

## Children of God

The Epistle for All Saints Sunday is 1 John 3:1-3. It is the sweetest news that we can hear.

A major reason for the writing of this epistle was to combat early versions of Gnosticism. Its primary tenant was that humans are basically good spirits that are trapped in an evil material world, including corrupt, inferior physical bodies. The way out of this dilemma was through special knowledge. This belief led to serious heresies, such as a denial of the true, full deity of Christ. It also made for a self-righteous way to be saved.

We need to go back to 1 Jn 2:28 to put this text in the context of being “children of God.” This is a theme that runs through the Epistle. We are begotten of (from) the Father. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. We therefore have fellowship with the Father and Jesus and with one another. Having been born from God, it is our new nature to want to live as children of God and to see Christ.

John can hardly get over the greatness of God’s love. Can anyone blame him for the amazement? That God should love us so much as to come down from His glorious heaven to this sinful earth to redeem us by suffering and dying in our place. the whole story is so amazing it can hardly be believed. In fact, it would not be believed if the Holy Spirit has not convinced us of the power of the Gospel.

Despite all our iniquity, our selfishness and sinfulness, He has called us His own children through the waters of Baptism. This lavished love of God is unique. It is not what our corrupted, sinful nature deserves. It is not what our thoughts, words and deeds have earned.

This reading has some words and praises that pile on the comfort we can experience in our lives:

- ✓ *beloved* is literally “ones whom I love.”
- ✓ verse 2 also has the phrase: *when he appears we shall be like him.*
- ✓ *We shall see him as he is.* Revelation 22:4 says: *They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.*
- ✓ *hopes* is not a mere wish, but an unshakable confidence concerning the future.

In these three verses, John makes abundantly clear that only the gospel saves us and gives us eternal life.

Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, thank you for giving us such a clear message of the hope for eternal life. Amen