

That You May Have Life In His Name

John 1:9-13

Pastor Matt Dean

⁹ The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

(Jn 1:9–13)

John is writing this account of Jesus with a clear goal in mind, that people would know that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God – and that by believing this of God, they would have life in his name.

We see in verses 9-11 that the light of the world came to a dark and dying world, wrecked by sin and blinded by pride and self reliance. When this true light, Jesus, took on flesh and entered into humanity, He did so among people that were looking for a Messiah, among people who were waiting on God.

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We see that Jesus – that maker of the world was not recognized by so many He had made. The very minds of people He created were too proud to see Him, many of the very mouths He had formed for His glory were unable to articulate praise and glory due His Name, the able bodies He had made were unable to kneel before Him in humility, the very arms He had made for his purposes were unable to embrace Him has the long awaited Messiah.

We see that Jesus came to his own (gk “to his own domain”) and yet his own people did not receive Him.

³⁹ You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, ⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life

(Jn 5:39–40)

We can see in each of the gospel accounts the very real spiritual blindness and prideful opposition that many Jews had towards Jesus.

When Jesus, the light of the world, revealed the eternal light and life of God, the lights came on to reveal a dying world, rife with idolatry, burdened by brokenness, populated by prideful people, steeped in sexual sin, conflicted with wars and violence. The light of the world revealed just how dark the realm of evil truly is.

But we see something else in verses 12-13.

¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

This word “receive” means this: to receive or accept an object or benefit for which the initiative rests with the giver, but the focus of attention in the transfer is upon the receiver—‘to receive, receiving, to accept.’

The initiative rests with the one giving it. The attention is upon the receiver.

God gives. People receive His attention. ← THIS IS GRACE! God giving his unmerited favor to us in Jesus.

But to all who did receive Jesus.

To all who believed in His name.

To all who completely trust in / depend on / rely upon His name.

He gave the right to become children of God.

For those who receive Jesus, who welcome His initiative, who acknowledge Him as the Son of God, who welcome Him as the Messiah...

For those who believe Jesus a new right is given.

To become children of God, born of God.

Receive. Believe. Become.

11 years ago, April and I stood in the doorway of a smoky hotel in SW China where we met our dear Anna Grace. Years before she was ever born, we knew in our hearts that adoption was part of our calling as a family. Before we ever met her we loved her and prepared to welcome her as our own, and over the five years of waiting for her, the Lord continued to open our hearts to more children in need of families. A week after welcoming Anna into our family and in the midst of grieving the death of our son Noah Watchman Dean, who died days before we would meet him, we stood in the lobby of a government building in SE China where we met our dear Noelle and welcomed her into our family. These precious girls at no fault of their own who needed a family, now had one. All that is ours is now theirs. The miracle of adoption is such a picture of the Gospel and clear reminder of what God has done. Infinitely more, this is what God has done. You were born into sin. You were born into darkness. And God sent His son, to bring about new birth, new life, and to bring His children home.

¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Future Glory

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

(Ro 8:14–21)

Adoption as God's children is something we receive, and God's Spirit is the one bearing witness to us that we belong to Him. In the backdrop of suffering and futility, the hope is for creation to set free from corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. (1 Jn 3:1–2)

You are a child of God.

¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, (Jn 1:12)

As a child of God, you are a friend of Jesus Christ.

¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. (Jn 15:15)

As a child of God, You have peace with God.

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ro 5:1)

You are united with the Lord and are one with Him in spirit.

¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (1 Co 6:19–20)

As a child of God, You are blessed, chosen, predestined, adopted, redeemed, and forgiven in Jesus' name.

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace. (Eph 1:3–7)

As a child of God, You are delivered from darkness and stand redeemed in the kingdom of Jesus.

¹³ He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Col 1:13–14)

As a child of God, You are complete in Christ

⁹ For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰ and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. (Col 2:9–10)

As a child of God, You are alive in Christ and your record of sin is cancelled and nailed to the cross.

¹³ And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. (Col 2:13–14)

As a child of God, You have a sure and steady confidence before the throne of God where mercy and grace awaits to help you in your time of need.

¹⁴ Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Heb 4:14–16)

As a child of God, You are free from condemnation in Christ Jesus.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. ³ For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (Ro 8:1–4)

As a child of God, You are assured that God is working for your good in all circumstances.

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. ²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. (Ro 8:26–28)

As a child of God, nothing can separate you from God's love in Christ Jesus your Lord.

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Ro 8:37–39)

As a child of God, you have been established, anointed, and sealed by the Holy Spirit.

²¹ And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, ²² and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. (2 Co 1:21–22)

As a child of God, you are hidden with Christ in God.

³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. (Col 3:3–4)

As a child of God, He will complete the work He started in you.

⁶ And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. (Php 1:6)

As a child of God, you are a citizen of heaven.

²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. (Php 3:20–21)

As a child of God, you don't have to be afraid or live with a troubled heart.

²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. (Jn 14:27)

As a child of God, you are a new creation with a ministry of reconciliation.

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Co 5:17–21)

