

***The Heartbeat of Hope:***  
***“The Embrace of the Father”***

Genesis 1: 26-28, John 1: 12-13, Romans 8: 14-17, and 1 John 3: 1-2

***Thoughts to Shape and Spark Discussion:***

*“Salvation is membership in the family of God . . . The creation of a family with children is the reason for all of God’s activity. This is how he intends to show his glory . . . Our sonship to God is the apex of creation and the goal of redemption . . . The story of Paradise lost becoming Paradise regained is the story of God’s grace bringing us from alienation from him to membership in his family . . . Our self-image, if it is to be biblical, will begin just here. God is my Father (the Christian’s self-image always begins with the knowledge of God and who he is!); I am one of his children (I know my real identity); his people are my brothers and sisters (I recognize the family to which I belong and have discovered my deepest ‘roots’).”*  
 - Sinclair Ferguson

*“You sum up the whole of the New Testament teaching in a single phrase, if you speak of it as a revelation of the Fatherhood of the Holy Creator. In the same way, you describe it as the knowledge of God as one’s holy Father. If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God’s child, and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means the he does not understand Christianity very well at all.”* - J.I. Packer

*“If the love of the father will not make a child delight in him, what will?”* - John Owen

***Themes and Questions to Guide Reflection and Response:***

- What from the Scripture passage or the sermon made an impression upon you? Are there lingering questions to be answered or rabbit trails to be followed for you?
- Which of the scripture passages resonated with you?
  - Why do you think “adoption” has historically been de-emphasized in Christian theology when it is such a prominent and dynamic theme of scripture?
  - How do justification, adoption, and sanctification work together from the Bible’s perspective?
- What images or phrases from Sinclair Ferguson’s reflection above stick out to you?
  - He asserts that salvation is membership in the family of God. What does that mean? Is that your understanding and experience of salvation?
- What are the biggest obstacles to receiving the Father’s embrace? For you personally and for those outside the faith?
  - Who may feel disqualified from the embrace? Who may feel they no longer need it? Why?
- Hope’s mission statement emphasizes not merely receiving the embrace of the Father but also thriving in that embrace.
  - Having been embraced with the Father’s redemptive love, how do we extend that embrace to others?
  - Who in your circles needs to experience the embrace of the Father?