

# Children of God

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[ 0 : 00 ] Before I move forward, I would like to say thanks to a dear friend and brother, brother in grace, for visiting us this morning.! And for the first time, I have all three of my children here.

So if you want to meet them, my youngest son recently moved back to Nassau. So Adam and Leah were here several times before, you may have met them, but now I have the three who actually live here in Nassau.

So it's a pleasure having them here to listen in. I hope that your experience today will not be the type of experience they had.

I remember in their younger days, when there was time for discipline, I could see my daughter looking in my face and she's saying, Dad, please beat me. No more lectures. Just beat me.

I hope that will not be your experience this morning. My children are, I guess, very used to me giving them sermons of another sort, I guess.

[ 1 : 25 ] But I hope for you, it will be one that blesses your heart. Good morning to you, everyone who is present and those of you on Facebook and on YouTube.

While we have been working our way through the book of James, we have taken a few Sundays off from that series. Last week, our brother Clarence Roll spoke to us from Romans 8, 31, 39, with a sermon entitled, God's Love Alone.

Our brother showed us from the text, the evidence of God's love in that he did not spare his own son in order to redeem us. He further spoke of another act of God's love in that he puts his shield of protection around us in that no one can bring a charge against God's children, his elect.

There is no question and there is no doubt that God went to extreme lengths in order that we might be redeemed and that we might be his children.

As the apostle John put it, see what kind of love the father has given us, that we should be called children of God. And so we are.

[ 2 : 38 ] The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 1 John 3, 1. What an amazing thing it is that we, of all people, we, as sinful and wretched as we are, that we would have such love be served on us so as to be called the children of God.

Now, this is not a privilege given to everyone. For John says, the reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

Today's sermon is entitled Children of God. And we will explore who the children of God are. Before we go any further, let us pause for prayer.

Father, we cannot thank you enough for choosing to reveal yourself to the world so that we might come to understand and know who you are.

We thank you for that. Despite our sin, you did not spare your own son. He came, he lived among us, and being the perfect lamb, he died in our place so that we might become your children, those who abide in you.

[ 3 : 55 ] What great love you have lavished on us in the giving of your son to atone for our sin. Your son and our Lord conquer death, and when you rose from the grave, in like fashion, we too will be raised from death unto life, into your eternal kingdom to be with you forever.

We look to that day when we will reach our eternal home. All praise be to you, Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who now sits in throne.

As we continue to live, give us ears to hear, eyes that see, and hearts that love you more and more. For those who do not know you, we ask that you grant mercy to them as you have granted to us.

For none of us deserve anything but your wrath, as we have all broken your law. Help us, Father, to live with grateful hearts, and that we will live in such a manner that you will receive all the glory.

For yours is the kingdom, and yours is the power, forever and ever. These things we pray. Amen.

[ 5 : 11 ] As some of you know, by profession, I'm a businessman. From the beginning, being involved in retail.

During most of those years, and the early ones in particular, it was a common experience for me to be called at my desk by sales staff for me to give the okay to accept a check from so-and-so. Given that the sales staff was already briefed on how to handle such matters, they would say that the customer had called my name, expressing that they knew me.

I would say, who is this person? I would then be given their name, to which I would inevitably respond with a follow-up question.

And how do they say that they know me? Quite honestly, and I must confess, I'm not one to remember names very well.

[ 6 : 17 ] One thing I have found intriguing about our culture is how normal it is that people would have already told the salesperson how they actually knew me. Which itself was often the dead giveaway that they, in fact, only knew who I was.

But did not actually know me. Some would identify me as being someone from their primary school. Or from the same school I graduated from.

Or that our children knew each other. Or perhaps they even were family. Distant family. On occasion. On occasion.

They would even know lots of things about me. The names of my parents, of my children, where I live, and who some of my friends are, where I go to church, etc., etc.

So let me get this straight. They know me. But I don't even recognize them by name. And what about that check?

[ 7 : 25 ] I would most often say to my sales staff, Oh, I know who they are, all right. But I don't know them. And certainly not like that.

We may, in fact, know a lot about the person. And we may have met them and even been around them many times.

But does that mean that we know them? The greater and often, greater and often the better question is, Do they know me?

This should have a familiar ring to us. To us all who have been in Christian circles for a while. As our Lord was concluding the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave an eerily similar account of what it would be like for those trying to cash their check for eternal life.

He said, Not everyone who says, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven. But the one who does the will of my Father, who is in heaven, on that day many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name?

[ 8 : 39 ] And cast out demons in your name? And do many mighty works in your name? And then I will declare to them, I never knew you. Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.

Matthew 7, 21 to 23. Calling someone's name in order to have a check cleared and being denied may be offsetting enough.

But imagine that at the very moment of truth when everything is on the line, hearing those words, Me?

You call it me, Lord? Do I know you? Pause for a moment and consider hearing words from the one who holds your destiny in his hands.

I never knew you. Depart from me, you worker of iniquity. One of the greatest deceptions of the evil one is in getting us to think that knowing things about God is the same thing as knowing God.

[ 9 : 55 ] Many people who claim to know God never take the time to actually be with him. to read his word, to get to know who he actually is.

We settle, rather, for knowing what is basic information. When it comes to putting in the actual time, we prefer to busy ourselves with things trivial and far less important.

We know enough to respectfully say, Lord, Lord. But that won't cut it. Children of God. Turn with me now to today's sermon text, 1 John 3, 1 through 10.

See what kind of love the Father has given us, that we should be called the children of God, and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

Beloved, we are God's children now, on 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.

[ 11 : 01 ] And everyone who has, and everyone who thus hopes in him, purifies himself as he is pure. Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness.

Sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared in order to take away sins. And in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning.

No one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Little children, let no one deceive you.

Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil.

For the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning.

[12:08] For God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who the children of God, by this it is evident who the children of God, and who are the children of the devil.

Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. 1 John 3, 1-10. Using today's passage, I want to solidify in our minds the following.

The children of God are those who abide in them. Who then are the children of God? How can they be identified?

What are the things that separate the children of God from those who are not the children of God? Contrary to popular culture, there is this idea that the children of God are not easily identifiable.

But the apostle John says, right in his text, by this it is evident who the children of God, who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil.

[13:21] Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. That's 1 John 3-10. A few years back, I was having a conversation with a dear elderly sister in the Lord.

She had recently experienced the sudden loss of her eldest son, a godly man, whom I also knew. You could see the glow in her eyes, despite the loss, in knowing that her son was now with the Lord.

As she lamented, she then began talking to me about all of her children, whom she loved and prayed for constantly.

I could hear the tenderness in her voice as she mentioned each one by name, all of whom had made a profession of faith at some point in their life. As she continued, she mentioned a deep concern she had for one of her children who was not living for the Lord for the past decade or more and who had become involved in an entirely different religion.

Then she said, I can only hope and trust that the Lord, I can only hope and trust that the Lord, that when he made his profession in his earlier days, that he truly meant it.

[14:46] only the Lord knows that's what she said to me. I was dumbfounded. Given that she was grieving though, I chose not to respond.

But in my mind, I thought, what's told for? And so is the thought pattern of many of those whom I grew up with in the faith.

Why is it that so many people believe that a prayer once upon others has some magical powers in opening the doors of heaven? Clearly the gospel message is repent and believe.

So when repentance is lacking, why is it so hard for us to see it for what is partly obvious? I remain convinced and I know some of you are that this repeat after me sinner's prayer has become the thing that people actually place their trust in as opposed to their trust in Christ himself.

He is not Lord. Repentance is not evident. But the unconverted but the unconverted walk with a full assurance of salvation believing that they have been redeemed because they are at a prayer?

[16:19] There is no such prayer to be found in the Bible anywhere. And I would add there is no step one, step two and step three formula to be found in the scripture either.

there is nothing that you can do in order to become children of God. That is not a status that you can earn. More or not later.

Now back to our text. Let's read the verse again. But this time let's use another translation so that we can get a better understanding of what the apostle is actually saying. 1 John 3 10 reads as follows in the New American Standard Bible.

By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious. Obvious is the word the New American Standard uses.

Evident is the word used in the English Standard Version. Contrary to this stop judging me culture that wishes for you to think to the contrary the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious.

[ 17 : 35 ] Evident. The only question for us is what are those things that make the children of God obvious? Again the children of God are those who abide in him.

But what does abide in him look like? What are the obvious characteristics of those who abide? First the children of God those who abide seek purity.

Verse 3 reads and everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. Purity doesn't appear to be important to many people these days.

In fact many tend to not desire purity for the express purpose of better fitting into the surrounding culture. Who wants to be that oddball after all?

The one who is unlike all the rest. God I'm reminded by something that Vodhi Parkham often says concerning the 11th commandment which he says and I agree has supplanted all the others.

[ 18 : 54 ] The 11th commandment is thou shall be nice. So in the attempt to be nice we don't want to have the slightest hint of rubbing the culture in any way.

We do whatever is necessary to appear nice and positive. Thou shall be nice. Never does anything that makes the other uncomfortable nor anything that causes other people to feel in any way shape or form any shame guilt or remorse.

Being nice is the only thing that matters. It's never offensive. and always uplifting. But purity has its way of weaving into behavioral changes that in fact not only rubs the culture but draws swords with the culture.

What then is purity? The dictionary describes it this way. Purity is freedom from immorality especially of a sexual nature.

while purity itself is something that cannot be seen its effects are in fact clearly evident. It is a freedom from immorality.

[ 20 : 15 ] this gets to the heart of the matter the heart of the matter pun intended and from the heart all actions flow.

By the way we did this in James David David in his contrition asks God to create in me a pure heart O God Psalm 51 10 Jesus in the beatitude says blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God Matthew 5 8 Paul in his first letter to Timothy says the aim of our charge is love that issues from our pure heart and a good conscience!

1 Timothy 1 5 Notice the words of David Jesus and Paul What is patently obvious is that we all need a pure heart A pure heart results in the life that seeks to be void of immorality in all its forms It affects everything we do What you read What you listen to Your desires Your preferences How you spend your time and money The places you go Your speech Your attitude The friends you keep The manner in which you serve The level which you sacrifice and a whole lot more Purity manifests itself in limitless ways and purity is the direct reflection of the holiness of God and when purity and holiness wears its head that is a sure rub to offend the culture which leads to my second point the children of

God that is those who abide in him keep God's law while purity is largely about the heart state of being something itself that is unseen one of its effects results in the keeping of God's law this is where the rubber starts to hit the road big time verses 4 to 5 of our text reads as follows everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness sin is lawlessness you know that he appeared in order to take away sins and in him there is no sin no one who abides in him keeps on sinning no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him those who continue on in sin are one and the same as those who are practicing lawlessness lawlessness is the breaking of the law but what law is in view here

Jesus sums up the entire decalogue when answering the question what is the greatest commandment he stated that the love of God was the greatest commandment and the second was to love your neighbor as yourself some people see this as a supplanting a supplanting of the decalogue the ten commandments as opposed to the summary of it and this is simply fallacious way back in the book of the law God made his moral law known that we know that what we know as the ten commandments indulge me for a moment in order to make a point about the commandments today's Christian tends to mirror the world's antinomian mindset which is an anti law mindset love is now thought to be something that opposes law altogether as though there is no relationship between the two accordingly we

[ 24 : 17 ] Christians have widely undermined the significance and necessity of the law of God the very thing that was intended to be the school master that leads the sinner to Christ the moral law that is the commandments have been long ago relegated to the shelf for the most part but consider

this I want you to hear me consider this the scriptures reveal to us that there is only one time in recorded history that God with his own hands wrote something down and it was the Decalogue the Ten Commandments and he wrote it twice Moses broke the first tablets on which they were written so God wrote them down a second time if God wrote it wrote it down himself and twice never having written anything before nor since again with his own hands how significant do you think they may be for those of you wishing to verify what

I have just said have a look at Deuteronomy 4 13 and Deuteronomy! 10 4 that's the first and the second writing now back to my main points of the sermon consider the sermon on the mount as recorded for us in Matthew chapters 5 to 7 practically all of the commandments save one were reiterated and affirmed by Jesus further in his preamble to the sermon Jesus said two very significant things concerning!

One that he did not come to abolish the law nor the prophets Matthew 5 17 and two that those who teach his commandments will be called the greatest in the kingdom Matthew 5 19 brothers and sisters the children of God are law keepers commandment keepers and they make and they make every effort to not sin against the Lord as John has indicated for us in today's text those who abide in him keep God's law the commandments of God thirdly my final point the children of God those who abide!

they practice righteousness righteousness verse 7 reads listen children little children let no one deceive you whoever practices righteousness is righteous as he is righteous the children of God are those who practice righteousness while there are things that we ought not do there are those things that on the other hand that we are supposed to be actively engaged to do things that make it obvious that we are children of God what might these things be in his epistle again 1st John the same 1st John the apostle John mentions the following as examples of acts of righteousness things that we are to do we are to walk in light in the light and have fellowship with one another chapter 1 verse 7 we are to confess our sins chapter 1 verse 8 we are to admit that we still do sin chapter 1 verse 9 we are to walk as

[ 28 : 03 ] Jesus did chapter 2 verse 6 we are to love our brothers and sisters chapter 2 verse 10 we are to do the will of the father to confess Jesus as Lord chapter 2 verse 23 we are to sacrifice for one another chapter 3 verse 16 we are to share what we have with one another chapter 3 17 and there is more and there is more as the list is not intended to be exhaustive acts of righteousness includes the sharing of our abilities those gifted abilities that God has given us the apostle Peter puts it this way as each of you have received a gift use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's very very grace whoever speaks as one who speaks to oracles of God whoever serves as one who serves by the strength that God provides 1 Peter 4 10 and 11 righteousness also manifests itself through acts of kindness acts of forgiveness acts of mercy acts of reconciliation acts of restoration acts of grace one of the greatest acts of righteousness of the church and everyone in it is to pursue the restoration of a brother or sister who has fallen into sin as depicted in Matthew chapter 18 by the way the first time we hear the mention of the word church in the scriptures the first time

Jesus mentions it and the first time he mentions it this is what he talks about the restoration of fellow believers those who have gone astray the first mention another is to seek the reconciliation with a brother or sister who may be at odds with you now this is not restoration reconciliation this is reconciliation which is you know you know brother or sister have something you know there's a little tiff we call them you know we have some little angst with each other that's another one to seek reconciliation with a brother or sister who may be at odds listen to the words of Jesus again as he articulated it in the sermon on the mount so if you're offering your gift at the altar there and remember that your brother has something against you they have something against you not you have something against them you see the difference you know they have something against you you know nothing against them leave your gift at the altar and go and be reconciled with them and then come and offer you a gift

Matthew 5 23 to 24 brothers and sisters the children of God are those who seek purity keep God's law and practice righteousness to all of those under the sound of my voice both here present and online ask yourself this question am I a child of God is it obvious that I'm a child of God as the apostle James would put it where are the deeds that reflect that faith as the apostle John puts it is purity the law of God and the righteousness so visible that others are able to say now it is obvious that you are a child of God in closing I wish to draw your attention back to the three scripture

references made earlier concerning purity here's what David said again creating the pure heart oh God

Jesus said blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God and Paul the aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith the pure heart how does one get it is that something we can muster up from within is it attained by the act of the will can I make it happen and speak it into existence is it a decision to be made David answers create in me a pure heart oh God God must do it it is a state of being and not something that we can earn or achieve hear the words of Jesus again blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God he does not say blessed are those who purify their hearts but rather those whose hearts are in fact pure that's a state of being are those who are blessed and Paul affirms it that love flows from a pure heart the apostle

John uses the term born far more than any of the other apostles and here again in this epistle he says 1 John 2 29 if you know that he is righteous you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him and he used it again in today's sermon text in verse 9 no one born of God makes the practice of sinning the children of God those who abide in him are those who are born of God but how does that happen hear the words of Jesus as the apostle John relays it in the story of Nicodemus a teacher of Israel who came to Jesus by night as recorded in John chapter 3 verses 5 to 8 read Jesus answered truly truly I say to you unless one is born of water and of the spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of

[ 34 : 20 ] God that which is born of flesh is flesh and that which is born of the spirit is spirit do not marvel what I have said to you you must be born again the wind blows where it wishes and you hear it sound but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes so it is with everyone born of the spirit Jesus declares unto Nicodemus that you must be born again born of the spirit God must do it so how would you know if you are among the children of God born of God do you seek purity do you desire to please God by living in obedience and keeping his law do you seek to treat others in a manner that God says you ought either way either way you answer that question what you are will be evident those who are born of

God are obvious because they are children of God let us close in prayer father as children of God may we abide the more we cannot thank you enough for lavishing such great love upon us that we may know you we pray now for those who remain in unbelief that you would grant unto them eternal life so that they too may be born of you and become children of God who abide in you these things we ask in your name in the name of your son and our Lord Jesus Amen