

Thursday, January 15, 2025

John 1:12-13

As you enter your time with God today, take a moment to quiet your mind from thoughts of life and this world. Breathe this prayer: "Come, Lord Jesus, come. Fill me with your Spirit. Open my heart that you might share your words of life with me today. I long to be more like you."

We read today from John 1:12-13. Read the passage now or at the end of this devotion. What can we learn today about being "children of God"?

Which of your parents are you most like?

I'm physically like my dad's side of the family. We are both darker complected. Our facial features are the same. If I put on a fedora, I look so much like my grandpa it's a little scary. Physically, I am my father's son.

Emotionally, I'm more like my mother. How I feel and express my emotions follow patterns like hers. I've noticed habits that are sometimes encouraging, and sometimes frustrating because of what the Aukema genetics gave to me. In other ways, I am my mother's son.

Of course this makes sense. My parents' DNA combined to make me who I am, and our DNA is shown in every part of us. Additionally, I was raised in their home. I witnessed and learned from them every day, for good or for ill. It is no wonder that I've heard from folks who know my parents, "Oh, I just saw Ray in you!" "My goodness, that is just like Claire."

We are children of our parents. But our text today tells us something of our new identity in Christ that shifts our focus away from our DNA. We hear that our identity lies elsewhere.

"Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God."

This passage comes to us from John 1, the passage that Lisa Liou shared last week was a new creation passage in the line of Genesis 1. Christ is named as the Word by which Creation is done and that without Jesus, nothing could ever had been made.

Today's verses take that idea a step further. All are created through Christ, but only those who believe in his name know the next step of Christ's creation of us, becoming children of God. That's a beautiful encouragement, but what John says next should move us to awe and wonder.

John says that we are *"children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God."* On a spiritual level, we are challenged to see our identity as no longer influenced by our DNA or our family of origin. We must now see ourselves as born of God. Among others, this shows us two gifts that we receive because of this work of Christ.

The first gift is that we are children of God. We are part of his family. We are included among those that our Father cherishes as his own. All humanity knows the love of God in a general way. The sun and rain fall on every person. But his special love, the love that saves us from death is known to his kids. We have that gift because grace brings rebirth into new life.

The second gift comes with some responsibility. As a child of God, like how we carry the DNA and lessons learned from our parents, we now carry the attributes of God. His children look like him. They act like him. When others see God's children, they can quickly remark, "Oh look! They are followers of God. You can see it in how they act!"

Since many around us know that we profess faith, that means that they are watching even when we do not know it. When we miss the mark and get caught up in sin and selfishness, we are confusing the picture. How are they to know that our behavior isn't God in us, but our brokenness and sin that the Spirit is continuing to work in? The problem is that they don't. What they see they equate with "our Father" and water of our testimony is muddied.

That's where our responsibility comes in. We are called to share Christ with the world in a way that they can truly see who he is. We are called to "be children of God" in everything so that when our friends and coworkers interact with us, they can't help but see Christ in us. Our lives are so connected to "the family" that the world sees Jesus in all that we do.

That's hard work, but it's the identity that we carry as his children. We want the world to see that the apples of God's children do not fall far from the tree.

May Christ equip us to give testimony to our Father. May we show the world around us that we are his kids and that we are being made to be just like our "Dad". May the Spirit continue that good work of transformation in us so that those around us can see more of the Father in everything that we do.

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord turn his smile towards you and give you his peace.

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

I love you all. Blessings.

Feel free to share this devotion with others.

Some questions out of today's text and teaching.

How does your life show others around you that you are a child of God? What might need to change so that you can "look more like your Father"?

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