

1 John 3:1

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[0:00] 1 John chapter 3 verse 1 says, 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.

I want to just lock in on this unique phrasing in verse 1, see what kind of love the Father has given to us. If you read it really quickly, which I'm sure we've all done over the years, it just comes across as a poetic way of saying, Oh my goodness, it's so good that God loves us.

Or, Oh my goodness, God loves us so well, or so bigly, or something like that. But there's actually something really glorious and theologically profound in the sentence here, and it's this, this word kind.

See what kind of love the Father has given us. He is referring here to a specific kind of love. Namely, listen carefully, namely, the Father's love for His only begotten Son.

What He's saying in verse 1 is that God doesn't just love us. He has extended the love He has for His Son Jesus to us.

[1:23] This isn't just God loves you. This is God loves you with the love He has for the Son. There are different theological terms for this concept.

It's essentially a participation in the filial love of Christ. The fatherly love that the Father has for the Son has been extended to those who place their faith in Jesus, like those that you just heard from.

Whenever you see this idea expressed, it's essentially this glorious truth. It's not just that God loves you in some generic way, some romantic way, some nostalgic way, but He loves you in a very particular way.

And that way is that He has included you in His love that He already had and had from forever for the Son. So let's just quickly make sure we understand a few pieces of this and we'll be done.

First of all, what you will see from the Father when He rarely appears in the Gospels, when He rarely speaks in the Gospels, is one sentence, and that is, this is my Son in whom I am well pleased.

[2:33] 2 Peter 1.17 says that Christ received honor and glory from God the Father. John 3.35, Jesus says, the Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand.

John 5.20, the Father loves the Son and shows Him all that He Himself is doing. Behold my servant, Isaiah 42.1, behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased.

And what John is celebrating in verse 1 of chapter 3 of his epistle is that it's not simply that God loves you, but that He has extended, as if it were a kind of blanket, He has extended the love that He has for the Son to all who place their faith in Him.

Now, I did that exegesis on my own, and that's typically how I prepare sermons, is I'll do all the exegetical work on my own. But then I'll go back in church history and find some of these husky boys, some of these reliable offensive linemen type theologians, and I'll be like, all right, am I okay here?

Is this a novel interpretation of the text and so forth? And one of the most reliable kind of fullback theologians in my arsenal is Martin Lloyd-Jones, and I want you to hear what he says about this.

[3:45] The Father's love for the Son is special because it involves no need to sacrifice. Sorry, that's me. That sounded like Martin Lloyd-Jones. I had myself fooled.

Here's Martin. We are called, we are chosen to what? Holiness, sonship, to the praise of God, glory? Yes, even higher. Is anything higher?

Possibly it is, and it's all in this word. It's this, to be loved of God, even as His Son was loved by Him. Have I gone too far?

Do you think that I'm exaggerating? Have I suddenly given reign to my imagination? Am I going beyond the Scriptures? I am not. Listen to this. They are the words of the Son Himself in His high priestly prayer in the 17th of John, the 23rd verse.

I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfect in one. Listen. And that the world may know them, that thou hast sent me. And then the most astounding thing, Jones writes, the most astounding thing that's ever been said, and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me.

[4:59] Let's look at that text in John 17, 23. One of the final things Jesus asks of the Father before going to the cross is that when He dies and makes sacrifice for the sins of those whom He would save, He wants those whom He died for to be included in the same love that the Father has extended to the Son.

John 17, 23. I in them, and you in me, that they may be perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and love them even as you have loved me.

Now, I've mentioned throughout this 1 John series, which I've really enjoyed. I hope you have. I mentioned that John in his epistle is going through essentially the farewell discourse in John 13 through 17 in the gospel that he wrote many years earlier.

What John is doing in 1 John 3 is he's saying this is what Jesus has prayed for, that all those to be saved would be included in this very special love that the Father has for the Son.

There's something unique about the Father's love for the Son. Well, there's a few things unique. The one is that it's entirely pure. Help me. Check in with me after if you think I'm missing something.

[6:14] I don't think there's another love that exists in the universe that doesn't involve some level of overlooking or forbearance. Right? I can't think of any other love that exists that is pure, unadulterated admiration and delight.

Now, we sometimes romantically say these things to our wives to help us succeed in certain endeavors. But in reality, all love that we experience as human beings involves a degree of overlooking and forbearance.

That's just reality. There's one unique love in all of the universe, and it's the love the Father has for the Son and the love the Son has for the Father that requires no overlooking, no forbearance, no patience, just pure, unadulterated delight.

It's hard for me to articulate with any appropriate level of goodness how glorious this notion of being included in the triune love is.

And all completely, completely, completely undeserved. All completely undeserved. Look back at that verse, 1 John 3, 1.

[7:37] There's this phrase that doesn't do anything for you in the English, but in the Greek, it really pops off the page. Right at the very beginning of verse 1 of 1 John 3, see what kind of love the Father has.

Well, that's kind of, okay, I don't know what that means exactly. In the Greek, you know what it says? From what country does a love like this come? From what country does a love like this come?

And the Greek word is *potipen*, and it just means where in the world are you going to find this? It was a term used for exclamation. It was a term used for how is this even possible?

It was a term used when people were marveling over something. And the reality is simply this. The love that God has for those whom He has saved is not a love that has any similarity to something in this world.

It's a completely unique, intense, loyal, permanent, faithful, kind, joyful, happy, not simply tolerating, not simply forbearing, not simply patience.

[8:43] It is delight. And the candidates who came today to be baptized are saying through all their stories and all the variety of things, one simple truth, that in God's magnificent mercy, in all sorts of providential ways that involve parents and diseases and churches and books, that the divine symphony conductor had arranged in His, only in the way He can, providentially to bring each person who testified today, and Lord willing, many people in this room, into this most pure, most unworldly kind of love.

That's just such a glorious thing. And it's, John, all John's doing is he's saying, Jesus asked for this, so now I know it's true because when Jesus asked for something, it happens.

So in John 17, 23, he says, hey, he says, Father, include them in my love, the love that you have for me.

Now listen to what he says in the next line, in verse 24. Father, I desire that they also whom you have given me may be with me where I am to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

Now look with me back at 1 John 3. I think I've got this arranged on the slides. There should be a slide. Yep, that's the one. Now look at verse 2 of 1 John 3.

[10:20] Beloved, we are God's children now. What we will be has not yet appeared, but we know when he appears we shall be like him because we shall see him as he is. John's just following the line of thought.

Jesus asked for an adoptive love. Lord, bring these people into our divine family. And then he says, and let them be where I am.

So when John is repeating this in the epistle, he goes from this adoptive glory to the next phase which is an eschatological glory. We will be like him when he appears.

Now, I'm going to wrap up because there's one piece of this that I think I want to land on and that's when you think about adoption as modern Americans, you have some reasonably good senses in your head about what that is.

And so when you see this idea of adoption expressed in the Bible, you kind of get it. Like there's a lot of what you kind of think about with adoption is true of spiritual adoption.

[11:24] I just need to add a couple things that are not normal in this world and are very normal in spiritual adoption. And the first is is that when God saves a person, he doesn't simply bring them into his family.

He causes them to be born again. So one of the unique things about theological, spiritual, gospel adoption is it's regenerative. It actually changes you. You become a new person.

That's not like regular adoption, right? The second one is something that's just not thought of so much in our world but was common in the ancient world when these texts were being written and that is that really the main purpose of adoption in the ancient times was to include someone into your inheritance that didn't have biological connection.

So a lot of the adoptions that happened in the ancient world were very economically oriented. There was a love, of course, like, hey, I love this person. I want them to receive what I have but the main reason was almost contractual.

I want you to bring this person into my family line. Often people were adopted as adults in the ancient world, not as children. I want to bring this person into my family line so that they can receive a piece of my inheritance.

[12:35] Does that start to make sense of what Jesus is praying in John 17, 23, and 24? Put them in our family, Lord. Make the love that you have for me the love you have for them and include them in my inheritance.

Include them in my glory. Include them in my eternal joy. That's what John's doing in 1 John 3, verses 1 and 2.

He's saying, what manner of love from what country has this glorious love come from? It is not a simple thing. It's not a simple statement of God's love. It's a beautiful thing.

We are included in the Father's love for the Son. And then he says, and we will continue to be drawn nearer and nearer to Him until He returns and we will be like Him.

Just as Jesus asked in John 17, 24, that where He is we may be also. So what's happening in these two verses is simply the glorious truth of you are, if you're in Christ, you are loved in a way that you have actually never experienced and there's nothing you can compare it to.

[13:44] There's like, there's almost nothing. Now, what's the big challenge with that? Well, if it's so otherworldly, if it's so different, there's a few challenges. One, if you're here today and you've never given your life to Jesus, I want you to understand the offer presented to you right now.

He's saying, you do nothing, you do not earn this, you do not deserve this, He's simply making an offer to you, would you like to be loved like this? And all you have to do is humbly say, yes, I don't deserve it, but yes, I want to be loved like this.

So that's one, I don't want anyone to pass by this incredible moment that's being extended to you. By the grace of God, He brought you into this place to hear this incredible offer that is completely undeserved and all you have to do by faith is say, I want to be loved like that.

And to be loved like that means you putting your faith in Jesus Christ. So that's one thing. Number two, many of you who are Christians here today are simply not full of the joy appropriate to what has just been said.

And I understand that. That's not, I'm not trying to beat you up. I just want you to know you need to work, I need to work, we need to grow in leaning in to this glorious truth.

[15:01] Honestly, guys, there should be a pep in our step constantly because of what this particular scriptural truth says. Now, as we prepare for communion, we have to say that the only reason that we are welcomed into the household of God in this way is not because God became a real softy and stopped caring about sin.

That's not how anyone in this room will ever be saved. God did not become a softy one day and stopped caring about sin. Every salvation is earned by works. There's only one salvation that actually works that is actually earned, and that is the works of Jesus Christ, His faithful, perfect, holy life, death, and resurrection.

And so when we celebrate the Lord's table, what we're celebrating is that Jesus offered His perfect, sinless self as a sacrifice to pay for our many sins so that while Jesus was on the cross, He was actually suffering the consequences of our sins under the wrath of His Father.

So you're thinking, well, how do I get this wonderful, glorious love that I can't earn? Jesus earned it for you. That's the whole deal. And really what it means to be saved and what we're celebrating today is a bunch of people who stopped trying to earn the thing that is impossible to earn and understood that instead they simply were called to put their faith in Jesus and receive what He had for them.

So we end with this text from Hebrews 2, 9 through 10. But we see Him for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

[16:37] For it was fitting that He for whom and by whom all things exist in bringing many sons to glory should make the founder of their faith, founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

So if you're here today and you're not a believer in Jesus, this table will not be any benefit to you. We just encourage you to sit still and contemplate what the Word has shared, these testimonies and so forth.

But if you are a believer of Jesus, whether you're a member of this church or not, whether if you're saved by what I just talked about, would you come forward and take some elements and return to your seat and I'll lead us in the table.