

1 John 3:1-3

“What We Are, What We Shall Be, What We Should Be”

We left off last time thinking through familial likeness. When someone is born of another, there's typically what we refer to as a “family resemblance”. We tend to take after our parents in some form or fashion. & John was bringing insight to the fact of what's true physically, is also true spiritually. In Vs 29 of Ch 2 he said... (read).

You & me, we can say that we're in Christ, we've been born again, we know the Lord (& all the rest). But the simple truth of the matter is that if our lives don't reflect that reality on the basis (not of what we say) of what our lives display... then perhaps we've trusted in the church, or jumped through some religious hoops, prayed a prayer, or maybe was baptized... but we haven't been “born again” of the Spirit of God. – Because God is righteous, & if His nature lives in us, then although we won't *perfect* righteousness, as His children we'll certainly *practice* righteousness. John is wanting us to know that the way we recognize other believers, isn't by their *lips*, it's by their *lives*.

If we're born of God, we'll take after our heavenly Father. That's the train of thought that John is on as we enter Ch 3. & What we discover is that John was just taken aback, he was awe struck... overwhelmed (& appropriately so) by the fact that we (as believers) aren't only *saved by God*, but that we are (in truth) *children of God*. & He's thinking, “As long as we're on the subject, I want you to set your mind on what that *says about God*...”

Vs 1-3

I trust you picked up on what I was putting down 😊. John says, “The fact that we're born of God, says something about God & it speaks to some things about you & me.” The primary thing (about God) that it highlights or holds up for us to see (& John wants us to think on it for a while, so that's what we're gonna do) is the tremendously vast, immeasurable (I would go as far as to say incomprehensible, unfathomable) love that God has for us.

✳️ He says, “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God.” The very 1st word tells us what John wants of us... He says, “Behold”. It's an imperative, it's a command. He says, “Look at this”, “set your eyes upon it, turn your attention to it. I want you to concentrate *on it* & think *about it*.”

Think about what? – John says, “I want you to think about what *manner* of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God...” This word that's translated “what manner” or maybe your bible says, “how great”, it's only used 7xs in your NT, & it always implies astonishment or amazement.

In fact, the original meaning is more literally, “of what country”. In other words, John is saying that God’s love is so great, so magnanimous that it’s foreign to humanity, it’s unearthly, it’s “otherworldly”. He’s saying, “Look at this love; this measureless, matchless love, (foreign to humanity) that the Father has for you & me.” *It’s impossible that we should understand fully, comprehend entirely its width, its length, its depth, its height... & To truly think about it, & reflect upon it should create a sense of awe & wonder w/in us. Let your heart be astonished by & overwhelmed w/the Love of God. It’s unearthly, otherworldly, “too high” for me. **

& As you study or think through John’s writings, it’s apparent that he spent time thinking about it, being blown away *by* it. He speaks of the instrumental role that God’s love played in our very salvation. *There he is in the 3rd Ch of his gospel, reflecting upon & writing down the conversation that Jesus had w/Nicodemus in which Jesus explained that to see the kingdom of God, a person had to be born again of the Spirit of God. & Nicodemus was perplexed, he was confused, he said, “How can this be? How can a man be born again?” & Jesus began to speak of Him of the necessity of the cross & said those words that have become such an anchor to our soul. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”*¹

*Of course, we realize that the attribute through which God saves us is His *grace*, but the initiative He took to *extend* His grace was rooted in His *love*. & The thing about God’s love is that it’s not drawn to us because we’re so lovely. It’s active in seeking us out despite our *unloveliness*. The Bible says, *“But God demonstrates His own (unique, individual) love toward us, in that while we were still sinners (still His enemies), Christ died for us.”*²

& This “manner” of love, that all giving, non-self-seeking (self-sacrificing) others-oriented kind of love that God has, notice, He hasn’t simply graced us w/a small flicker of it. A little taste of it. He’s “bestowed” it on us. Meaning, He’s *lavished* it upon us, *engulfed* us in it, *we’ve been surrounded & swamped by it*. & The idea behind “bestowed” is that of a one-sided act. We didn’t earn it, or do anything to deserve it, God just poured it out. Not because *we’re* so great, but because *He’s* so great!

But John takes us even farther. God’s love doesn’t find it’s “limit” (if you’ll allow me that word) in our salvation (as incredible, inexplicable & Incomprehensible as that is), it extends even to *sonship*.

¹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Jn 3:16]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Ro 5:8]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called *children of God*.” The Bible teaches that by nature we are *children of wrath* (Eph 2). But John tells us in his gospel, “*But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*”^{3*}

I think that we often don’t allow this to resonate & marinate in us as we should. There’s a real sense in which God didn’t need to make us family to rescue us from depravity & save us from hell.

* Imagine a scenario in which you find someone (maybe out on the street), they have nothing, they’re totally destitute. For whatever reason your heart is moved w/compassion & you decide to help that person out. You don’t just give them money, you take them to your house, & you don’t just allow them to shower off & clean up. **You say, “I’m going to allow you to live in my guest home (if any of us had one 😊) out back. & I’m not just going to stock your fridge, you’re going to eat at my table, every evening.”** – I think anyone would look at you & say, “**You’ve gone far & above the call of duty. Your mercy, your compassion, the way you’ve interceded in that person’s life & rescued them from certain despair is w/out compare.**”

But Ladies & Gentlemen, God did more than that! He said, “Not only am I seeking you *out*, sweeping you *up* & giving you new life. I’m adopting you as My child, you’re entering in to My inheritance, everything I have is now yours!” -- & We begin to understand John’s mindset, “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called *children of God!*” *

You gain exponentially more in Christ, than you ever lost in Adam. Adam was never called a child of God, in the sense that John speaks of here. He was never adopted as a son of God as you are & I am. – Don’t think of redemption as a mere restoration of what was lost when Adam sinned. You gain infinitely more in Christ, than you ever lost in Adam.

“Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.” As a child of God, you are a foreigner, a stranger to this world. (This culture/climate that stands in hostility toward God). The world didn’t understand J.C. (the Son of God), don’t expect that it should understand you as a child of God. You are light, the world loves darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.

³ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). [\(Jn 1:12-13\)](#). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

There are 2 different families, 2 different fathers when it comes to the people on this planet. Jesus said the same when He was being chided by the religious leaders of His day. He said, "I speak what I have seen w/My Father, & you do what you have seen w/your father." They were all, "We weren't born of fornication (implying He was since Mary & Joseph weren't married when she turned up pregnant); we have one father – God!" Jesus said, "If God were your Father, you would love Me." (There's a litmus test for ya, do you wanna know if you're born again, do you truly love J.C.)? He said, *"You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it."*⁴

Satan is the god of this world, God is your Father, the world won't understand you, won't love or appreciate you, far as they're concerned, you're from a different place altogether... & they're right. Your citizenship (Phil 3:20) is in heaven.

Vs 2

In Vs 1 John speaks of what we are, here in Vs 2 he speaks to what we shall be, he's talking about your destiny as a child of God. & As he begins to lean into your destiny, he underlines, or emphasizes once again what you are presently. He says, "Beloved now we are children of God." It's not something you one day will be, or might perhaps hope to be, it's what you are (in Christ) currently!

* Listen, I want you to realize that you can be confident in your status as a child of God. You don't have to leave here wondering or wavering or wishing. You can stand certain in your position as a child of God. Paul wrote in Romans Ch 8, *"For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.' 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,"*⁵ If you're a child of God, you don't have to worry or wonder about it, the Holy Spirit bears witness w/your spirit, He assures you inwardly of who you are in reality as a child of God.

Now, if you're sitting there & you're thinking, "I am worried and wondering about it, I don't have any kind of 'witness' in me. In fact, I have no idea what you're talking about!" Then it's time for you to recognize your need for J.C., to believe on Him & be saved! *

So, who we are presently is clear, no confusion, what we ultimately *will be* (however) is cloudy... did you catch that?

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [In 8:44]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁵ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Ro 8:15–17]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

He says, “Beloved, now we are the children of God; & it has not yet been revealed what we *shall be*...” This is one of those “mysteries” that God has left in obscurity, uncertainty for you & me. We’d really like more details concerning what all our transformation will entail when we leave this world & enter our eternal state. **But John says, “We really have no idea exactly how we’re going to look or how we’re going to function in glory...”** Ladies & gentlemen it’s just 1 of the many surprises that awaits us when we go to be w/the Lord or He comes for us, whichever comes 1st.

Of course, there are passages that tease us a little. 1 Cor 15 touches on it a bit (I’ll just leave it at that & try & whet your appetite to read it later). In the book of Phil Paul says this, **“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”**⁶

Let me just say this. For all that we *don’t* know, what we *do* know is that it’s going to be so incredible... so inconceivable, that it’ll be beyond anything you could think or even imagine 1,000-fold & infinitely more... **Sometimes people have questions, wondering if their dog will be in heaven, or what their relationship to their spouse will be in heaven... The inference is that they might be somehow disappointed w/heaven if it’s not how they envision it or desire it to be. Well, I’m here to tell you, it’s *not* how you envision it, it’s *not* how you desire it, it’s infinitely greater than what you could ask or imagine & you will not be disappointed!**

***** One thing we *do know* (Jn says) is that when He (that is Jesus) is revealed, when He returns for His bride (the church), we shall be *like Him* for we shall see Him as He is. 😊 How does that sound? We may not know many things about our glorified state, but *this thing* we know, we’re going to be like Jesus...

Not in the sense that you’ll be God or absorbed into some kind of “God consciousness” as in a state of nirvana or some nonsense like that. But you will be perfectly w/out sin, you’ll be perfectly holy & righteous, you’ll have your glorified resurrection body. Oh, you’ll still be you, God won’t do away w/your personality. You’ll be known even as you’re known. But you’ll be brought into the full stature of perfection... like Christ.

Btw, you do realize that’s the plan of God for your life, right?

Some would have you believe that God's great plan for your life is to give you health & wealth, to bring you comfort in every circumstance & happiness in every relationship. But that's not what the Bible teaches, alludes to or even implies. The Bible is very clear concerning God's great plan for your life & it's written plainly in Rom 8:29, "*For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son,*"⁷ That's the plan of God for your life, to make you like Jesus. *

It begins here & now, it'll be completely fulfilled when you see Him, when you're in His presence (not just in the spiritual sense, but in the literal sense). & I might add, *that is perhaps the greatest glory of heaven altogether*. Yes, we long to see the great gates crafted of pearl, the streets of gold so pure that they're clear, the angels worshipping around the throne of God day & night, our friends, family & heroes of the faith. But the greatest glory of heaven is surely to be in the unhindered, unrestricted, unobstructed presence of Jesus...

For now, we don't see Him as He is. We have more of an obstructed view. Paul put it like this, "*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.*"⁸ *In his day, a mirror wasn't a perfect reflection. It was simply polished metal, it was always a bit grainy or wavy, somewhat distorted. But the day is coming when we will see Him w/perfect clarity.*

"When we all get to heaven, what a day of rejoicing that will be. When we all see Jesus, we'll sing and shout the victory!" – It should be found in your heart to be like Jesus. & If you do, it'll show in your life now & it'll be realized in eternity. If you *don't* really want to be like Jesus, that will show in your life right now as well... I would go as far as to say that to the extent that you truly see Him, to that extent you are like Him, & we long for the day that we see Him as He is.

Vs 3

If Vs 1 is what we are, Vs 2 is what we shall be, Vs 3 is what we *should* be. * Knowing that the day is coming when you will see Jesus, when we will be made *like* Jesus for all eternity, that should serve as incentive to seek to lead a holy life *presently*. It should impact us in a way that serves to clean up our lives morally. Close

God has given all that He has to make you His child, not because He *had* to, but because of His great *love* for you. & Since Jesus has paid the ultimate price for you & *me*, we should have no desire to sin against *Him*.

⁷ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ro 8:29). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁸ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (1 Co 13:12). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

It's been said, "An unbeliever who sins is a creature sinning against his Creator. A Christian who sins is a child sinning against his Father. The unbeliever sins against law; the believer sins against love." *

* & Btw, I'd point out that "hope" in the biblical sense isn't a optimistic wish intermingled w/a chance for failure (kind of like we use the word today). Biblical hope is a concrete reality, a guaranteed certainty. Where is our hope? It's not in heaven, it's not in a place, not in money or some other kind of success financially/politically/militarily or otherwise. We don't hope in good health, creature comforts or the acquiring of material things. & We *certainly* don't hope in ourselves...

"My hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus' blood and righteousness I dare not trust the sweetest frame But wholly trust in Jesus' name." Our hope is in J.C.

If your hope *isn't* in J.C. than truly you have no hope. You are w/out hope being w/out God in the world. Turn from your sin, trust in J.C. & you will become, *you will be called a child of God...* *

Prayer Points:

Father we're blessed & blown away by the overwhelming display of love that You have shown in making us Your children... Help us to lead lives becoming of You. We're excited to think of what You've prepared for us, what awaits us in Your presence... But most of all, Lord we just can't wait to see You as You are, to be in Your presence forevermore. Even so we pray, come Lord Jesus.

If you don't have that hope, that assurance, that witness w/in your spirit that you are a child of God. I'd encourage you not to leave here w/out it. You've been born physically, but Jesus said we must be born *again* as by the Spirit of God. That transformation takes place through simple faith. Call upon the Lord, believe *in* the Lord and you will be saved.