



Sermon Series: 1 John: Testing the Pulse of Your Faith Part 3

Sermon Title: Unified In Christ

Speaker/ Date: Scott McCrea, November 14, 2021

1 John 3:1-18

In 1 John 3:1-18 John explains what we should look like as children of God.

Big Idea: Make yourself easy to identify as a child of God

As we go through 1 John 3 today, we are going to focus on two identifying markers of a Child of God.

1. Christians should hate sin and practice righteousness

1 John 3:4-6

What John means when he says **No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him** is that no one who is a child of God will continue a lifestyle of *continual, habitual* sin. In verse 4, John says that sin is lawlessness – that is an utter disregard for God and His laws. Scripture makes a distinction between someone who sins, as we all do, and someone who practices a lifestyle of active rebellion against God's known will, proving they have no regard for God's commands – they are lawless.

In **Matthew 7:23** Jesus explains that when He judges the workers of lawlessness He will cast them away because they never knew Him, and He never knew them.

It's true that all people are created in the image of God, but scripture teaches that's not what makes us children of God. John says some people can be called a child of God, but the rest are children of the devil, and whether someone is a child of God or a child of the devil is evident by their actions. **1 John 3:7-10**

If you are a child of God, there was a time when you were a child of the devil, but when you put your trust in Jesus for your salvation, your parental ownership was transferred, you were adopted, and you became a child of God. Jesus destroyed the work of the devil so that children of God are no longer slaves to sin. If you put your trust in Jesus for your salvation, you were

born again, and God's Holy Spirit entered into you and gave you a new heart.

John tells us in verse 9 that the child of God cannot and does not practice a lifestyle of active rebellion against God. The child of God hates sin, resists it, and strives to live righteously, and because of Jesus' victory on the cross, we are **NOT BOUND TO SIN** – we can be quick to confess and turn away from it even in the midst of it.

2. Christians should love one another with actions

1 John 3:11-18

We know God is love and His children are called to reflect His nature and display love. This is not a new concept that John is introducing – it is woven throughout the New Testament from Paul to Peter Jesus to John – Paul said **1 Thessalonians 4:9-11, Peter 4:8, John 13:34-35**

Loving one another is such a **BASIC COMMAND**, but it is so **ESSENTIAL** in the life of a Christian because love is the very thing that creates unity in the church. Without love, there can be no lasting unity.

A threat from the outside is not the greatest threat to the church. The greatest threat to the church is division from within. Division will tear God's church apart if it is allowed to prosper. There is one spot in the New Testament where Jesus prayed for the church today and He prayed for unity. **John 17:20-23**

The world know that the Father sent Jesus when the church is united. And the church can only be united as long as we have love for one another.

As Christians, we are not called to agree on every single thing, but we are called to love one another. You can disagree with people and still love them. It is a mark of a child of God. John says don't just love with words – love with actions. Let it be evident that you love your brother or sister. You can disagree with someone and still love them. That is a concept that is not celebrated by the world.

In Matthew 24 Jesus was describing the end times and He *said as **lawlessness increases the love of many will grow cold.*** Lawlessness and love are directly linked. According to Jesus, the world will continue to move toward lawlessness and away from love. As children of God, we are called to be different and continually move away from lawlessness and toward love. We are called to look and act different not just out of sheer will power but because we have the Holy Spirit.

Discussion Questions:

- **What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?**
- **Do others identify you as a child of God by your actions? Explain.**
- **Explain the difference between those who John considers lawless and Christians who sin.**
- **Explain a time when you disagreed with another Christian yet you showed love to them. How did you show love to them?**
- **Give examples of what it looks like to love other Christians**