

Our 1<sup>st</sup> lesson pointed out that we are the **People of God**. Our Gospel lesson reminded us that we are **Members of God's Flock** and our third lesson shows us that we are **Children of God**.

### **Epistle Lesson - 1 John 3:1,2**

**3** How great is the 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 he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

If you remember last week's sermon from 1 John, the idea that we are Children of God is familiar. At the beginning of chapter 2, John also called us Children of God. In the verses before us this morning he points out why we are Children of God. It is because of God's great love for us. God has loved us from the beginning of time.

We know that because God knew how Adam and Eve would ruin his perfect creation by bringing sin into the world but he created this perfect world and everything in it. God knows the human nature is sinful and hostile towards him but he loves us anyway. Before the world was created, he was already planning how to send his Son into the world to restore our relationship with him – to make it possible for us to become one of his children – and that's what we are!

Our baptismal certificates are in fact our adoption papers into the family of God. We are all brothers and sisters in Christ and that is great! The faith in Jesus that is in our hearts ties us all together and brings us the benefits of being a child of God. The greatest benefit in this world is forgiveness for our sins and not far behind is experiencing how God cares for us and speaks to us through his Word. Finally the best benefit is, that as a child of God, we can look forward to heaven.

Unfortunately, the world has rejected Jesus and rejects us as children of God. But God's love goes beyond the ways of the world and while they might reject him he continues to reach out to the world just as he has reached out to you and to me and changed our hearts as he brought us into his family through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Along with these wonderful gifts, the Love of the Father brings us even more blessings.

In verse 2 John says, **“Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”** We are waiting for Christ to come again on Judgment Day. We don't know when that will be but we are ready because we believe in Jesus and his promises.

John tells us that we will be like Jesus – that is our bodies will be glorified. We don't know exactly what that means except that it will be good. we will no longer be affected by sin and we will be in his presence forever. It doesn't get better than that.

Just as God's people looked forward to his first coming and the redemption of their sins, so we look forward to his second coming and to be glorified with him in heaven because of our trust and faith in Jesus, but until he does come again may we live as children of God – knowing that we are forgiven, loved and heirs of eternal life in heaven. Amen.