

## Written Copy: "See What Kind of Love" 1 John 3:1-3

All Saints Day

Sunday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019

### Text: 1 John 3:1-3

<sup>1</sup> See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. <sup>2</sup> Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. <sup>3</sup> And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

### Exegetical Statement

John invites us to stop and pause for a moment, reflecting on how great a gift of love we have from the Heavenly Father that He would declare us to be His beloved children. And that is the unseen reality of what we are. The world doesn't know us as such because the world does not know the Savior who makes us good enough to be God's children. So, we are right not God's children. But what we will be on the Last Day has not been made manifest to us. But when Christ appears on that day and makes Himself manifest our identity as God's children will be fully known to the world and to us for we ourselves will be as our Savior is. All who hold this sure and certain hope by faith continue to purify themselves from their sinful thoughts, words, and actions through the repentance worked by the Spirit through the Word. In this way, when He returns, we will be pure, undefiled by sin, and holy just as our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is holy.

### Focus Statement:

Jesus declares us good enough to be God's precious children-His saints, even now, despite our sin. His death and resurrection restored us as members of the kingdom of God. He cancelled the record of sin that stood against us and earned for us the right to be God's children, His Saints by faith. His Spirit moves us to repentance, purifying our sinful soul and recreating us from within in His likeness. By faith He declares us good enough to be Saints and promises that this unseen reality will be made manifest completely on the Last Day when His work of restoration is complete body and soul

### Function Statement:

#### Why it's important to know:

We struggle with the identity of being sinners and saints at the same time. We often see "Saints" as those "who from their labors rest" with Jesus. Our continued sinning can make us wonder if God really sees us as His precious children-His Saints

#### What the hearer should do as a result:

Avail ourselves to the means of grace through which the Holy Spirit works to purify us and change us through repentance so that we grow to be more like Christ. We hold fast by faith that on the Last Day we will be restored to perfection.

### Subject Sentence: The Love Strong Enough to make us Saints

As we celebrate All Saints Day today stop and ponder for a moment: who or what do you have in mind as we sang the Opening Hymn “For All the Saints”? As you sang that first line “For all the Saints who from their labors rest...” who were you picturing? Were you picturing some of those faithful departed ones that you were close too? Moms and Dads, Grandmas and Grandpas, friends; those who demonstrated their faith in Christ through their words and actions while living? Those who are now resting comfortably with Jesus. Those who await the coming Resurrection Day?

But what about you who are still here on this earth? Do you ever picture yourself as one of the Saints? Or more like a sinner? I’m sure you’ve heard yourself being described as a Saint and Sinner at the same time. But in your heart do you see yourself favoring one more than the other? Do you see yourself as a Sinner who daily fails miserably at being a Saint? When I’ve talked about this with Christians from other denominations, I’ve noticed two distinct answers.

When I talk about how we confess at the beginning of our worship services that we are “poor miserable sinners” I’ve had Christians correct me regarding that assumption. They tell me that they are most assuredly not poor miserable sinners. Jesus died on the cross to take away their sin. They have been washed clean of sin. And that is true; at least up to a point. Christ died to forgive the sins of all men. But each and every one of us continues to sin. All one has to do is examine your life over the past 24 hours in light of the commandments and it becomes evident that we’ve all fallen short in thought, word, or deed somewhere along the line. As **1 John 1:8** reminds us **“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”** When we ignore our sin as if it no longer matters than how long before our Savior no longer matters? How long does it take for Jesus to become our excuse to sin instead of our Savior from sin?

But then there are those who are so stuck on their identity as “poor miserable sinners” that they could never really see themselves as Saints. Saints are those people who as the hymn states “from our labors rest”. Those who have left behind the world of temptation and sin. There may be those who might be considered Saints while alive on earth, but only those who have lived truly exemplary lives of faith and service such as the Apostle John or

Mother Theresa. After all, saying that we are Saints and Sinners at the same time makes it sound like we have a multiple personality disorder instead of describing a spiritual truth. How can most of us who continue to sin really claim to be a Saint in any way shape or form.

For this reason, the Apostle John encourages us to stop for a moment and ponder this. **1**

**John 3:1** “**See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.**” He says, “take a look at the kind of love that we’ve been given by the Heavenly Father.” What kind of love is it? It’s a different kind of love than what we produce in our hearts. It’s the kind that does some pretty marvelous work in our lives.

It’s not like that love that you had for your high school sweetheart. Or even the kind of love that was sparked the first time you went on a date with the one who was to become your future spouse. The kind of love that sent a shiver of excitement through you when you kissed for the first time. The kind of love we sometimes refer to as “having the hots for each other”. It produces a powerful change within you. But its not the kind of change that lasts. Because this is not the kind of love that lasts. After a while familiarity causes its strength to weaken. And if its not replaced by something else it will eventually fade away. And as that happens those who it brought together will fade away from each other too.

There is a stronger love that may come to replace it. This is called a “relational love”. It’s the kind of love that grows as each spouse shares it with the other. You love your spouse as they express love toward you. As you do loving things and say loving things to your spouse, it moves them to return in kind. It’s kind of like a snowball rolling downhill. Once you get it started in a small way it can pick up momentum and grow into something that fills your life. But what happens when one spouse stops doing and saying loving things? What happens when arguments and disagreements raise their ugly head? This kind of love needs reinforcement and energy put in by both parties for it to continue and flourish. And as time goes by and the unrest and arguments increase, this love can be stretched to the point of breaking. To the point where one or the other contemplates divorce. Especially when that intense love, the “having the hots for each other” beckons you to enjoy the fruit of another.

But how is this love that John wants us to contemplate different? First of all, it's not the kind of love that we can create in our own hearts. It's a love that is foreign to us. It must come to us from outside, from God Himself. It's the love that He has for you and for me. It's the love that God poured out upon us when we hated Him and wanted nothing to do with Him. It's the love that moved Him to send His only Son when we were not looking for Him or desiring Him. It is the love that Jesus had for all people, even those who do not believe in Him. **1 John 4:9-10** **"<sup>9</sup>In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup>In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."** It's the love that moved Christ to be the atoning sacrifice for sin, not just for you and I but for the whole world, for the sins of all mankind, even for the sins of those who will never believe in Him. It's the love that is so strong it kept Christ nailed to the cross, moved Him to suffer beyond the ability of the human body, so that He all of your sin might be taken away and never counted against you. The love that moved Him to save you.

It's an unselfish love that has the power to change our lives forever. **1 John 3:1** **"See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him."**

It's a love that declares us to be what we could never be on our own. It moves the Father to claim us as His own precious children through the work of our Savior, applied to your life through your baptism. Just as it was applied to the lives of Dameon and Tiernan this morning so it has been credited to your account. And it is changing their lives and your life forever, making them what it has made you: Children of God. Not because you act like children of God, but because of the work the Holy Spirit has done in your life and their lives by creating and sustaining faith. By this faith we are given the love from the Father that declares you to be His children, declares this to be the hidden reality in your life. And so, you truly are His beloved child, a real life Saint, whether you feel like you are or not. The Holy Spirit brings the blood of Christ to bear on every sin you commit and washes them away. Jesus blood as the atoning sacrifice cancels the wrath God would have for you over your sins. Instead He expresses toward you the same love He has for His own beloved Son.

The world may not see us this way. It likes to point out how hypocritical we are. How we continue to sin even as we put on the airs of being a Saint. The world doesn't know us as God's precious children, as Sinners who are declared Saints because of God's love for us. That's because the world neither knows God nor His love. And therefore doesn't really know us. You and I can see the worlds point. We do much of the time act more like sinners than Saints and this fuels doubt inside us. That's why John repeats the declaration of the Heavenly Father Himself: in **1 John 3:2** **"Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is"**

You are God's precious child right now. What you and I will be is still hidden, it has not yet appeared fully. But there will come a day when all the sinfulness in our heart has been removed and our bodies have been restored to the perfection God originally intended them to have. It's the day when we can and will obey God perfectly. When we will be filled with His life changing love completely. It's the day we will sing about when we sing the last verse of **"For All the Saints"** ***"But lo, there breaks, a yet more glorious day; The Saints triumphant rise in bright array; The King of Glory passes on His way. Alleluia! Alleluia"*** It's the Last Day when Christ returns and all will see Him in all His glory. When He manifests to the whole world who He really is as Almighty God, Savior and Lord. When He appears, we will be made to be like Him, perfect in the flesh, perfect in the Spirit. Purified Saints of the Heavenly Father who stand with our Lord and Savior and gaze upon the eternity stretched out before us. As John describes from His vision of that day in **Revelation 7:16-17** ***"<sup>16</sup> We (They) shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike us (them), nor any scorching heat. <sup>17</sup> For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be our (their) shepherd, and he will guide us (them) to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from our (their) eyes."*** It's the hope that is created and sustained in our heart through by faith in the Gospel Message.

In the meantime, what are we supposed to do? **1 John 3:3** **"And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure"**. We avail ourselves of the Word and Sacraments by which the Holy Spirit continues the work begun in our Baptism. Through these means He

continues to purify us by showing us our sin, then showing us our Savior. As he moves us to repent and turn away from loving ourselves more than Jesus and turns us toward a loving obedience that finds its power in the full forgiveness we have by faith in Christ. This purification is the on-going work of the Holy Spirit. He is at work in you and in me right now transforming us from Sinner to Saint. And this work will reach completion on the Last Day when with Christ the whole world will see how the power of God's love has made us to be just like Jesus our Savior; pure and sinless Children of God, Saints.

What kind of love is this? It's greater than the love we produce in our heart and share with each other. It's God's love that moved Him to send His Son who has changed us forever. It's the love by which the Heavenly Father declares us to be His beloved children. By which He declares you to be Saints even while you still act like Sinners. It's the love that comes from Jesus to us by faith. It's the love that has changed my life and yours. It's the love that is being used by the Holy Spirit to continue that change making us to be more like Jesus our Savior. It's the love that we are to share with each other now, and will live forever in on the Last Day. Until then may this love strengthened by your faith guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.