

“HOW TO BE A CHILD OF GOD”

August 2, 2020

I John 3:1-10

INTRODUCTION — I was stunned at the words that came out of his mouth. Only a few minutes before, this salesman who was training all 30 of us to sell home security systems had assured us of the source of his self-esteem: “I am a child of the King — the King of heaven, and therefore I deserve the best!!” Then — he told a story of training another person for sales by taking him on a sales visit — the trainee made one comment that blew the sale, and this salesman – who talked one minute of his *Christian faith* – cussed out that trainee, and locked his car to keep the trainee out! He had to walk home — *five miles!!*

“This is not a very good example of ‘forgiving your enemies’ and ‘loving your brothers’ and ‘not practicing the sin’ of taking the Lord’s name in vain,” I thought. What does it mean to truly be “a child of the king??”

I. HOW to BECOME a CHILD of GOD

A. The extent of God’s love

1. First, look at how great is God's love for us — God calls us children of God!

2. I had a friend in grade school who was adopted. Brian (Martin) was his name, and he was troubled some by the fact that his “birth-mother” had given him up for adoption – but his adopted parents always reminded him that “we chose you as our son — how special you are to us because we were able to choose you over any other child to be our son!!” And that helped Brian a great deal.

3. *That is what God has done for us!!* God has chosen us to be his children — as the Gospel of John says, ch.1:13—[those] “*born not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*”

B. How to know that you are a child of God

The Bible has two places that tell us how to KNOW we are “children of God”:

1. I John 2:29 - “*you know that everyone who practices righteousness is*

born of him.” To “*practice righteousness*” means simply to “try to do God’s will, live the Christian life, and do what is right — in God’s eyes.”

2. John 1:12 - “*But as many as received Him (into their lives and hearts), to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name....*” (NASB)

3. As John tells us here in Ch. 3, as God’s children, we shall become like [Christ] when he appears. That is the complete measure of how great God’s love for us is!! If this is so, then:

II. HOW TO LIVE AS A CHILD OF GOD

A. What the practice of sin means

1. When John says in verse 6, “*no one who abides in Him sins*” he is talking about the constant practice of sin.

2. He mentions more specifically in verse 8 that it is the constant practice of sin that characterizes someone as being “a ‘disciple’ of the devil.”

3. John is addressing here the habits of sin and the constant sins that people don’t want to give up.

4. To continue to do the habit of sin — to willfully continue to commit a certain sin, is to be a disciple, not of Jesus, but of the devil!!!

5. If there is a sin in your life that you are not repenting of and “*letting go*”, then you must seriously examine yourself and ask *if you really want to follow Jesus, and obey Jesus!*

6. Remember the uncle of Hamlet in the Shakespeare play? One night, in the castle chapel, he tried to pray, but he finally said, “My words fly up, my thoughts remain below. Words without thoughts, never to heaven go.” *He was not ready to repent and pay the price* for his sin, which was the murder of his brother, the king, and the marrying of his sister-in-law, the queen!!

B. Growing in faith — growing in holiness

1. But it is important to see that as we grow in our faith — the longer we walk with the Lord, and attend church, go to Sunday school, and study our Bibles, we grow in the likeness of whom God wants us to be. We “practice righteousness” (v. 7) for

a longer time, and more faithfully.

2. That is what the Bible calls “*growing in holiness*” and “*becoming perfect*” — as Paul refers to it in Phil. 3:14.

3. Not that we become “perfect” in this life-time, and never sin any more, but we can grow more like Christ – more “holy”, and practice righteousness better as we walk longer and closer to Christ.

4. We may say, “I’m not all I should be, but by the grace of God, I’m a better Christian than I was last year. And with God’s help, I’ll be a better Christian this time next year!!!”

III. *The CHILDREN of GOD — and the WORLD :*

A. Being *of* the world — the system of sin

1. The world practices unrighteousness — the work of the devil: which is “have it your way;” “do your own thing;” “look out for yourself – no one else will!;” “don’t get mad – *get even!!*”

2. These are the kind of attitudes that our world plays up — selfish, self-centered attitudes that encourage people to ignore others and care only for yourself!!!

3. John calls this “*lawlessness*” — v. 4.

B. Being *not* “of” the world — by contrast

1. Jesus teaches us another way of living:

— “*whoever slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also;*” (Mt.5:39)

— “*love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you;*” (5:44)

— “*This is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you;*” (John 15:12)

2. A child of God is commanded to love his or her brother or sister in Christ. Look again at v. 10—.

3. And loving others is shown in practical ways — not lying to family and friends and others. Not stealing from family or friends or stores or others

C. Living in, but not being *of* the world —

1. To live in the world but not be of the world, then, means to live as a child

of God— to follow Jesus, and obey Jesus. To love others, and forgive those around us. That means to say *good, positive, uplifting things to one another!!* It means to not *gossip, or criticize your brothers and sisters in Christ — instead, be encouraging!!*

2. To live in the world but not be of the world is to love one another r— love those people in the pews around you! After all, *you are going to spend eternity with them!!! You might as well start to love them now!!!*

3. To live in the world but not be of the world is to do what is right in God's eyes — *to avoid sin*, as much as you can with God's help, to love other Christians deeply, and to *see yourself and other Christians as a colony of God's kingdom* in a foreign land.

CONCLUSION—— (story of Larry Eubanks)

Larry was married to a young woman whose family were members in the church where I was pastor — but Larry was not a professing Christian. I witnessed to him several times, and we had some long talks about what it meant to follow Jesus. It was not until Larry hit a really tough time in life — when he was arrested for some illegal actions that he decided that he needed to be a child of God!!

—> He realized that he needed his Father in heaven to lead him and his family. And he has since.

LET US PRAY THIS MORNING:

1) You want to pray and ask the Lord to help you surrender to him, and let him fill your heart with his glory and joy;

2) PRAY: If you have never before trusted as your Savior, and are ready to do so today.