

INTRODUCTION

1. Please take God's Word and turn with me to 1 John chapter 3.
2. It's been a little over a year since we have been in our study of this book but today we are picking up where we left off.
3. If you remember, John has been contrasting the false teachers and the true believers.
4. He says in verse 18 that the false teachers are antichrists but you are Christians and then shows the difference between the two.
5. He said in verse 19 the false teachers left but you remained.
6. They do not have the Holy Spirit (v.20) but you do.
7. They are liars (v.22) but you know the truth (vv.20-21).

8. They deny Jesus is the Christ (vv.22-23) but you confess Him as the Christ (vv.23-24).
9. They do not have eternal life (v.25) but you do.
10. They deceive (v.26) but you speak the truth.
11. They are taught by Satan but you are taught by the Holy Spirit (v.27).
12. They're unfaithful (v.28) but you abide.
13. They have shame but you have confidence (v.28).
14. They do not know the righteousness of Christ but you know He is righteous (v.29).
15. They practice unrighteousness but you practice righteousness (v.29).
16. The greatest truth that John says in this section that marks the difference between a false teacher and a true believer is the true believer, according to verse 29, is "born of Him" and the false teacher is not. False teachers are of their father the devil.

17. Before John says anything else, he pauses in 3:1-3 “to marvel at the amazing love which condescends to call us ‘the sons of God’”¹ and “he invites his readers to contemplate the same truth.”²
18. **So John begins 3:1 by saying (read 3:1-3)**
19. Look at this kind of love that would cause us to be “born of Him.”
20. Look at this kind of love that would change our status from children of the devil to “children of God.”
21. So John begins by first expressing...

LESSON

I. The Astonishment of God’s Love (v.1)

A. “See”

1. “See” has been translated “behold” in the Authorized.
2. The verb (idete) means “to take special notice of something, with the implication of concerning

¹ Burdick, Donald W. The Epistles of John. Logos.

² Wescott / Foss. The Epistles of John. Logos.

oneself.”³

3. This is a word that “heightens the sense of enthusiasm.”⁴
4. Another word could be “consider”.⁵
5. D. Edmond Hiebert says, “The plural number of the aorist imperative...calls upon the readers to take a heart-moving look at the amazing love which gave them membership in God’s family.”⁶
6. David Jackman says, “The force is that we need to take time to contemplate this love and allow its reality to sink down into the depths of our being.”⁷
7. God saved us because He loved us even though we were not a lovable people - Titus 3:3-7 (NASB) For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. 4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for

³ Louw Johannes P. and Nida Eugene A. Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament. Logos.

⁴ Smalley, Stephen S. Word Biblical Commentary. 1, 2, 3 John. Logos.

⁵ Ibid., Smalley.

⁶ Hiebert, D. Edmond. [The Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary](#). Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1991. Print.

⁷ David Jackman, *The Message of John’s Letters*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), p. 81.

mankind appeared, 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

8. 1 John 4:9-10 (NASB) By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
9. We need to “contemplate this love and allow its reality to sink down into the depths of our being.”
10. We were “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph.2:1).
11. We didn’t love God. We hated Him (Tit.3:5).
12. So John says “See, take notice, consider, look by faith, with wonder and astonishment.”⁸

⁸ Gill, John. John Gill’s Exposition on the Whole Bible. E-Sword.

So what is John so amazed about? God's love.

He says...

B. "How great a love"

1. This "love" is "great" or has been "bestowed" or "given" (didomai, to give) to us.
2. One translation says it has been "lavished on us" (NIV).
3. This love was measureless!

Albert Barnes writes, "What love, in "kind" and in "degree." In kind the most tender and the most ennobling, in adopting us into His family, and in permitting us to address Him as our Father; in "degree" the most exalted, since there is no higher love that can be shown than in adopting a poor and friendless orphan, and giving him a parent and a home. Even God could bestow upon us no more valuable token of affection than that we should be adopted into His family, and permitted to regard Him as our Father. When we remember how insignificant we are as creatures, and how ungrateful, rebellious, and vile we have

been as sinners, we may well be amazed at the love which would adopt us into the holy family of God, so that we may be regarded and treated as the children of the Most High. A prince could manifest no higher love for a wandering, ragged, vicious orphan boy, found in the streets, than by adopting him into his own family, and admitting him to the same privileges and honors as his own sons; and yet this would be a trifle compared with the honor which God has bestowed on us.”⁹

Notice...

II. **The Selflessness of God’s Love (v.1)**

A. It is seen in the word John uses for love (agape)

1. This love describes God’s nature - 1 Jn.4:8 (God is love)
2. This love describes God’s attitude to His Son - John 17:25-26 (NASB) “O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; 26 and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love

⁹ Barnes, Albert. Barnes’ Notes on the Bible. E-Sword.

with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

3. This love describes God’s attitude to the elect - Romans 5:6-8 (NASB) For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (John 3:16)
4. This love describes a husband’s attitude toward his wife - Ephesians 5:25
5. This kind of love is unconditional.
6. It seeks, at a great cost to itself, but only to give freely and spontaneously for the benefit of another, even if that person is not worthy of such an expression.¹⁰ - Deuteronomy 7:7-8 (NASB)
The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but because the Lord loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers,

¹⁰ Ibid., MacArthur.

the Lord brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

B. This kind of love that comes from God always seeks the true welfare of those being loved

1. Matthew 4:23 (Jesus teaching/healing)
2. Matthew 6:25-33 (God's care for basic necessities)
3. Psalms 37:28 (NASB) For the Lord loves justice and does not forsake His godly ones; they are preserved forever, but the descendants of the wicked will be cut off.

So “God’s love works visible, transforming results in the lives of its recipients.”¹¹

C. This is the love the Father has bestowed on us

The perfect-tense verb “hath bestowed” (*dedōken*) declares that this love is a permanent gift; it cannot be earned or purchased but is a gift that will not be withdrawn.¹²

¹¹ Ibid., Hiebert

¹² Ibid., Hiebert

And nothing can separate us from it - Romans 8:35 (NASB) says, "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"

We see the permanency of God's love by the statement he makes next...

III. **The Statement of God's Love (v.1)**

A. What we are called - "children of God"

"That we would be called children of God."

Adam Clarke says, "For we had neither claim nor merit that we should be called, that is, constituted or made, the sons of God, who were before children of the wicked one, animal, earthly, devilish; therefore, the love which brought us from such a depth of misery and degradation must appear the more extraordinary and impressive."

They became His children solely because He lavishly bestowed on them a gracious, unmerited, sovereign

love apart from any that has human merit. Such love is inexplicable in human terms.¹³

How do you become a child of God?

1. John 1:12-13 (NASB) 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.
 2. As a child of God Romans 8:16 (NASB) says, “The Spirit Himself testifies (bears witness) with our spirit that we are children of God.”
- B. What we are - “and such we are.”

D. Edmond Hiebert says, “These words, “and *such are we*” (*kai esmen*, “and we are”), emphatically declare that we are not merely God’s children in name but in reality. They express a ringing note of assurance, encouraging and strengthening the readers.”¹⁴

1. 1 John 3:10 (NASB) By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone

¹³ Ibid., MacArthur.

¹⁴ Ibid., Hiebert.

who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

2. Galatians 3:26 (NASB) For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

IV. **The Blindness of God's Love (v.1)**

“For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.”

- A. The world cannot “see” this love that has been lavished on the elect because the world does not know Him.

They are what we were--dead in trespasses and sins!

- B. It's no wonder then that we are described as “aliens and strangers” in 1 Peter 2:11.

Lenski says, “The world sees that we are here and thus knows us (οἶδα); but as “God's children” we are utterly foreign to the world because even our Father is utterly foreign to the world. The world has no conception of what we are as those who are born from God and thus God's actual children, and the deepest reason for this ignorance is the fact that it

has no conception of our Father. The world is proud of its knowledge, but the real things worth knowing it does not know.¹⁵

Jesus said in John 17:25 when He was praying to the Father that “the world does not know You.”

Jesus told the Jews in John 8:19 they “know neither Me nor My Father. If you knew Me, you would know My Father also.”

- C. The people of the world do not understand us nor the way we behave.

Indeed, the world did not understand the Lord Jesus when He was here on earth. “He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.” Since we have the same characteristics as the Lord Jesus, we cannot expect the world to understand us, either.¹⁶

1. This is why 1 Corinthians 2:14 (NASB) says But a natural man does not accept the things of the

¹⁵ Lenski, R. C. H. [*The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude*](#). Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1966. Print.

¹⁶ MacDonald, William. [*Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*](#). Ed. Arthur Farstad. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995. Print.

Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

2. Even 1 Corinthians 1:18 (NASB) says For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

It's important to note at this point as Glen Barker says, "The author wants his readers to know that approval by the world is to be feared, not desired. To be hated by the world may be unpleasant, but ultimately it should reassure the members of the community of faith that they are loved by God, which is far more important than the world's hatred."¹⁷

CONCLUSION

1. As we conclude we should ask, "What are you more concerned about, love by the world or love by God?"
2. We need to let God's love consumed us.

¹⁷ Glenn W. Barker, "1 John" in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 12:330.

3. We need to take a heart-moving look at the amazing love which gave us membership in God's family.
4. We need to take time to contemplate this love and allow its reality to sink down into the depths of our being.
5. Jude says we need to "Keep [ourselves] in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life" (Jude 1:21).
6. Do you know this kind of love?
7. Have you repented and believed in Jesus Christ?
8. Turn to Him now.
9. Let's pray.