

The Children of God

Text: **1 John 3:1-3 HCSB** Look at how great a love the Father has given us, that we should be called God's children. And we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it didn't know Him. **2** Dear friends, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him as He is. **3** And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself just as He is pure.

Introduction

1. In 1 John 2:29, for the first time John spoke of Christians as those who are "born" of God...

- **1 John 2:29 HCSB** If you know that He is righteous, you know this as well: everyone who does what is right has been born of Him.

a. It is an expression that will be used time and again throughout the remainder of this epistle.

- **1 John 3:9 HCSB** Everyone who has been born of God does not sin, because His seed remains in him; he is not able to sin, because he has been born of God.
- **1 John 4:7 HCSB** Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.
- **1 John 5:1, 4, 18 HCSB** Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Messiah has been born of God... **4** because whatever has been born of God conquers the world. This is the victory that has conquered the world: our faith. **18** We know that everyone who has been born of God does not sin, but the One who is born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him.

b. It is a figurative expression, emphasizing that the Christian's spiritual life is a result of the redemptive work of God.

- **Colossians 2:12-13 HCSB** Having been buried with Him in baptism, you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. **13** And when you were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive with Him and forgave us all our trespasses.
- **Titus 3:4-7 HCSB** But when the goodness and love for man appeared from God our Savior, **5** He saved us--not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to His mercy, through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit. **6** This *Spirit* He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, **7** so that having been justified by His grace, we may become heirs with the hope of eternal life.

c. As a result of this working of God in our lives, we have been "born again", and can therefore be properly called God's "children"

2. That we can be called "children of God" was amazing to John, and in our text (1 John 3:1-3) he wants us to consider...

- a. the significance of being called the "children of God"
- b. the implications of what it should mean in our lives

As we take the opportunity to reflect upon such things, we first notice that this passage reminds us of...

I. What we are as children of God (1)

A. We are recipients of God's love (1a)

1. "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!"

2. It is through the love of God that we can even become His children
 - **John 3:16 HCSB** "For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.
 - **1 John 4:9-10 HCSB** God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent His One and Only Son into the world so that we might live through Him. **10** Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
 - **Titus 3:3-7 HCSB** For we too were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, captives of various passions and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, detesting one another. **4** But when the goodness and love for man appeared from God our Savior, **5** He saved us--not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to His mercy, through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit. **6** This *Spirit* He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, **7** so that having been justified by His grace, we may become heirs with the hope of eternal life.
3. It is an honor for God to even take notice of us as one of His creatures, how much love God must have to allow us to become His children! As the Psalmist said...
 - **Psalms 8:3-4 HCSB** When I observe Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You set in place, **4** what is man that You remember him, the son of man that You look after him?

B. We are unknown by the world (1b)

1. "...the world does not know us..."
2. That is, they do not truly recognize or appreciate what we have become in Christ
3. They may even deem us as religious fanatics, fools. But we are in good company:
 - **1 Corinthians 4:9-13 HCSB** For I think God has displayed us, the apostles, in last place, like men condemned to die: we have become a spectacle to the world and to angels and to men. **10** We are fools for Christ, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored! **11** Up to the present hour we are both hungry and thirsty; we are poorly clothed, roughly treated, homeless; **12** we labor, working with our own hands. When we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; **13** when we are slandered, we entreat. We are, even now, like the world's garbage, like the filth of all things.
4. This is understandable...
 - a. For the world did not (and still does not) really know Jesus
 - **John 1:11 HCSB** He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him.
 - b. And for now, our lives are "hidden" in Jesus
 - **Colossians 3:3-4 HCSB** For you have died, and your life is hidden with the Messiah in God. **4** When the Messiah, who is your life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

Loved and honored by God, unknown and sometimes despised by the world; that is what we are today as the children of God. But as stated by Paul in Colossians 3:4, when Christ comes we will "appear with Him in glory"! This speaks of our condition in the future, and John also writes of our future condition...

II. What we shall be as children of God (2)

A. It has not yet been fully revealed...

1. Exactly what we shall be like has not yet been revealed
2. Which may be due to our finite capability to comprehend
3. In general terms we have been promised a spiritual body and immortality

- **1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 50-53 HCSB** So it is with the resurrection of the dead: Sown in corruption, raised in incorruption; **43** sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power; **44** sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. **50** Brothers, I tell you this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and corruption cannot inherit incorruption. **51** Listen! I am telling you a mystery: We will not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, **52** in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. **53** Because this corruptible must be clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal must be clothed with immortality.

4. But there is something else, hinted at by both Paul and John...

B. We shall be like Jesus!

1. "...we know that we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."
2. Paul also says that we will be like Jesus when He comes...
 - a. We shall bear the image of the "heavenly Man"
 - **1 Corinthians 15:49 HCSB** And just as we have borne the image of the man made of dust, we will also bear the image of the heavenly man.
 - b. Our lowly bodies will undergo a wonderful transformation to become like Jesus
 - **Philippians 3:20-21 HCSB** but our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. **21** He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of His glorious body, by the power that enables Him to subject everything to Himself.
3. Though we cannot fully know what we will be like, it must really be something. We can get a glimpse of our future selves for as Christ is now, we someday shall be.
 - **Revelation 1:10-15 HCSB** I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet **11** saying, "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea." **12** I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me. When I turned I saw seven gold lampstands, **13** and among the lampstands was One like the Son of Man, dressed in a long robe, and with a gold sash wrapped around His chest. **14** His head and hair were white like wool--white as snow, His eyes like a fiery flame, **15** His feet like fine bronze fired in a furnace, and His voice like the sound of cascading waters.
 - **1 John 3:2 HCSB** Dear friends, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him as He is.

This wonderful hope of what we will be some day should encourage us to "stand fast in the Lord" (Philippians 3:20-4:1). John also has something to say as to how this hope ought to influence how we live, as he describes...

III. What we should be as children of God (3)

- **1 John 3:3 HCSB** And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself just as He is pure.

A. Ought to be motivated by our hope...

1. "everyone who has this hope..."
2. The hope of which John writes, of course, is the earnest expectation that we will be like Jesus when He comes

B. Diligently involved in purifying one's self...

1. The Greek word for "purify" is hagnizo {hag-nid'-zo} which means "to make clean, i.e. (fig.) sanctify"
 - a. It is closely related to the word for "holiness", which in Greek is hagiasmos, {hag-ee-as-mos'}, meaning "holiness, sanctification"
 - b. It therefore involves the idea of being "set apart" for a holy purpose, which Christians are taught to pursue
 - [Hebrews 12:14 HCSB](#) Pursue peace with everyone, and holiness--without it no one will see the Lord.
 - [1 Peter 1:15-16 HCSB](#) but, as the One who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; **16** for it is written, **Be holy, because I am holy.**
 - [1 Thessalonians 4:7 HCSB](#) For God has not called us to impurity, but to sanctification.
2. Properly motivated by the hope that Jesus will "transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body" (Philippians 3:21), the true child of God will work toward the purity (holiness) seen in the Lord Himself
3. How can Christians purify themselves?
 - a. First and foremost by appropriating the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus!
 - [1 John 1:9 HCSB](#) If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
 - b. Only then can we hope to be truly holy and without blemish
 - [Ephesians 5:25-27 HCSB](#) Husbands, love your wives, just as also Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her, **26** to make her holy, cleansing her in the washing of water by the word. **27** He did this to present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and blameless.
 - c. But we also have an obligation to remove ourselves from things that would defile us.
 - [2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1 HCSB](#) And what agreement does God's sanctuary have with idols? For we are the sanctuary of the living God, as God said: **I will dwell among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be My people. 17 Therefore, come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord; do not touch any unclean thing, and I will welcome you. 18 I will be a Father to you, and you will be sons and daughters to Me, says the Lord Almighty. 7:1** Therefore dear friends, since we have such promises, we should wash ourselves clean from every impurity of the flesh and spirit, making our sanctification complete in the fear of God.

Conclusion

1. By virtue of God's love for us, and His working in us, we can truly be called the "children of God"!
2. However, to become a child of God, we must be willing to accept God's terms.
 - [Colossians 2:12-13 HCSB](#) Having been buried with Him in baptism, you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. **13** And when you were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive with Him and forgave us all our trespasses.
 - [Galatians 3:26-27 HCSB](#) for you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. **27** For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

May the love our heavenly Father has shown in making us His children, serve to motivate us to remain faithful to Him!