

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Marks of God's Children

Scripture: 1 John

Code: 1317B

1 John

1 John Chapter 3, tonight we're continuing in our discussions about the church. And in 1 John Chapter 3 we have the distinguishing marks of the children of God. And certainly there are some things that set the church aside from the rest of the world. That make it unique. That make it different.

Now 1 John is a very interesting book, for in 1 John we find there are three glorious revelations of God. First of all God has revealed as life, life itself. In Chapter 1 verses 1 to 4, then God is revealed as light in Chapter 1, verses 5 to 7, and finally and climatically, God is revealed as love.

And it is to that last point that we want to speak to some degree tonight. Because in Chapter 3, verse 1 we have the highpoint of God's love. God's love was to the purpose that he might make children that belong to Him.

And of course, that great...that great point or pinnacle of the love of God was seen at Calvary's cross for it is at Calvary that the deed was done that enables us to become a son of God. God, first of all, loved us and wanted us to be His children. He loved us so much and the desire was so great for us to be His children that He allowed His Son to die to make it possible.

Christ literally paid the supreme sacrifice for you and for me because of God's desire that we become His children. So the theme of love leads us to discuss what marks us as children of God. We know He wants us to be children, because of the price He paid, giving His Son Jesus Christ.

But what are the marks that distinguish us from the world? What are the marks that make us different than the children of the devil? As Christ was indicting those Jews that day, He said you are of your father the devil. What makes us different? What marks cause us to be recognizable?

Let's look carefully at three marks of a child of God in Chapter 3, verses 1 to 10. There are three marked characteristics, there are three very evident qualities of a child of God. And I want you to see them as John paints them. And again, this is very simple, this is very basic, but is also important to our understanding of who we are as a church.

Three things that mark a child of God. The first one is the bestowal of sonship. The second one is the hope of sonship. And the third one is the manifestation of sonship. Now we'll explain these as we go. First characteristic of a child of God that is the bestowal of sonship. That is simply to say he has been made a child of God. Now you notice that in verse 1 where it says "The Father bestows upon us His love to produce son." And so we see two things about this bestowal of sonship. Number one it is revealed by God's love, you see it there? In the first part of verse 3...verse 1.

The love causes God to bestow upon us sonship. So this bestowal of sonship is revealed by God's love. Now watch this, the second part of the verse says, "and it results in the world not knowing us." You see that? It's revealed by God's love and it results in the world not knowing us.

Now again you have that say concept of know again. It's all over the place in the Bible. You say well you're just picking out the passages. No, I'm not. We're going to run into it time and time again. First of all then, this bestowal of sonship that comes upon us that makes us children of God is revealed by God's love. Notice the first word in verse 1. It is behold. And paraphrased, He is saying hey everybody I have something to say tune in, basically.

Wake up now, get this, I know what I've been saying for two chapters is really hot stuff, but you haven't heard anything yet. "Behold," right in the middle of the book he says that. He summons them to attention and he says this, "What manner of love the Father's bestowed upon us?" Now you say now John, what a let down. "Behold," and all of a sudden, "what manner of love." Well, you don't even get very excited about, John. Why don't you say fantastic, unbelievable, stupendous, monumental, classical love.

John says, well, I'll you, I thought about doing that, but I discovered that the love of God is indescribably delicious. You can't...I couldn't figure out how to put the adjectives together. It just...they just didn't fit and so I gave up and said oh what manner of love? It couldn't be described. There's no human word that could even describe the love of God. Listen, if we could describe the love of God in human terms, it wouldn't be divine.

No, it'd be human. And I like it the way it is. I don't want to know all about the love of God. It's divine love. What manner of love? Oh there's all kinds of love. All dimensions of love. We use love in reference to everything. We say I love my car. Now you think about that, that's pretty ridiculous.

You say you love your dog. That's even more ridiculous. You say you love your wife. Now that's getting closer to the truth. And your children. All dimensions of them and every love relationship that we have has a little bit different dimension doesn't it? There are all kinds of qualities of love. There is just plain human love. Then there is the combination of a kind of a human and divine love. And then there is pure divine love. You say well, what's that combination? Well, maybe that's a poor way to say it, but I think about...I think the favorite missionary biography I ever read and I've shared this so

many times because it makes this an impact on my life.

And I read the story of John Payton who was a missionary to the New Hebrides. And I read his story and to me that was the most fantastic illustration of the combination of human and divine love I ever read. He was a seminary student in England, Payton was. And he was trying to decide where God wanted him to go to serve.

And really, I think he had in mind a pastorate from reading what he says, but God lead him to the mission field and he began to think about missions. And he married a young girl and of course they were planning their future together and God called him and he seemed to understand that God wanted him to go to a place called the New Hebrides. Now the New Hebrides was inhabited by a man eating cannibal. Which was really not something that John had anticipated.

And so he said well Lord if that's the way you want me to go, I'll go. So he packed up his little wife of a few months, got in a boat, took off, the ship let him off 200 yards from shore. Wouldn't even go near the place and they rowed into this island. Now what do you do when you arrive at an island full of man eating cannibals? Nobody's ever been there that hasn't been invited to lunch and never come back. What do you do?

You stick up a sign and say VBS begins on Saturday? How do you approach that? You don't even know the language. You haven't even contacted on human being on the island and you're really not too hot to contact anybody. It's bad enough just to go up to somebody that's going to be friendly. What do you do?

Well, in his biography, his brother was writing it really, his brother recorded that they build a little lean to on the beach and they set up a little house keeping. They were there a couple of days trying to figure out what do and just waiting on the Lord and all of a sudden, the natives started peering out at them from around and the natives didn't do anything. They just kind of watched them. Which is a very petrifying experience.

And at night they would sort of go around their lean to and it was a very, very scary thing. Well, they were there several months and they never touched them. And his wife gave birth to a little baby. And two weeks later his wife contracted a tropical disease and died and the next day the baby died. And he was all alone. He said, "I buried the bodies and slept on them for three nights to keep the natives from digging them up and eating them." And he said, "I was lonely beyond loneliness." And he said, "I kept saying why God, why? You know, that's what I would have said. I would have said the same thing.

I would have said now listen God I have a plan. I wouldn't have even arrived there probably. But I would have said now look God I graduated from seminary, this is the human in me, you see. My

human nature is, now God I graduated from seminary. And not only that God I made pretty good grades. And God you want to know something, I can make it in the ministry. But there's no sense in sending me out there. I can make it in the ministry, but Lord, I know a Biola dropout. Send him, they'll eat him up and nobody will ever know the difference.

You know, from every human standpoint, you'd figure well that's fairly sound reasoning. Should I blow my whole education and be somebody's dinner, that doesn't make a lot of sense. You know the amazing story about Payton was that he did go. And he buried those two bodies and slept on them and then waited for the Lord to lead him and finally that it happened just days after that. A native had been kicked out of the tribe and he came to John and they began to communicate a little of the language and pretty soon he introduced him to a God who had a Son who died for him and that native became a believer.

The tribe heard about it and they started after John, but now he had somebody to warn him and the rest of his biography is the most fantastic thing you ever read. They hid him all over the place and the natives never did find him. On the contrary, that native kept bringing other natives to Christ. And pretty soon there was a little group, and another group, you know how long he stayed on those islands? Would you believe 35 years. And at the end of 35 years as he was leaving those islands, he said when I came here I heard the cry of cannibals. As I leave I hear the ringing of church bells.

And he said I do not know of one single native that hasn't received Jesus Christ. That takes an awful lot of love, much beyond human love to love a people like and to stay there and pour your life into that. That's a supreme love isn't it. That's an infinitely sacrificial love. That must be the combination of human and divine love. But can you grasp this? Even infinitely more pure than that is the love of God.

God loved so much that He gave His Son that He might bestow on us sonship. That we might become joint heirs with whom? With Christ. Oh the bestowal of sonship comes by the love of God. What a love it is? It's a sacrificial love. "Greater love hath no man than this," said Jesus, "than a man lay down his life for his friends."

That is sacrificial love. Not only was it sacrificial love, but beyond that it was eternal love. "Jeremiah," God said, "I have loved you with an everlasting love." It's not one that's going to die out. Not only that it was a love beyond understanding. It didn't make sense to love like that.

Paul said in Ephesians 3, verse 19, he says, "The love of Christ which passeth," what, "knowledge," it doesn't make sense to love like that. Not only was it divine and eternal and beyond understanding, but it was a secure love. Do you remember the apostle Paul, it says, "What shall separate us?" or "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" And the ringing answer is nothing. And oh it was a saving love too wasn't it.

God commended His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. "God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Not only that it's the kind of a love we can give back, is it not? We love Him because what? He first loved us.

We can give it back. What a fantastic love. And it's this love that's bestowed sonship on us. I'll tell you when I think about that, I get all excited. When I think about the fact that God...I know myself pretty well, and I'm not the most loveable guy around. And it...and God knows me better than anybody. And I'll tell you, not only me, but God loves everyone of you and every man in this world with an infinite love. Oh what an exciting thing that God loves so much that He paid the supreme price to bestow sonship on us.

You see it's God's love that called us to be Son. That's not the way it is humanly. I love my children, because they're my children. They're not my children because I love them. I never met them before they arrived. How could I love them? I love them because they're mine. You know God is just the opposite. God loved you and He made you His.

He loved you before you belonged to Him. He loved you when you hated Him. It's a fantastic thing. He loved you when you didn't want him. He loved you when you were unlovely. And that's the difference between divine love and human love. A love of God is the key to our sonship. And it results in the world not knowing us. Look at verse 3...verse 1, the last part. "Therefore, the world knoweth us not because it knew Him not."

You see the world has no capacity to recognize God. They don't have any capacity to recognize Christ. The Bible says "He came unto His own in His own," what? "He was in the world, the world was made by Him and the world," what, "knew Him not." The world has no capacity to know God or to know Christ.

In fact, says Paul in 1 Corinthians 2:14, "That the natural man understandeth not the things of God. He just cannot grasp them." Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:4, he says, "The God of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not."

John says when you're a child of God you are unrecognizable to the world. They can't know you. They can't...they can't understand or comprehend you. I think a graphic illustration of that is a funeral where I was one time before long was little six month old baby. And I'll never forget the mother who couldn't accept the fact that the baby was dead. Leaned in and began to pat the little cheeks and kiss the baby all over its face. Nothing happened. That baby didn't know that mother. Not all.

And you see, the reason was, was because it was dead. And the apostle Paul says in Ephesians 2:1, "That the unsaved man is," what, "dead." And he can't recognize the child of God. He doesn't know him. All the world never did know Jesus Christ. They were blind to Him when He was born. They were blind to Him through His whole ministry. They were blind at the cross and stood there shouting "crucify Him, crucify Him, we will not have this man to reign over us."

The world has no capacity to recognize God, Christ or the child of God and understand because it's foolishness. It doesn't make sense. We can go back to verse 29 of Chapter 2 and we can say that if the world can't recognize God, they're not going to be able to recognize us because we resemble God.

This is why we have no love relationship with the world because they can't love us. The word know again implies the fact of a love relationship. The world has no love for us. Why 1 John 2, verse 15 he says "If any man love the world," what, "the love of the Father's not in him." I you're have a love relationship going on with the world, I'll clue you, you don't have any going on with God.

That's what he says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." You don't have anything going with them. You're love relationship is with God. And the world shouldn't recognize you. If the world recognizes you, you better check on your love relationship with God. And that's what we read about in 1 John 3:13. Look what he says. "Marvel not my brethren if the world," what, "hate you." Don't be surprised if they hate you. Why?

You go back to John 15 he says, "Because they hated me." And if you're my child you resemble me. If they didn't have any capacity to see me, they won't see you either. And so we see the bestowal of sonship revealed by the love of God and resulting in a world not knowing us.

The second thing we see is the hope of sonship. Verses 2 and 3, "Beloved now are we the children of God." Do you like that? Do you like that present tense? Isn't that fantastic? Now are we the sons of God? Hmmm that blesses my heart. "And it doth not yet appear what we shall be." Hey, you want to know something? There's better stuff to come. "But we know, thank the Lord, that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him for we shall Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as he is pure."

We not only have the bestowal of sonship, we have the hope of sonship don't we. You say, what do you mean by that? Well, it says right here that our hope is in the appearance of Jesus Christ for when that happens, we're going to be complete in Him. Have you ever thought about that? There are two things that he says here. The hope of sonship is revealed in Christ's coming and results in purification. It's revealed in Christ's coming and it results in purification.

First of all, let's notice that it...that this hope of sonship is revealed in Christ's coming. Here we're hoping for the future and we know that when He shall appear we'll be like Him. That's our hope isn't it? It's going to be revealed. The fulfillment of our hope is going to be revealed in the coming of Christ.

You say well, what's going to happen to us when He comes? Well, we're going to be like Him. We're going to be like Jesus Christ. The Bible says very carefully, "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His," what, "Son." We're going to be like Christ.

Well, when you stop to think about what's your life now and you think about that, that's an awful gap to fill. And it's going to be filled in an instant. You know, I like what Paul says in Ephesians 2:10. He says, "For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus." Do you know what the word workmanship means? It's taken from the crafts. It means His masterpiece. Do you like that?

You're God's masterpiece. You're the most glorious thing that God has ever made. And if you're Christian God is molding you into whose image? His dear Son. Oh that's exciting. You know that you're just a chalk drawing right now. You're going to be colored in when Christ comes back. I mean, there's more to do.

It's like the lady that was sweeping out the studio where the guy was making a sculpture and one day there was a big block of marble and the next day Abraham Lincoln's face was emerging from it. And she looked at that and she "oh my, how did you know Mr. Lincoln was in that stone?"

And Michael Angelo made the statement he said, "In every block of stone I see an angel to be liberated." There was a little boy in the junior Sunday School class, junior Sunday School classes are wonderful. I used to teach one for one week. And it was junior Sunday School class and all these little guys were just behaving except for one who was just a monster. And he was poking and talking and scuffling around and it really distracting the poor teacher who was a man. So the teacher thought I'm going to teach that kid a lesson he'll never forget. So in the middle of the class he stopped and he said, "Who made you?" The little kid shot out of his seat and came down to a landing and said, "God did."

And the teacher looked at him and said "Well, He didn't do a very good job." And the little guy looked back at the teacher and said, "that's cause He ain't finished yet." And he didn't know how right he was did he? Isn't it exciting thing to know that God's not finished yet? That some day when I meet Jesus Christ, I'm going to be like Him.

Little by little as you go through this life, God's molding you isn't He? Or chiseling you as the case may be. Depending on how resistant you are into the image of Jesus Christ, and the more Christ-like we become, the more mature we become. Some day we're going to be like Jesus Christ. What a

thrilling thought? Our hope, our hope is revealed in the coming of Christ when we are like Him, because we see Him as He is.

So the hope of sonship is revealed in the coming of Christ and it results in our purification. Look at verse 3. "Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure." Now, I think when I was here before, I talked about this, but I want to reiterate it. One time when I preached on a Sunday night.

What John is saying is this, that when you really live in the light of the coming of Christ it shapes you up. When you really live as if Jesus Christ is coming back any instant and you're going to be ready for Him it changes the way you live, doesn't it?

Now you know as well as I do that when we know an authority figure is eminent on the scene, it changes the way we operate. You did things differently at work when the boss comes walking through. You do differently at school when the teacher leaves the room and then you hear her coming back towards the door. Everything changes immediately. It'd better change.

We need that authority figure to cause us to straighten up. And I can think of so many illustrations of that and you can too in your own life. That when we know there is something coming that's important and we want to be ready for it, it changes the way we operate. And that's exactly what he's saying. He's saying the result of this kind of a hope is the fact that we purify our self. You say you mean we can do it?

Look at that, "In Him purifieth himself." That is reflexive. We purify ourselves. You say how do you do that? You can clean up your life. You say, but God has to do it all. Oh God's going to give you the power to do it, but you're going to yield to it.

There are some things that God can't do for you that you have to do. And if you really live in the light of the soon coming of Jesus Christ, if you as Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5, "labor at whether present or absent you may be accepted of Him." If you really live in the light of that soon return of Christ, it's going to change the way you live. And I can show you from 2 Peter, just a few books over in your Bible and in Chapter 3 Peter is talking about this.

In verse 10, he says, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." It's going to come when you don't expect it. It's going to sneak up on you. "In which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are in it shall be burned up." Now watch this one, verse 11, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved what manner of persons ought ye to be?" Do you see that?

Listen, when you really live in the light of the soon return of Jesus Christ and when you start to see these things coming to pass, it's going to change the way you live. Now you say what kind of person am I supposed to be? Look at the end of verse 11.

"In all holy living and," what, "godliness." Look down in verse 14. "Wherefore beloved seeing that we look for such things be diligent that you may be found of Him," three things, "in peace, without spot, and" what, "blameless." We can go back to 1 John. Do you see what he's saying there? He's saying when you really know. When you're really aware that this is going to happen, it's going to change the way you live.

When you really have that hope in you the one who really has that hope in him purifies himself that he might be pure when Christ arrives. That we might stand before Him blameless. What a tremendous truth. Anticipation always results in purification.

And so we see the hope of sonship revealed in the coming of Christ and resulting in our purification. I'll tell you if you're not ready for the coming of Christ, you better get ready. It's not far off. I was talking a fellow in Northern California the other day about this and we were talking about the fact that the Bible says in Revelation that the Army of the kings of the east it's going to march across, God's going to dry up the Euphrates River and this Army's going to come right into Israel.

John's vision he saw that Army as having two hundred thousand thousand men. That's 200 million. Oh it's not been too many years ago that the kings of the east were created. Red China broke off the Russian block and became a kingdom in themselves. Time Magazine in November it said this, and I'm quoting. "The Red Guard now numbers 200 million." Exactly what the Bible says. Then the prophecy indicates that they're going to march across and the Euphrates River is going to be dried up. Two years ago the Russians started a seven year project to dam up the Euphrates.

When you see all these things come to pass, it's time to get ready. You may not even live until that happens and that's not very far away. The hope of sonship is in the coming of Christ and it results in purification. Lastly, not only is there the bestowal of sonship, and the hope of sonship, but the manifestation of sonship.

And there are two aspects to it. It is revealed in a life born of God a new life and results in righteousness. Notice verses 9 and 10 and we're skipping those in the middle. Verses 9 and 10, "Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin for his seed remains in him and he cannot sin because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil. Whosoever doeth no righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."

Here you have two things, first of all the manifestation of sonship is revealed in a new life and secondly it results in righteousness. Let's notice the idea that this manifestation of our sonship is a

new life. It says in verse 9 that "Whosoever is born of God cannot or doth not commit sin." Now this is a very interesting verse and has been much misunderstood.

Some people have interpreted it to mean that when you become a Christian you stop sinning. Well, I can be real practical about that and tell you that's not true. And if you're a Christian you know that's not true. There are two types of verbs in the Greek and I have to tell you this because you won't understand it if I don't. There is a verb that is called erosthat's point action. Like I hit or I threw or I ran or I stopped or I said, it's all direct point action. Then there are verbs that are called linear, they are continuous action.

The idea of I was running or I was hitting or I was doing. And here you have this linear verb, although it is not translated that way, it should be translated like this in verse 9. "Whosoever is born of God does not continue to practice sinning." Better is not characterized by continuous sinfulness. It's not saying that the one who's born of God never, never sins. Well, how do you know it's not saying that? Well, go right back to 1 John 2, verse 1. "My little children these things write unto you that ye," what, "sin not." Now he's talking to Christians, right? And if you want to see a picture of the Grace of God, read between the lines in this verse.

"My little children, these things I write unto you that ye sin not." Now that's a pretty strong statement, right? Now what's the next statement? "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Now if that's not the grace of God I don't know what is.

God says, "Sin not." But if you do, Jesus Christ will forgive it. And He's talking to believers. It doesn't mean that the sin nature is eradicated in Chapter 3. Go back to Chapter 3. It simply means that this practice of sinning is not the characteristic of living anymore. That's what James said. "Faith without works is dead, by their fruits you shall know them."

There is a difference in the life. And here he says the reason that he can't continually commit over and over the same sins and be characterized by sinfulness, in verse 9, is because his seed remains in him. This is the seed of God. And here he's using a metaphor of human reproduction. But he uses that over and over again.

Well, he told Nicodemus that he had to be what, born again. Isn't that a human illustration of reproduction? And here you have the seed of God planted and creating a new life. Did you know that if you're a Christian you are a child of God because God planted His seed in your soul and you sprang a new life? Oh that's fantastic.

You are a new life. How thrilling. You say how was I born of God? How did it happen? You know how it happened? It happened just like it always happens. 1 John 5:1, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is," what, "born of God." "And everyone that loveth Him that begot loveth Him also

that is begotten of Him."

Do you know how you were born again? You were born again because you believed and received Jesus Christ, right? Some of you are sitting out there saying how do you get...how do you get to be born a child of God? How do you get the seed of God planted into you? To spring in the new life. I'll tell you how. You believe and receive Jesus Christ, just that simple.

Hebrews 11, the Bible says "Him that cometh unto me must believe." Do you remember what old Paul told a Philippian jailer? He said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be," what, "saved." Believing and receiving Christ. Paul said in Romans Chapter 10, "Believe in thy heart and confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus Christ." Believing. You say what does it mean to believe? It means to trust, to have faith.

You say how much faith? Not very much. Just enough to cry out and say Christ I believe You're the Son of God and I believe you can come into my life and I can be born anew. That's all it takes. You say well don't you have to have an awful lot of faith? No, no, not too much. You say why? Well, I always think of the illustration in Mark Chapter 9. What a beautiful story it is.

This father comes and he brings his boy who cannot speak and in verse 24, the father looks at Jesus and he cries out and says, "Lord I believe." You say oh fantastic. And then you know what he said right after that? "Help thou my unbelief." Isn't that interesting. He says, Lord I believe about this far. Lord, I'd like to have an extension on that if I could. See, Lord I have a little bit will you just help me to believe the rest of the way. And you want to know something? If you just have a little bit, God will help you to believe the rest of the way.

Faith is a gift of God. And if you just believe part way, God's going to carry you the rest of the way. All you have to do is take whatever faith you have and cast yourself on God and He'll supply the rest. Yes, the manifestation of sonship is revealed in a life born of God. And it happens when you believe. When you say Christ I believe you're the Son of God. I receive you into my life and in that instant you are implanted with the seed of God. And a new life springs.

What a thrilling thing. The manifestation of sonship then is the life born of God. It results in righteousness. Look at verse 10. "In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil. Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God. Neither he that loveth not his brother."

The result of believing is righteousness. The result of being implanted with a new seed is righteousness. My righteousness? Who? Christ's righteousness is imputed to me. But I'll tell you at the same time, my life gets cleaned up too. And you know, that's what Paul meant in Galatians 5:1, you know, when he wrote to the Galatians, he said, "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free." You know what he meant by that liberty? That doesn't mean you're free to do

anything you want. That means for the first time you can choose to do right. That's what that liberty is.

Do you know the unsaved person can't choose to do right. Did you know that? That an unsaved person does wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong all the time. Paul says in Romans 3, "There is none that doeth good no not one." There's none righteous no not one. And when Christ comes into your life for the first time you have a choice to do what's right. What a tremendous truth that is.

You're not perfect. Look at Paul in Romans 7, was he perfect? No, he kept saying, "I want to do this but I keep doing this." I have a desire for what is right but I get hung up on what's wrong. But positionally you are righteous and practically in your own living there is a change in the way you live.

I think a tremendous illustration of this is Romans 6, and I want to share with just briefly one concept there that is pointed out in Romans Chapter 6. Now listen to this, verse 11, this is a tremendous thing. He says...he's talking about this idea of being righteous positionally in Christ and then practically in your own life. He says, "Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." Now, I'm telling you folks, when you stop thinking...start thinking about that, that thing is really pretty potent. He says, you...you folks remember you are dead to sin.

You say now wait a minute Paul, dead to sin? Well, it's awful active. If I'm dead to it, what's going on? Why am I always getting hung up on it? Notice verse 12. Then he says this...he just told you you're dead to sin and then he says this, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body." Now isn't that a strange thing for him to say. Paul, you just told me I was dead to it, now why should I worry about letting it reign in my body?

Paul, if I'm dead to it, what's the problem. And then in verse 13 he says, "Don't even yield your members as members of unrighteousness, but yield unto God as those that are alive from the dead." And you say what is he saying? God back to 1 John. Here's what he's saying. He's saying this, "In Christ you are righteous." Now watch this one. "Now act like it." Did you get that?

In Romans 6 he says, "You are dead to sin positionally in Christ and the sight of God there's no sin imputed to you." You're dead to it now act like it, he says. And here you have the same thing in 1 John. He says, "Your righteous, now act like it." Positionally in Christ you're spot. But practically folks, you've got a little work to do.

And so we see then the manifestation of sonship is in righteousness first positionally we're perfectly righteous in Christ and we have a new righteousness of our own. Then he paints a portrait differentiating us between the children of the devil, the children of God as he illustrates verses 9 and 10 and verses 4 through 8. And that's a family portrait of two families, verses 4 to 8, that's why I skipped them, because they kind of tie it all together. He's just said that a child of God is this and a

child of the devil is this.

Now watch this picture, he's painting two family portraits, one is the devil and all of his children, the other is God and all of His children. Now watch the difference. In verse 4, you'll see how he switches back and forth.

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law for sin is a transgression of the law. And you know that he was manifested to take away our sins and in him is no sin." So first of all verse 4 deals with the devil and his children committing sin. And in verse 5 he switches over and paints a little while in this picture and says but wait a minute here are the ones that had their sin taken away.

And then in verse 6 he says, "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not. Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him; neither known him." And now he's painting a little bit of the Christian and a little bit of the devil and his children. Just giving you a little bit about each and going back and forth.

"Little children," in verse 7, "let no man deceive you. He that doth righteousness is righteous." And he paints a little bit more of the child of God. In verse 8, "He that committeth sin is of the devil." And he paints a little bit more over there. "But the devil sinneth from the beginning, for this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil."

So we see there are three great marks of the child of God that make His portrait easy to understand. They are the bestowal of sonship revealed by the love of God and resulting in the world not knowing Him. The hope of sonship revealed in the coming of Christ resulting in purification, the manifestation of sonship revealed in a life born anew and resulting in righteousness.

As children of God we have a divine origin don't we? We have a divine hope and we have a present manifestation to this world that we're different. The Christian is unique. For all the things that He possesses the devil and his family don't have.

And a child of God is born of an incorruptible seed setting him apart. These are the marks of a child of God. Which portrait includes you tonight? Let's bow in prayer.

Father, we're thankful again tonight for tremendous portion of Scripture that we have dealt with, the joy of studying thy precious eternal word. God our hearts are burdened with the thought that there are some who are in our midst who do not know Jesus Christ who are not thy sons, thy children, who have never had the seed of God planted in them to spring in a new life, a newness of life. Who do not know what it is to have a hope in the coming of Christ and the desire to be like Him. Who do not know what it is to have righteousness in Christ and the ability to choose what is right, and to glorify God. Oh what a joy it is to know thy love, to hope and in becoming of Christ and to have the righteousness imputed to us which was Christ's and is Christ's. In Christ's name. Amen.

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