

God's Children– Sunday July 21st 2013.

See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ² Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (1. John 3:1-3)

Beloved in the Lord,

One of the greatest things about Christianity, apart from the fact that it is the only Truth, is that Jesus reveals to us that God is a loving Father. John begins our text today with these glorious words: ***“See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; “***

No other religion in the world, reveals God as a loving Father, because none of the other world religions are founded in love, and indeed they cannot be, because God is love, and we can only know Him through Jesus. Apart from Jesus we cannot come to God. All religions with the exception of Christianity, keep people in some form of bondage. People are enslaved to a greater or lesser degree. There is something you have to do in order to gain the favour of god.

Christianity is not about earning God's favour, because that is freely given to us by His grace. In His love and mercy He draws us to Himself. God loves us with an everlasting love, and He desires for all men to come to Him and live in Him. He desires for us to be in a loving relationship with Him. He desires for us to be His children.

John writes in His Gospel: ***“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 those who were His own did not receive Him. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even 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 1:10-12).***

When we believe in His name we are children of God. We are not born as God's children, His creation yes, but His children no. We are born in a state of sin and are separated from Him by our inherited sin. We have the old Adam in us. If we were baptised as infants then we were baptised into God's family, but we still need to receive Christ as our own personal Saviour. In fact we need to surrender our lives, our heart to Him every day in faith. Martin Luther stressed that we should return to our baptism every day. We should put down the old man and be clothed with Christ everyday.

Our old sinful Adamic nature is very strong and does not want to be put down. It does not want to accept it's death sentence and that is why we feel a war going on inside us. The old

nature is always trying to regain control. We know what we should do, yet very often we do the very opposite. We desire to be better and yet we fail over and over again. Paul describes this battle in his letter to the Romans:

“¹⁵ For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. ¹⁶ But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good. ¹⁷ So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. ¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. ¹⁹ For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. ²⁰ But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

²¹ I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. ²² For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, ²³ but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin” (Romans 7:15-25).

I have included this lengthy Scripture because Paul puts it so well. As God’s children we try to live a life that is pleasing and honouring to our Father, but it is a daily struggle. It is not easy, because our old nature is always trying to rear its ugly head. The situation is not helped by the fact that we live in a world where very few people live for God. We are swimming against the tide. Worldly, fleshly people cannot understand us, nor our desire to honour God, for they do not know Him. It is very interesting that you can believe almost anything you like and people will accept it, but the moment you mention that you love Jesus, there is a negative reaction. Why? Because Jesus is The Truth. God’s Word is The Truth and it is alive and powerful. When you are living as a child of God, then your very presence should make a sinner feel something different about you. At least it should.

This is what Jesus was speaking about when He taught they we are to be as salt and light.

In His love, for the sake of Jesus sacrifice, His shed blood, God accepts us into His family as His dear children. Our obligation then, is to live accordingly. We should be honouring our Father with all of our life. We should love Him with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength. We should be placing Him at the very top of our lives. We should be trusting and relying upon Him in all things.

The more we do this, the stronger our relationship grows, the deeper our love and admiration for Him. The more time we spend with Him, the easier it becomes to win the war that rages inside of us.

We spend time with our Father, when we read His Word. When we study it, meditate upon it. We spend time with our Father when we pray. We should cultivate a prayer life that is constant and strong. We should discuss all matters with Him. Jesus did, and He is our greatest example.

It is important to remind yourself often, that everything we have comes from our Father, from His loving hand, and therefore we should be giving thanks to Him and offering up regular praise.

It is vitally important that we submit to Him and obey Him always. From time to time all children need some form of correction from their fathers. When God corrects us or is teaching us a lesson we should not run away, but seek to learn what He is teaching us. He is forever working to improve us. We read in Revelation: ***“Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent”(Rev.3:19).***

If we stray from the right path, then God our Father seeks us out, and He brings us back. If necessary He will reprove and discipline us but always in love. At times His hand may seem harsh, but HE is always fair and always loving, and He knows exactly what we need.

God is our loving Father and HE always works things for our good if we are His. Often we may not see it nor understand it, but let's believe it, because it says so in His Word. He loves His children with an everlasting love. He paid a tremendous price to procure us, to free us from the clutches of Satan. He had to shed the blood of His only begotten Son, to pay our sin debt in full. He did it because HE loves us.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him” (John 3:16-17).

Praise God, that He has loved you and me so much. Have you accepted His gift of love? Have you received Christ into your heart as your Saviour? Do you understand that if you have, you are a child of Almighty God and that He loves you in a way that you cannot fathom? Do you realise that this world is not your home, but the next has a place for you?

Jesus taught: ***“Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³ If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:1-3).***

Thank God today that He love you as His child.

Amen.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.