

Children of God

1 John 3:1-10

By Scott Huckaby

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BIG BEND
BIBLE
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Last Sunday Dib expounded on 1 John 2

- Warns us about the deceptions of the world
- importance of the truth of Christ abiding in us
- pick up where he left off: 1 John 3:1-10
- What it means to be a Child of God

As an introduction, I'll summarize the last couple verses of 1 John 2 addressing the importance of abiding in Christ:

...If we are abiding (or living your life) in Christ:

- confidence & not ashamed at His coming
- practice righteousness: evidence of being born again
- Being spiritually born from above (born again) means being born into God's family

Definition of righteousness:

behavior that is morally justifiable or right

- Bible: God's own perfection in every attribute, every attitude, every behavior, and every word
- Bible: the righteous person as one who has faith in God, trusting in Him.

bad news: true and perfect righteousness is not humanly possible to attain on our own; the standard is too high.

Romans 3:23 – *all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*

Good news: Christians have the righteousness of Christ
2 Corinthians 5:21 – *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God*

Those who trust in Jesus we are made righteous in the sight of God

- we are treated as if we had entirely fulfilled the Law of God and never have to be exposed to its penalty

So, practicing righteousness is doing everything as Christ would have us do as much as we possibly can.

- Not because we are trying to earn God's favor
- But out of gratitude for what Jesus has done for us.

1 John 3:1-10... 1 or 2 verses at a time...

(1 John 3:1) The glory of God's love.

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

Having just mentioned being *born of Him* (that is Christ)

- amazement about this *manner of love* that makes us *children of God*.
- *behold it* — that is, look at it and study it intently.

This status of being called *children of God* is:

Bestowed on us – lavished on us

- has the idea of a one-sided giving
- it is not a payment for something earned.

As God looked down on lost humanity, He might have merely had a charitable compassion, pitying our plight

- With a mere pity, He might have set forth a plan of salvation where man could be saved from hell.
- But God went far beyond that, to call us His children

And as the children of God we are joint heirs with Christ of everything in God's kingdom for all eternity...

Romans 8:16–17 – *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ*

God created this entire universe for His image bearers to live in. A physical place for physical beings.

- Since God created everything, He owns it all
- And as His children, we will inherit it all!

All 3 persons of the Trinity call us children of God: God, the Father...

2 Corinthians 6:18 – *I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty*

God, the Son...

Hebrews 2:11 – *He [Jesus] is not ashamed to call ~~them~~ [those who are being sanctified] brethren* (fellow members of His family)

God, the Spirit...

Romans 8:16 – *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God*

The Holy Spirit gives us assurance of having eternal life

- No child of God has to wonder if they are going to heaven
- God wants us to know, to have no doubt: doctrine of eternal security
- We can be certain of our eternal security because of God's promises
- The Holy Spirit reminds us of His promises & His character – God never breaks His promises

As we consider being a child of God, it is important to understand: **everyone is not a child of God**

- Term: brotherhood of man (physical, not spiritual)
Certainly, God's love is expressed to all (John 3:16)
- but the *children of God* have received the love of Jesus in a life of fellowship with and trust with Him
John 1:12 – *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name*

That is why *the world does not know us*

- Because of our unique parentage from God, we are strangers to this world (or should be).
- expect the world to treat us as it treated Him

As children of God, we have a new nature...

Ephesians 4:24 – *created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness*

This is not something we can achieve on our own in this mortal life

- But we can make progress that pleases God (rewards)
- Jesus: *lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven*

Contemplating who we are as the *children of God* will cause us to think seriously about how we live...

- Will we pursue a life of holiness and obedience to God?
- or will we have a lackadaisical attitude toward sin?

That is what every child of God needs to have settled

(1 John 3:2) The destiny of God's children.

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Though our present standing is plain, the details of our future destiny is not as clear.

1 Corinthians 2:9-10 – *“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit.*

We don't know in the kind of detail we would like

- But He has revealed enough to us to know life in our resurrected bodies will be glorious

Our mortal minds can't fully comprehend the spiritual truths that will be revealed when we're resurrected

One thing that is hard for us to imagine is no sin nature...
One aspect of being in the image of God: as God is Father, Son & Holy Spirit...

- a tri-unity of body, soul & spirit (1 Thess 5:23)
- Soul & Spirit are used interchangeably
- Distinction between soul & spirit (Hebrews 4:12)
- Born again spirit has already been resurrected
 - Guarantee of future bodily resurrection
- Soul will be resurrected along with our bodies
 - No more selfish nature
- Can you image what it will be like with no selfishness?

But we are not left completely in the dark:

we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him
Romans 8:29 – *For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren*

The resurrection of Jesus was the prototype of our future resurrection:

1 Corinthians 15:20 – *Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep*

After Jesus was resurrected, His appearances to His disciples revealed a lot about what we can expect:

- He had a physical body (not just a spirit)
- He ate food
- He retained His general appearance
- He materialized in rooms behind locked doors
- He ascended to heaven

We often dismiss these details... Of course, Jesus is God
Philippians 2:7 – *(He) made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men*

He set aside His prerogatives as God for His mission

- He attributed miracles to the Father (John 14:10)
- He went out of His way to show us what to expect
- He used the Spiritual realm to get around

John 14:3 – *if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also*

- As God, Jesus is omnipresent... His physical body is not everywhere but it can be anywhere at will.

We also have some understanding of eternal life from God's promises... for example:

Revelation 21:4 – *there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away*

We will reign with Him – reward for faithfulness

God's ultimate goal in our lives is to make us like Jesus, and here, John speaks of the fulfillment of that purpose.

- This does not mean that we cease to be ourselves
- the distinct personality and character God gave us

Eternal Life will not be like the Nirvana of Eastern mysticism

- all personality is dissolved into God like a drop into the ocean

God will never force a person to be like Jesus

- that is what hell is for: people who don't want to be like Jesus.
- The sobering, eternal truth is this: God gives man what he really wants.
- If you really want to be like Jesus, this will show in your life now, and it will be a fact in eternity.

If you don't really want to be like Jesus, this will also show in your life now, and it will also be a fact in eternity.

We shall see Him as He is

this is the greatest glory of heaven: not so much our personal glorification, but to be in the unhindered, unrestricted, presence of our Lord.

1 Corinthians 13:12 – *For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known*

Today we see Jesus only in a dim, unclear way, but when we are resurrected, we will see Him with perfect clarity.

(1 John 3:3) Knowing our destiny purifies our lives

And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He [that is Jesus] is pure.

- When we know our end is to be more like Jesus, it makes us want to be more like Him right now. Having the anticipation of the soon coming of Jesus Christ, can have a purifying effect in our lives.
- It makes us want to be ready, to be serving Him now, to be pleasing Him now.
- To get on with what He is calling us to do

Notice also: our hope is in Him

- Not in any other thing like our good works, our success on earth, or in other people
- Our only hope is in Jesus

(1 John 3:4-5) Sin: An Attack on all Relationships

Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that [Jesus] was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.

Sin is lawlessness

- It is a disregard for the law of God
- a disregard for the law Maker, God Himself.

[Jesus] was manifested to take away our sins

the mission of Jesus Christ— to take away our sins

Matthew 1:21 – *you shall call His name JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sin*

Jesus takes away our sin in the sense of...

- taking the penalty of our sin (immediately)
- taking the power of sin away (ongoing work)
- taking the presence of sin away (glorified with Jesus)

(1 John 3:6) We either abide in sin or abide in God.

Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.

- to abide in Christ means to not sin.

According to the verb tense used, *does not sin* means does not live a lifestyle of habitual sin.

- For us non-Greek scholars, we know this has to be the case:

1 John 1:8 – *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

So, not teaching here the possibility of sinless perfection

The question is not "Do you sin or not?" We each sin.

The better question is, "How do you react when you sin?"

- Do you give in to the pattern of sin, and let it dominate your lifestyle?
- Or do you humbly confess your sin, and do battle against it with the help of Jesus?"
 - King David confronted by prophet Nathan (man after God's own heart)

Instead of making excuses, take action!

- Mud on trousers due to potholes on way to work
- Take another route!

(1 John 3:7) Righteousness will show in a person's life.

Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He [Jesus] is righteous.

Let no one deceive you

Especially for us today: Jesus warned of deception

- Apostasy, falling away of the faith
- Doctrines of demons: salvation-by-works, universalism

He who practices righteousness is righteous

You can't separate a "religious righteousness" from a life of righteousness

- Worship is not just something we do on Sunday mornings, it is how we glorify God all day, every day

Being righteous before God is more than just being declared, "not guilty"

- It is more like being declared, "Not guilty and in right standing"

Being righteous before God means the presence of good, not just the absence of evil.

- We don't do good works to be righteous, we do good works because we are righteous.

(1 John 3:8-9) The root of sin and righteousness

He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

Everyone is either a child of God, or a child of the devil

- Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil and free us from our bondage to the devil... Another purpose:
- Not only did Jesus come to take away our sins, He also came to destroy the works of the devil.

What are these works? ...death & separation from God

Whoever has been born of God does not sin

The change from being of the devil to being children of God begins when we are born of God

- our old nature, patterned after the instinctive rebellion of Adam, dies
- and we are given a new nature, a new instinct to follow the pattern of Jesus Christ.

This is what it means to be born again.

- It means that a change comes into our lives
- This change will be in every area of our lives as we grow in Christ

[God's] seed remains in him

This is the promise of the Holy Spirit...

John 14:16 – *I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever*

This promise is unique to the Church... David & Saul

he cannot sin:

This has the same verb tense as does not sin in 1 John 3:6, meaning a continual practice of habitual sin.

- when we are born again into the family of God — there is a real change in our relation to sin.
- The Holy Spirit gives us a sensitivity to sin
- Christians should have a decreasing pattern of sin
- Like quality: continuous progress

(1 John 3:10) Two essentials: righteous conduct & love

In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.

- our spiritual parentage determines both our nature and our destiny.

way to identify the children of God and the devil:

Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor does he love his brother.

- Righteousness and love go hand-in-hand
- You can't have one without the other
- Right relationship with God = with others

Jesus addressed how His children would be identified:

John 13:35 – *By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*

How do we show love for one another? We spend time together... you want to be with the ones you love.

I hope this passage has helped you to better understand what it means to be a child of God...

- Righteousness & love will characterize our lives
- We know our destiny is eternal life (will be glorious)
- We do good works out of gratitude