

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John**

Chapter 12- Sons of God **1John 2:29-3:3**

96. Being in the Family- Part 1

WAOY Friday/Monday 10/5-8/07

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to begin to look at what John taught about "Being in God's Family". So, let's turn in our Bibles and read **1John 2:29- 3:3** again together:

29 If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.

3:1 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.

Now on the last broadcast- we were going over just what John was saying here in these four verses and we began to look at just what it means to be adopted into God's Family. Now there are several very large religious groups on the earth today that talk about this issue much differently than the Bible does. Being in God's Family doesn't mean that mortal human beings can be or become Deity. And to say that or to teach or believe that is blasphemy.

For example- the Mormon Church is based upon that false teaching and sadly- many so-called, "full gospel" cults have fallen into that very same deception in recent years as they teach that God is an exalted Man and that through learning certain secrets and by following certain principles- these people teach that human beings can become gods. And I just want to be clear here that all such teaching is wrong-

no matter who it comes from. To take a few Scriptures completely out of context and make a doctrine out of it to teach such things is not studying the Bible and neither is it preaching the whole counsel of God. It is simply leading people astray- plain and simple. So, when you read verses about “being like Jesus” or “doing what Jesus did”- you must remember that this doesn’t mean that human beings can ever become gods.

Some English versions use the phrase, “sons of God” here in this Passage- but that simply means “children” of God. But there are some things we should know about this.

First of all- a very common thought that prevails among Western Civilization is that of the so-called, “universal fatherhood” of God and the “universal brotherhood” of Man and in one sense that is true. All people originally came from Adam and Eve who were made by God- so everybody who is alive today is the offspring of the Man who was created by God- so in that sense- all people are “brothers and sisters”. But in a larger and infinitely more important sense- the Bible teaches that there are certain people who come into this special relationship of adoption to God’s family as a direct result of the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ. And they are called Christians.

But the Apostle John was very clear as well as all of those who were used by God to pen down inspired Words- that everybody is not saved. Now that may come as a shock to some of you- but it is true- nonetheless. But I take no joy in this being true- because I want everyone to know and love and serve Jesus Christ. But the fact remains that the Bible is clear about this from cover to cover- the way to hell is filled with people enjoying the broad road- while the pathway to heaven is narrow and the gate is straight, and Jesus said few there be that even find even find it- much less actually believe it and walk on it.

So contrary to popular opinion- The Bible refers over and over to a small number; a remnant; a despised few; a little flock being God’s Family- not the large , massive overflowing crowds that have become so popular today.

When Jesus walked the earth- the streets were lined with waves of people crowding Him; straining to touch Him and calling His Name. And as long as Jesus fed them and healed them and blessed them and did something for them- they all thought He was great.

But when it came time to teach the Truth; when it came time to require things from them or to demand responses or to limit their behavior or to govern their lives; when it came time to mold and shape these people into vessels of honor- only a handful were there to sit and learn and believe and obey.

And it has never been any different. Millions love to look into the manger and see the baby Jesus; millions more want to sit on the mountain side and eat the fish and the bread that was multiplied. Masses of people want to be healed and blessed and still more will stand in awe as the Lamb of God hangs on the Cross. But until we see the *risen* Lord; until we look into His Eyes that burn like flames of fire; Until we hear His Voice going forth as a sharp two edged sword; until we see Him in his garment that is dipped in Blood; Until we view Him riding the white Horse with the rod of iron in his hand with a Name written on his thigh- “King of Kings and Lord of Lords”- we have not see the fullness of Jesus.

So, John divided people. His words and his Epistles and His Gospel account and His Revelation angered the people of his day. And even now- 2,000 years later- the issue of Jesus being 100% God and 100% Man in the same body at the same time without conflict or contradiction is still hotly disputed and rejected. But it was from John that we read that **the Word was with God and the Word was God.**

It was from John that the word, “Truth” became paramount to the success of the Church. So, John was one to flatter anyone. He wasn’t one to stroke people to make them feel better about themselves. No, to John- everything was white or black. So, it is from the pen of John that we learn about certainties and absolutes. Everything was cut and dried to John.

For example- in his Gospel account- John sets light against darkness; life against death; the kingdom of God against the kingdom of the devil; the children of God against the children of the devil; the judgment of the righteous against the judgment of the wicked; the resurrection of life against the resurrection of damnation; receiving Christ against rejecting Christ; fruit against fruitlessness; obedience against disobedience; love against hatred. John clearly knew how to draw a line. To John, truth was his passion and he bent over backward so that no one could ever accuse him of being ambivalent.

As a Christian- John learned how to love. During his lifetime- John went from being one the of the “Sons of Thunder” to being the disciple whom Jesus loved.

But as an Apostle; as one of the 44 men who wrote the sixty- six books of inspired Scripture- it is hard to find any clearer descriptions of Jesus; Salvation; Heaven and Hell; and Truth and Error than you can from what John wrote. God gifted John with the ability to shine light upon hidden things and to uncover agendas which clouded the first century.

So here in the last verse of Chapter 2 and the first three verses of Chapter 3- John describes for us what it means to belong in the family of God.

So, listen to the key phrases of these four verses:

- ✓ **Everyone... who practices righteousness is born of Him (1John 2:29)**
- ✓ **the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. (1John 3:1)**
- ✓ **we will be like Him (1John 3:2)**
- ✓ **Everyone ...purifies himself (1John 3:3)**

Now the overriding attribute that John describes here is righteousness- being like Jesus- which is being different from the pagan, sinful world; and purifying himself. Then notice also another set of key phrases that John repeats often in this Epistle:

- ✓ **Everyone (1John 2:29)**
- ✓ **Us (1John 3:1)**
- ✓ **We (1John 3:2)**
- ✓ **Everyone (1John 3:3)**

So, John was clearly teaching that righteousness and godly purity was not an abstract haphazard event that *some* saved people reach for while others who are equally saved have no burden for at all- no, John was saying here that:

every one- who is born of God practices righteousness and he is not understood by the people who are lost and he is not in alignment with the lost and sinful world; and this person acts like Jesus and he talks like Jesus and he believes like Jesus and he behaves like Jesus and he purifies himself to the same extent that Jesus is pure- or in other words- he follows after holiness and righteousness to the same extend

that Jesus follows after these things.

Now I want to be clear about this- following after righteousness does not and cannot bring about Salvation. Salvation is by Grace alone through Faith alone- and not a result of any human works- not even morality. So being saved is not about simple morality anyway- because it *transcends* morality. To be sure- if you are saved- you *will* be moral- but a Christian is moral and lives a moral life out of a loving response to the God Who has already saved his soul- not so that he can earn his Salvation.

So, a good man is not saved because of his goodness; and a kind man is not saved because of his kindness. And a noble man is not saved because of his nobility. But a lost and wretched sinner is saved because God chose him before the Foundation of the world and God the Holy Spirit drew him and God the Son died to guarantee his Salvation and God Himself opened his blind eyes and God unstopped his deaf ears and God gave him a heart to believe and God washed his black heart in red blood and made it whiter than snow. And it is God who keeps him as the Son and the Spirit are in 24 hour a day seven days a week intercession on his behalf.

Salvation is so impossible for human beings and is such a supernatural miracle that we cannot even *cooperate* with God in the saving of our own souls. So, Salvation is a sovereign Act of a Kind and Merciful God to show unmerited Favor to undeserving sinners –all to the Glory of God alone.

And because Salvation is such a miracle- a saved person cannot help but change. He now loves the things he one time hated, and he now hates the things that he one time loved. God has so altered his nature; God has so transformed his attributes; God has so revolutionized his soul- that the saved individual now lives and breathes and eats and sleeps Jesus and he lives for only one goal- so that through his life and actions and words and deeds- God alone can get all the glory; all the praise and all the honor.

Now the Greek philosophers of the first century were teaching people that knowledge alone is Salvation without any change of behavior. But John said that was not true. The Gnostic mystics taught that engaging in secret rituals brought forth Salvation. But John says that is not true as well. The Judaizers taught that morality would save

you- But one again- John said that was not true. And the Antinomians taught that since we are saved by Grace alone- that saved people can do anything they are big enough to do- and once again John stands up and says that is not true.

So, the reason that John wrote the way that he did here in this Epistle was to accomplish two things: First of all- John was refuting the false teaching of the four heretical groups that I just mentioned who had invaded the Church in the first century and were teaching things contrary to Sound Doctrine:

The Judaizers
The Antinomians
The Greek Philosophers
The Gnostic Mystics

These people were in various ways trying to alter the Gospel; redefine Grace; and alter the way that God saves the human soul. They were also seeking to redefine Who Jesus was and bring into doubt either His full Divinity or His full Humanity.

So, John was attacking their false teachings head on. And by the way- when you run into a modern day Judaizer; a modern day Antinomian; a modern day philosopher or a modern day Gnostic- you can use these very same words of John right here in this Epistle to absolutely dismantle their teachings and show them to be the fraud that they are.

But the second thing that John was doing by writing these words- was to encourage the true believer who genuinely loved Jesus and was trying to serve God with all their heart. And we can use these very same words that John wrote right here in this Epistle today to be encouraged about what God is doing in our lives and to rejoice in our Salvation.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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