

**1 John 3:1-3      God's Love – the Greatest Love There Is      April 24-26, 2021**  
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**1 John 3:1-3**

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. <sup>2</sup>Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. <sup>3</sup>All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

**Introduction**

In traveling you have come across road signs that advertise the biggest, the best, the highest, the most unusual, the greatest, etc. Sometimes there's truth in these claims. At other times, they are untrue and those who believe and pursue them are in for disappointment.

God's word that we focus on today for our message – 1 John 3:1-3 – deals with the biggest, the best, the highest, the greatest. These verses showcase ...**GOD'S LOVE – THE GREATEST LOVE THERE IS ...**

**... to call us his children in Christ ... to glorify us like Christ ... to see us as pure in Christ.**

**... to call us his children in Christ**

"Lavished" .... Did you notice the word when we read and heard the first lesson for today? To lavish means to bestow or give some in generous or extravagant amounts. IN the New Testament Greek version of this verse it simply says "gave." But when it comes to the love of God the Father his love is not just simply given, it is lavished. God doesn't use thimbles and dixie cups. He uses super tankers and downpours. He lavishes love.

The Apostle John says that God lavished his love on us in calling his children. This involved his adopting us. Every year in the United States loving parents adopt 135,000 to 140,000 children. Still there are over 100,000 eligible children waiting for adoption. Sometimes it's the result of not enough eligible parents. Sometimes, though there are special needs that require more than many potential adoptive parents can or want to give. And nobody wants to adopt a dead baby.

Before you react in horror, that's what we were spiritually speaking when we came into the world. As St. Paul wrote to the Ephesians, **"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient."** (2:1-2) We came into the world physically alive, but spiritually dead. We couldn't believe in God, love God, serve God or worship God. We were destined to hell!

**"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!"** In the same Letter to the Ephesians I quoted from before it is written, **"In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will ..."** Before there was ever a you or me to adopt, in view of Christ God decided that we would be his. Our adoption was pre-arranged. Then God in love paid the price for our adoption: **"This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."** God paid for us with the life and death of his Son, Jesus. Then in love God brought us to saving faith: **"In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ..."** (1 Peter 1:3) **"So you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus."** (Galatians 3:26)

God sees us as his children. The world does not. The Barna Corporation in a recent survey of perceptions of conservative Christians – people who believe the Bible is the inspired word of God, creation, miracles, the resurrection of Christ, etc. – found that half the people surveyed view these Christians negatively. Descriptors they used included narrow-minded, homophobic, racist, woman-haters, uptight and more. There's nothing special in their eyes about being a Christian. After we see and hear enough of this stuff in the media and from

people around us, we may start to think the same thing. But we are special to God. We are his children on whom he lavished his love to call us this in Christ. The love he lavished on us also moved to plan to glorify us like Christ.

### **... to glorify us like Christ**

In vs. 2 John again emphasizes that we are God's children as a result of his love in Christ. **"2 Dear friends, now we are children of God."** Then he goes on to point to our future in Christ: **"and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."** With this John points to what we will be like after Jesus returns in glory at the end of time.

Right now we have eternal life having faith in and life with Jesus. Yet we only partially experience the benefits of this. We are still sin-effected people living in a sin-effected world. We struggle with temptation. We commit sin. We get sick. We die. But when Jesus returns, if we are alive, we will be changed, glorified. We will have no more effects of sin in our bodies or our souls. We will be glorified like Jesus. If we have died before Jesus' return, our souls will be glorified when we go to heaven. But when Jesus comes, he will raise our bodies, glorify them, and reunite them with our already glorified souls.

So right now you might say we are like uncut diamonds. We are loved and precious in God's sight. But in eternity we will be cut, polished, and glorious forever.

The Bible gives glimpses of what we will be like. It talks about never again hungering, thirsting, crying, feeling pain, or dying. The Bible compares being in glory to sitting on thrones, celebrating, and being in total peace, joy, and contentment. But John points out that there are things we don't know and won't know until Jesus returns. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, **"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has conceived" — the things God has prepared for those who love him (2:9)."**

Yet because of God's love – the greatest love there is – that has lavished on us, we can trust that we will be like Christ for we shall see him as he is.

For many Christians this has been a source of comfort, strength, and hope. For Christians disabled, disadvantaged, depressed, bed-ridden, addicted, imprisoned for life, and the like, this has gotten them through their trials and given them comfort, strength, and hope. Let this fact that one day you will be like Christ because of God's great love for you, be a source of comfort, strength, and hope.

### **... to see us as pure in Christ.**

God's love – the greatest love there also moves him to see us as pure in Christ. John wrote: **"3 All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure."**

No one deserves to be a child of God. No one deserves to be glorified like Christ. But the Holy Spirit moved John to emphasize that those who hope for everlasting glory in Christ, are pure in Christ.

In some contexts "hope" can be very uncertain. For example, someone may say, "I hope the weather is nice on Memorial Day." Or, "I hope the Twins win the World Series this year." These examples of hope are very uncertain. But the hope of which John writes is certain. It is the equivalent of faith and trust.

Those who believe in and trust Jesus as their Savior are pure as Jesus is pure. Our being pure is different than Jesus being pure. He was conceived and born without sin. He never sinned in his lifetime. But when we came into the world sin was in our spiritual DNA. We were sinful. The result is that we are sinners. But in love, God doesn't see us as the sinners we are.

Paul wrote to the Galatians: **"So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."** Now clothed with the holiness of Christ, God in his great love sees us as pure and holy as his eternal Son. He sees us as worthy in Christ. He sees us pure in Christ.

Isn't this a comfort? When you suddenly realize that you have sinned, turn to him, confess to him, and trust that God sees you holy in Christ. When trials and troubles come along in life, remember that God is not getting even with you. He laid your sins on Jesus and Jesus' holiness on you. You are pure in his sight. When you are facing death or dear standing before the Lord on the Last Day or last day of your life, find comfort that in Christ God sees you as pure and acceptable.

**"See what great love the Father has lavished on us..." This is The Greatest Love There Is .... ... to call us his children in Christ ... to glorify us like Christ ... to see us as pure in Christ. (DRS)**