**We Are the Children of God**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**1 John 3:1-6**

**Wednesday Evening**

**September 20, 2023**

**1 John 3:1-6**

1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. 4 Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. 5 And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. 6 Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.

**1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.**

Saints, John’s statement at the end of chapter 2 that believers are God’s children caused him to marvel at how very much God loves us that he would allow us to be called his children.

Great as he is, God has brought believers into the loving, intimate relationship of children with their Father.

John was emphasizing the assurance believers can have that they really are God’s children.

But being God’s children separates them from the world. The world does not desire to know God, and it even refused to recognize Christ as God’s Son,

so believers can hardly expect the world to understand their special relationship with God as his children.

**John 1:10-13**

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

**John 15:18-19**

18 "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

**2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.**

Saints, not sometime in the future, not when Christ returns, but already believers are God’s children.

Yet God’s people have a future, as John further explained that we can’t even imagine what we will be like when Christ returns. Christians have been born into God’s family, and they presently enjoy God’s kindness and blessings through Christ.

But in the future they will also fully share in his glory. Believers don’t yet know the specifics, but they do know that when he comes they will be like him.

This hints of what this future glory will be like. Christ will be revealed and his people will be like him, for they will see him as he really is.

The Greek word for “see” involves more than a merely physiological occurrence; it means “perceiving,” “recognizing,” even “appreciating.”

In order for people to truly know each other—to see each other as they really are—they have to share similar experiences.

Therefore, in order to see Jesus as he really is, Christians must experience the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings.

This was Paul’s aspiration; it was also John’s, as expressed in the following verse.

**Philippians 3:7-14**

7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ

9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

**3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.**

Saints, Because Jesus Christ lived without sin (he was pure), believers will keep themselves pure.

To be pure means to be morally and ethically free from the corruption of sin.

This is an ongoing cleansing process, beginning at rebirth and continuing until the day Jesus returns.

The more pure his people become, the clearer will be their view of Jesus, who is pure through and through.

God also purifies Christians, but they must take steps to remain morally fit:

**1 Timothy 5:22**

“Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure”

**James 4:8**

“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded”

**1 Peter 1:22-23**

22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, 23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever…

**4 Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.**

Saints, after defining purity, John next defined sin, presenting negatively the same truth he just expressed positively in.

**1 John 3:1-3**

1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Saints,since being born of God demands self-purification, then a life of sin, or a continual lack of purity, demonstrates that one cannot really be God’s child.

Sin cannot coexist with the new nature derived from the new birth. Sin is opposed to the law of God. Those who keep on sinning are active rebels against God.

There is a difference between committing a sin and continuing to sin. Even the most faithful believers sometimes commit sins, but they do not cherish a particular sin and choose to commit it.

A believer who commits a sin repents, confesses, and finds forgiveness. Those who continue to sin, by contrast, will not repent of what they are doing.

Thus, they never confess and never receive forgiveness. They live in opposition to God, no matter what religious claims they make.

**5 And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.**

Saints, Besides the fact that sin is rebellion against God, another reason that Christians should not sin is because Jesus came to take away their sins.

In other words, to know of such a sacrifice and then to keep on sinning depreciates that sacrifice. The reason Jesus came to earth was to take away people’s sins.

This could only happen because there is no sin in him, so he could provide a suitable sacrifice. Under the Old Testament sacrifice system, Jews offered a lamb without blemish as a sacrifice for sin.

Jesus is:

**John 1:29**

“the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”

Saints, because Jesus lived a perfect life and sacrificed himself for sin, people can be completely forgiven (2:2).

Only he could bridge the gap between the sinless God and sinful people. Jesus died on the cross in our place, taking all our wrongdoing upon himself, saving us from the ultimate consequences of our sin—eternal judgment.

Because Jesus still lives and still has no sin in him, it follows that he is totally opposed to sin. It also follows, then, that those who claim to be his people must be totally opposed to sin.

**6 Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.**

Saints, those who continue to live in Christ won’t sin. The Greek word behind “continue to live” is the same verb John used in his Gospel about the branches continuing to live in the vine.

**John 15:1-8**

1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

Saints, as a branch lives in the vine, it draws its life from the vine. As believers live in Christ, they are free from the power of sin.

Living in sin and living in God are mutually exclusive, like darkness and light.

John was confronting various types of false teachers. Some taught that they were sinless, actually unable to sin.

They claimed superiority over everyone else. These teachings are refuted in:

**1 John 3:8-10**

8 He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. 9 Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.

To this group, John explained that while Christians should indeed be “sinless,” it was not the kind of sinlessness that the false teachers claimed to have.

Experience bears out the fact that sin is still very much in every believer’s life.

Yet believers can stop living a life of sin through sensitivity to sin when it occurs, sincere repentance from sin, and acceptance of forgiveness from the one who already took the punishment.

Some claimed to have a special relationship with God despite their sinful conduct. They assumed that their behavior did not matter to God.

These teachings are refuted in 1:5-7 and 2:1-6.

**1 John 1:5-7**

5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

**1 John 2:1-6**

1 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. 3 Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.

4 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. 6 He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

Saints, to this second group of false teachers, John explained that sin was indeed very important to God. In fact, to keep sinning proves that they did not “live in God” at all:

those who keep on sinning have never known him or understood who he is. Christians seek to remain “sinless” in God’s eyes by continually confessing sin to God and repenting of it.

But they do not keep on sinning, meaning that they do not impose upon God’s forgiveness by taking it for granted in order to keep on living as they please. When they repent of sin, they truly desire to remain free of that sin.

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.”**