people who need it.

And so you see, that impresses me about Prince Harry. Even though he's a bit rough around the edges, Prince Harry is someone who recognizes that with great privilege comes great responsibility.

And while there are times that he just wants to live an ordinary life, I'm sure, he knows and accepts that that's just not possible because of the family he's been born into.

He and his brother William know that they've been called to something much more than an ordinary life. The same is true of a Christian. No, actually not the same.

[ 2 : 1 4 ] It's so much more true of a Christian. A Christian, someone who knows the risen Lord Jesus Christ, has been called by God, not to be part of some royal family on earth like Harry, but to a much higher calling, to be part of God's eternal family, God's kingdom, which is the highest calling any human on earth can ever have.

Now the book of Ephesians in the Bible that we read from earlier, the book of Ephesians is in your Bible to help you see just how great and high your calling is if you're a Christian.

Now that's what Ephesians is about, basically. And that is something we need to realize. God has given us this book in the Bible to help us grasp the immensity of our calling. And you need that and I need that because it's only when we really grasp what we've been called to that we begin to live how we should be living.

And I went through the first few chapters of Ephesians, and I picked out all the references to the Christian's calling, and it's quite a list. And I want to tell you what Ephesians tells us about our calling as Christians.

Listen to this. First, a Christian has, according to Ephesians 1, been blessed in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. A Christian has been chosen in Christ before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless.

[ 3 : 38 ] A Christian has been predestined for adoption to be a child of God, to be in God's very family. As a Christian, you've been made alive when you were dead in your sins.

To be God's special possession, to rise above this world and be seated in the heavenly realms. You've been set apart from the world to do good works, which God has prepared in advance for you to do.

As a Christian, you form part of God's new humanity that he's creating for the world to come. As Christians, even now, we are a dwelling on earth in which God lives by his spirit.

As a Christian, you are called to share in the boundless riches of Christ, things that are far more valuable than anything on earth. As Christians, we have been called to display the wisdom and character of God to the world, and ultimately to experience nothing less than the fullness of God himself in all eternity, forever and ever, which is the greatest experience a creature can ever have.

And that is what you have been called to if you're a Christian this morning, which is incredible. And just look at some of those things up there.

[ 4 : 48 ] Look at what you've been called to. If that doesn't affect you deep down inside, nothing will. That's what you've been called to. And so, because of that, and God wants to make a point now, obviously, to you, because that's what you've been called to, no matter how you might feel that you just want to live an average, normal life, that's not possible anymore.

That's not an option because you've been called to so much more. Christians can't live normal lives if you understand what you've been called to. And that's what the Apostle Paul is talking about in chapter 4, verse 1.

So if you do have your Bibles, open them up and have a look at chapter 4. Because the Apostle Paul, he says, I urge you now to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

If you know the book of Ephesians, he spent three chapters just trying to emphasize to you what your calling is. And now, in chapter 4, he goes into the practicals and he says, now, because you know what a great and high calling you've been called to, live worthy of the calling you have received.

It's a command, it's an imperative, which means we need to do it. We don't do it naturally. We don't naturally live worthy of the calling we've received. We've got to be told to do it and we've got to learn how to do it.

[ 6 : 07 ] And that's what we're going to do this morning. In fact, look how he starts. He says, as a prisoner for the Lord, I urge you to live worthy of your calling. He was literally a prisoner.

When he wrote this, he was writing it from prison. And the reason he was a prisoner is because he was a man who took his calling seriously as a member of God's kingdom. So seriously that he risked all.

He risked beatings and imprisonment to live out that calling no matter what happened. He took his calling seriously. And so he's in the best position to instruct you and me to do the same.

You know, he's saying, look, I've taken this calling seriously. And if you call yourself a Christian, you must too. And then what he does is he doesn't leave us there. He goes on to describe just what that means, what it looks like in our lives to take our calling seriously.

The things we must be concentrating on daily if we want to take our calling seriously. And so if you want to take your calling as a Christian seriously, I want you to pay attention to what he says. Let's have a look at each of these things in turn.

[ 7 : 10 ] The first way we are to take our calling seriously is to strive for unity with other believers. That's what Paul goes on to say. So look from verse one again.

He says, As a prisoner for the Lord, then I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle. Be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Make every effort to keep the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace. This is the first thing, the first aspect of living worthy of your calling as a Christian.

And it's perhaps the most difficult part of it as well because this is saying to live out your calling as a member of God's family. The first thing you've got to do is love the other members of that family with humility, gentleness, patience, and so much so that you bear with their failings, which isn't easy.

You know, it's one thing to bear with the failings of technology and ESCOM. It's another thing to bear with the failings of the person sitting next to you. We don't do that very easily.

[ 8 : 19 ] We don't do that naturally. And yet that's the first thing we need to start doing as Christians. Because Paul writes, bear with one another. And you know why he writes bear with one another? Because he knows we're not going to naturally.

He knows we're going to get on each other's nerves. And so he says, the first thing he says, bear with each other. That's the first step. And his point, you see, his point is that Christians have a calling that demands that we get over ourselves and our little issues and problems with each other.

And because, you know, Christian unity is far too important to let our issues and personality clashes get in the way. That's what he wants us to realize here. And the reason for that is simple.

The reason is because as God's people on earth, all those things that we've been called to do, those good works we've been called to do, to be a dwelling place for God on earth, to represent God to the world, we can't do those things if we are constantly getting on each other's nerves.

And if we have problems with each other. And so the first step to being effective at our calling as Christians and a body of Christians in Plumstead, the first step is being unified with each other.

[ 9 : 32 ] Nothing will happen if we're not first unified. To illustrate, do you remember the 2010 Soccer World Cup? Anybody remember that five years ago? Do you remember how France performed in the 2010 Soccer World Cup?

Anyone remember? Remember? Terribly. They were performed shockingly. They were one of the top international soccer teams. And they were beaten by Bafana Bafana. And I'm sorry, but if you're beaten by Bafana Bafana, you've got to be pretty bad.

Okay? But do you know why they were? It's because during their entire tour, they were fighting amongst themselves. In the change room, behind the scenes, the team, there was hectic personality clashes and fights amongst the team and between the players and the coaches.

And because of that behind the scenes infighting, they couldn't achieve a thing together out on the field. They were rubbish. And you know what? It's the same in a church.

If we are going to entertain personality clashes and issues, and if we're going to allow ourselves to gossip about each other in the church, if there's stuff going on behind the scenes between us, then this church will never be effective at what we're called to do.

[ 10 : 39 ] And our mission is far too important to let personality clashes get in the way. And that's why Paul says, bear with one another. That's the first step to you living worthy of your calling as a Christian, is as Hebrews 12, 14 says, to make every effort to live in peace with everyone.

Which means, according to Titus 3, verse 2, to slander no one. Don't gossip. To be peaceable. Strive for peace above all.

And to be considerate and gentle towards everyone. And the best way to do all these things is simply, Jesus gave us the key. He said, love one another.

Love one another. That's what it comes down to, is to truly love one another. Because if we truly love one another, we will do all these things. We won't gossip. We won't slander each other. We won't let personality clashes get in the way.

If we love one another truly. Do you know, Jesus, before Jesus went to the Father, he gave his followers on earth two primary commands to leave us with.

[ 11 : 49 ] He left us with two instructions, two main instructions. You probably know the first one, called the Great Commission, which is to go in all the world and preach the gospel and make disciples. But the other, lesser known one, is just as important as the Great Commission.

We find it in John 13, 34. He says, a new command I give you, love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. And this is why, by this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.

Jesus is trying to make a point to you and me here. He's saying that the mark of a true disciple, a true Christian, is a true love for other Christians.

Motivated by the love of Christ for us. And so if we don't understand Christ's love for us, if you don't understand what Jesus went through for you to be forgiven of your sins, then you will never be able to love others with that same kind of love.

That kind of unconditional love. That's what Christians are called to. The kind of love that Christ had for us and has for us still today. An unconditional love that is not natural.

[ 12 : 58 ] And it's so unnatural that when we do love each other in that way, what happens? The world notices. The world sees something about us. That's why Jesus said, this is how the world will know that you are my disciples.

If you love one another as I have loved you. And when the world notices, then God is glorified. And that is the first way as Christians that we live out our calling.

To be unified. To strive for unity over and above everything else. To love one another. Secondly though, is to pursue purity. That's the second thing Paul goes to mention.

The next way Christians live out their calling basically is to stop sinning. That's what it means. Now we all sin. It's human nature. And so it's easy because of that.

Because we say, well, it's so hard to stop sinning. And it's human nature. And it's natural. And it just happens automatically. Because of that, it's easy not to be too bothered about it. It's easy just to accept it in our lives as part of being a person in a fallen world.

[ 14 : 05 ] And not be bothered about it. But you see, a Christian is supposed to be bothered about their sin. A Christian is always wanting to identify and get rid of sin in their life.

And I constantly say it's like an onion if you're a Christian. It's got layers. It's a quote from Shrek. But an onion's got layers. And as a Christian, you've got layers of sin. Big sins.

When you first become a Christian, you've got these big sins that you realize I've got to stop. And you strive at them. And you work at them. And with God's help, you move on. But then you discover there's a whole other layer. Sins that you never noticed.

Smaller sins. Sins of the mind. And you take that off and you realize there's a whole other layer of deeper sins. And that's the thing. As Christians, we're constantly identifying deeper and deeper sins and working on them with God's help.

And a Christian is always wanting to do that. Always wanting to work on your sins. Because that's exactly the reason Jesus died. To free us from our sin. Now, it's a common misunderstanding.

[ 15 : 06 ] And you'll hear this a lot. And you've got to be aware of it. It's a common misunderstanding that because Jesus died for our sins, that means we don't really have to worry about them anymore. But that's silly.

Because that's like saying, well, because I was rescued from drowning, I don't have to worry about the water anymore. No, of course you do. Because you were rescued from drowning, you should worry about the water even more. You should even more be careful to steer clear from getting into that situation again.

And because Jesus died to save us from our sins, we should be even more careful to steer clear of sin from now on. You see, Jesus came to change us.

He didn't come to tell us a few platitudes to make us comfortable and go home on a Sunday unchanged. He came to change us. And every time we open his word, it's a sword that divides through flesh and bone.

It should pierce us deeply and it should cause us to change every week. If you leave church unchanged, you've got to ask yourself why. You've got to ask yourself if you were listening to God's word.

[ 16 : 06 ] Because it's there to change us. Jesus came to change us. Jesus didn't come to give us an excuse to carry on living the way we were living. So when he died for our sins, he didn't give us an excuse to carry on sinning.

He died for our sins to free us from sin. And look at verse 13 of Ephesians 4 in your Bibles. Because God's plan for you, for Christians, is that 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.

You know, God's got nothing less than that in mind for us. To attain to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. In other words, God's plan for you is to be like Jesus.

To be unhindered by sin. To be pure. To be holy. To be perfect. To be completely sinless. Now that's something that we often don't realize.

Because we're so imperfect in this life. Because sin is so, it clings to us so much and we struggle to get rid of it. We never see ourselves as what God saved us for.

[ 17 : 16 ] To be perfect. To be sinless. That is God's plan for you. And now while that will only be fully achieved when you get to heaven, if you're a Christian, the process of becoming what you're going to be starts today.

It starts now. And so you need to work at it now. As God works in you by his spirit, you've also got work to do. And so Hebrews 12.1 tells us.

Throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race that is marked out for us. Just meditate on that verse.

Hebrews 12.1. Throw off the sin that entangles. And we're told to do that because as Christians we can now do that.

Now before Christ came, humans were not able to not sin. But now that Christ has come, that's changed. Now that Christ has come, we are able to throw off sins.

[ 18 : 23 ] It takes work. It takes discipline. But we are able to do it. We're able to stop sinning. And then in the new creation, we won't even be able to sin. That's what God's plan was. It's those four stages.

I mentioned them in Bible studies before. But before the fall, humans were able to sin. And then they sinned. And then before Jesus came, they were not able not to sin.

And then Jesus came and now we're able not to sin. And when we get to heaven, we won't be able to sin. It's God's glorious progression for his people.

And so we must throw off the sin that entangles. Because we can do that now through the Holy Spirit working in us. But notice what else we must throw off.

Not only the sin, but everything that hinders. You see that in Hebrews 12? Throw off everything that hinders and the sin. Not just the sin though.

[ 19 : 18 ] Anything in your life that might prevent you from growing into spiritual maturity, you must throw off. Be that excessive TV watching or bad habits that prevent you from taking time to read your Bible and pray.

Whatever might be stunting your growth as a Christian, you must get rid of. You must throw it off. Because that's what you've been called to. Nothing less. And if you realize that, if you just take a moment to picture yourself as you were meant to be.

Picture yourself perfect. The picture that God has for you if you are in Christ. If you take a moment to realize what you're going to be one day. That will be the motivation for starting to work on that now.

And if you're not a Christian. Well, don't you want to be? If this is true. Don't you want to be free of sin? Don't you know that if you're not a Christian, if your faith is not in Christ, you're still under the power of sin.

And you're a slave to it. That's what the Bible says. And you're not who God made you to be. Don't you want to be? Don't you want to be who God made you to be? Well, Jesus came so that you can be.

[ 20 : 25 ] Jesus came to die for your sins. So if you put your trust in him, you can be. You will be saved. And for eternity, you will be who you were made to be. How can you pass up that opportunity?

If you're not a Christian, don't you want that? Don't you want sin to have no power over you anymore? Because that's what Jesus came.

He came to die to break you free. He came to open the prison doors. Now you've got to walk out and follow him. And if you want that, and you know that you're not a Christian, please come speak to me after the service or phone me up during the week.

I'd love to chat with you what it means to follow Christ. But that's the second way that Christians live out their calling, is to pursue purity.

Thirdly, Christians live out their calling by supporting the mission. See, Jesus left Christians on earth for a particular purpose. We saw a number of weeks ago in Acts.

[ 21 : 24 ] Jesus left Christians on earth not just to wait around for heaven. This is not one big waiting room. But our job is to get to work to bring other people into God's kingdom before he comes back. That's the reason we're still here.

And so look at verse 11. So Christ himself gave to the church the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors, and the teachers to equip his people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up.

Okay, so the job of pastors and evangelists is to build up and grow the church. No. No. That's a common misreading of this verse. Look at it.

What does it say the job of evangelists and pastors and teachers is? It's to equip his people, you, for works of service to build up the church.

It's not the job of the pastor to build the church. It's your job. In other words, you grow the church, not me or the other pastors. We equip you to do that.

[ 22 : 28 ] Pastors and churches equip the people for the works of service to build up the church. You see, that's clearly what that verse is saying. And yet, lots of people don't see it that way.

Let me illustrate, though. If we describe the church in terms of a soccer game, another soccer illustration. Good, excuse me. But this is, if we consider what happens at church as a soccer game.

This is how people typically see the church. Typically, the ministers and the people up front, the musicians and the leader and stuff, doing their thing are the players on the field. While the people in the pews looking on are the spectators in the stands.

So, everybody does here and everybody just looks on. And, you know, the singers and the musicians play and sing. And everybody just stands and goes, behold our God. You know? So, that's typically how it happens.

You know, we just sing because we have to. But they're doing the work up there. No. You know, if we took our soccer team illustration, what the church really is, according to the Bible, is the people in the pews, the Christians are actually the players on the field.

[ 23 : 31 ] You guys are the players on the field. The pastors and the teachers and the people up front are the coaches on the sidelines, helping you, inspiring you, giving you the words, giving you some music, so you can sing out with all your heart, so you can worship God, equipping you with the Bible so you can go out into the world and live the life you were called to.

And you know who the spectators in the stands are? They're the world looking on. You're not the spectators when you come to church. You're the players. The spectators are out there. And we're the coaches.

Which means that each of us has a role to play in the mission of the church, not just the pastors and the paid missionaries. And each of us has been given special gifts to contribute to that mission.

When you received Christ and the Holy Spirit came into your life, he gave you special gifts to contribute to what happens here.

Each one of us has been given that. And Paul says that in 1 Corinthians. He says, Now to each one, The manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

[ 24 : 41 ] To each one. To every Christian. Even if you think you've got nothing to offer. If you're a Christian, you do. Because God has given you something to offer. If you're a Christian, you have a spiritual gift given by God, which your church needs in order to function properly.

And your job is to find out what that gift is and to start using it. Because if you don't, you're actually withholding something that God has given for your church. And that's not the only way Christians are called to support the mission of the church.

Another way Christians are called to support the mission, apart from their spiritual gifts, is their material gifts. The things that God has given you materially. Your home, your resources, your money.

It's not actually your money. In the Bible's perspective, the money that you have in your bank account is God's money. You're just a steward. You're just looking after it for Him.

And God tells His people to use His money for gospel work. And also to look after your family and things like that. But also for gospel work, which is equally important.

[ 25 : 50 ] 2 Corinthians 9 says that God gives Christians what they have over and above what they need, so that they can be generous. And that their generosity can result in praise to God as people hear the gospel.

That's what the Bible says you have money for. Any money that you have over and above what you need, God has given to you for His glory. And if you have a lot, then God obviously sees you as a good steward.

And you've got to live up to that and use it. You know, some people have been blessed with the gift of stewardship. Christians who are rich, Christians who have a lot of money, and they use it mightily for God's work.

And when you're in the new creation one day, when you've been there for 6,000 years, enjoying the riches of eternity, enjoying the presence of God, and you look back on this life, you're not going to say, Man, I should have bought that Mercedes while I had the chance.

No. You know what you will be saying? You're going to be saying, Man, I should have invested more in reaching people with the gospel, so that they could be here too. That's what you're going to be saying. And so we support the mission through our material gifts as well.

[ 27 : 07 ] Another way to support the mission is through prayer. The Bible tells Christians to constantly pray for preachers and evangelists proclaiming the gospel, and to pray for opportunities that each one of us have to tell people about Jesus and the situations we find ourselves daily.

And so there's a lot of ways that Christians support the mission. But in all of this, the point is, we must realize that as long as we are on earth, we are on mission.

That's why we're here. And we're on mission together, not as individual Christians. We're on mission as a body, and we help each other to fulfill that mission with the various gifts that God has given us.

And so our job, each of us, is to focus our energies and resources on that mission and not to get caught up in worldly missions, which there are many of, and worldly causes that might take our time and energy away from the most important mission for Jesus Christ.

And those worldly causes and missions might be good, but they're not nearly as good as the mission that you've been called to as a Christian. And so ask where your time and energies and resources are being focused.

[ 28 : 16 ] You know, like a well-functioning military unit on a mission, we can't be headed off in different directions. You know, you see those action movies, if you watch action movies, with those special forces units, and they go into a building to capture some terrorist or something.

But they work as a team. They're perfectly trained and communicated. They work as one, and that's why they managed to carry out their mission. They don't all go in different directions, listening to different people.

They would never work that way. And that's why God has given each church community, particular leaders and pastors, to help you keep on point, to help you to keep focused on the mission at hand, so we work together, so we work as a body, and not go off in all our different directions and do different things.

And that's why Hebrews 13, 17 says, and this is something that pastors typically try to avoid preaching from the pulpit, just because it's uncomfortable, but it says quite clearly, submit to your leaders in the church.

That's what Hebrews, that's what the Bible says. Submit to your leaders that God has placed over you, because he wants to see the church working together as a team, and you need a leader to guide a team.



[ 29 : 29 ] But it'll only happen, we'll only work together as a coherent unit, when everybody gets on board with what the church is doing, and the direction that the leaders have set. Even if you're not quite sure of that, just head that way, because that's the direction that's been set.

Like, for example, as John mentioned earlier, when your church puts on events. You know, we put on events because we want people to come in, and we want to build relationships with outsiders so that we can invite them back to church so that they can hear the gospel and be saved.

Everything we do is for that purpose. You know, these events we put on aren't the pastor's events, they're not my events, they're not even the church council's events, but they're your events to help you do your job, and so use them.

Come to the events, for one. Invite people to them, even if it doesn't interest you. That's not the point. Just come to support what your church community is doing, because that is far more important than sitting at home and watching TV.

Because that's the mission you've been called to. Take it seriously. That's what we're called to. That's what we're doing here. And so, in summary, Christians live out their calling by striving for unity, by pursuing purity, and by supporting the mission of the church in the various ways that God has gifted us to do that.

[ 30 : 50 ] And so, in closing, what I will say is that if you look at those instructions that we've been instructed from Scripture, you'll know that they are not easy. To strive for unity with people that we clash with, to pursue purity when we're constantly struggling with us, and to support the mission when we want to run off and do our own thing.

Those are not easy to do. Not least of all, because our sinful natures make us forget what we've been called to. And just make us selfish.

And so, we need help. We need help to do these things. We need help from each other to live out our calling. We can't do it by ourselves. And that's why being part of a local church is so important.

You can't be an individual, lone ranger Christian by yourself. And that's why membership in a church is important. What we're focusing on this morning. Because membership, when you sign up, and you put your stake in the ground, and you say, this is my church, and I want to be held accountable, you are saying, I want help to be who Jesus has called me to be.

And I want to be held accountable to it, and I want to help others to do that too. That's what you're saying when you become a member of a church. So, are you willing to take that step? Are you willing to say that?

[ 32 : 11 ] Are you willing to say, I want to be held accountable by this church, and I want to help others to be who God has called them to be. Well, I was going to print out for you this morning, if it wasn't for load shedding, I was going to print out for you our church's membership agreement.

Every member from this church, from this year, when they become a member, they have to sign a membership agreement. And that membership agreement is just, it lists things that you're going to be held accountable for as a member, which typically we don't want to sign.

We don't want to sign to be held accountable for something, to agree to do something, but it's important that we do that. It's important that we say, I want to be held accountable to this. And the membership agreement, I'll give you a copy. You know what I'll do is, because the power's back, I'll print out a few and put them at the back and on the tables in the hall.

Take one. Take one home. You read it through. Because the membership agreement is not asking you to do anything more than the Bible asks you to do as a Christian anyway. The only difference with signing it is now you're saying, I want to be held accountable to these things.

And so take one home. I'll give you some next week as well. If you don't get one this morning, read it. And if you are a member of this church and you haven't yet, sign it and then give it back to me or give it to your Bible study leader.

[ 33 : 23 ] We'll make a copy just so that you know what you will be held accountable to as a member of this church. And it's important to sign it and see it so that you can constantly be reminded of what it means to live out your calling.

That's why we do it. And if you aren't a member, you might not be a member this morning for various reasons, which is fine. But I want you still also to have a look at this membership agreement. Take it home.

Read it. And as you read it, know that this is what God calls you to do, whether or not you're officially a member of the church or not. And you might want to consider if membership is something you want to do to help you.

It's a step you want to take to take your calling seriously. As I said before, you can do that without being a member. You should do that without being a member. But membership is just a way that you can formally say, I want help to do this.

Please help me. Because you see, as Christians, we have the greatest calling anyone can have. And we've got to take that seriously. We've got to do what we can to walk in a manner that is worthy of that calling.

[ 34 : 24 ] And St. Mark's Church is here to help you to do that, but only if you let us. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, when we consider just what you've called us to, we are overwhelmed.

And we don't feel worthy of it, because we're not. But we know that you have given us Christ's righteousness, and you desire to see us made perfect and holy, and enjoy you for eternity.

And Lord, we thank you so much for what you've done to make this possible. And we now pray that you would help us, as a local church, as believers, to walk in a manner that is worthy of our calling.

Help us to realize what we have been called to, out of this world, to be your special possession, to be your holy nation, to be your new humanity and the new creation.

Help us to start living as that today. And I also pray for anybody here who has not accepted Christ, who is not following Christ, who does not have a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 35 : 26 ] Lord, help them to take a step of putting their faith in Christ, so that they can be part of your people too. And that they can be, eventually, who you have created them to be.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.