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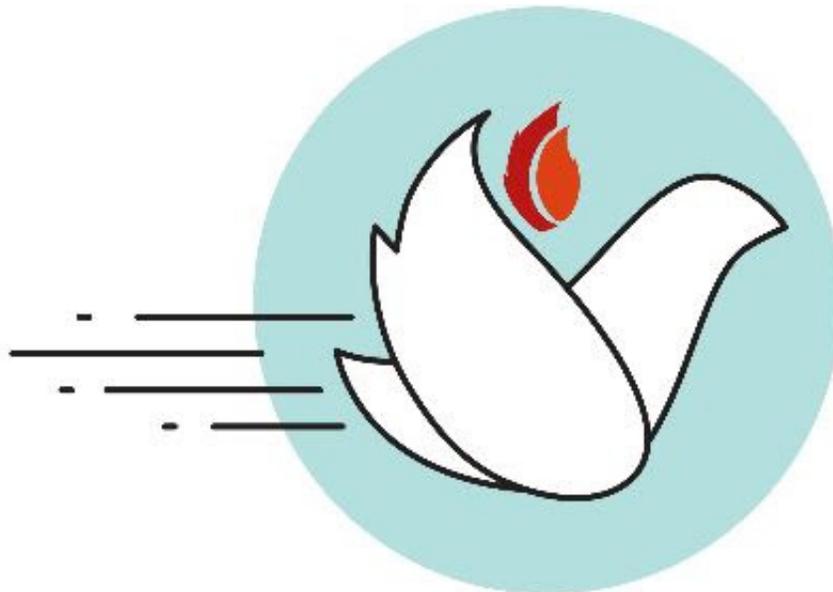
Sunday's Sermon

1 message

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Confirmation Sunday / Second Lesson

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Sunday's Sermon

April 7, 2019 (Confirmation Sunday)

1 John 2:28-3:3***“We are God’s Children!”***

In the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit:

That reminds us of our baptisms, and it seems like only yesterday that my little girl was baptized in the Name of the Triune God. That too was a glorious event and a day worthy of celebration. It’s appropriate to think back on that day – because **Baptism** and **confirmation** are

inseparably linked together. Through in-depth study of God's Word and Christian doctrine – you learn about the Faith you have been baptized into when you were just a baby.

You are following what Jesus said in the Great Commission: *Go; baptize all nations, and teach them everything I have commanded you.*

It fits into God's plans that stretched way back into the Old Testament – children were circumcised and brought into the family of believers as babies, and then taught the truths of the Faith as they grew up. As Moses said in our first lesson, ***“Take to heart all these words I am giving as a warning to you today, so that you may command your children to follow all the words of this law carefully. For they are not meaningless words to you but they are your life.”***

(Deuteronomy 32:46-47). GOD is the author of family and He wants nothing more than for **all** of us (from very young to very old) to be and remain in His family – *by grace and through faith* – to eternal life.

We know that. We rejoice in the FACT that God made us His very own through the Blood of Jesus; shed for all. We are happy to follow our Savior once again to the cross and the empty tomb of Easter. For we know that's how God purified us from all sin and rescued us from the darkness of unbelief and hell. By the power of the Holy Spirit in Water and the Word – He adopted us as His very own children.

The world doesn't know that. The world doesn't know *HIM*. The world doesn't understand how glorious it is to be God's child – and why that is more important to us than anything else. That sad fact / that hole / that spiritual emptiness – became evident to me when our adoption agency had us gather for a seminar dealing with the challenges of international adoption and raising children of a different race who came from a different part of the globe. We were told there can be serious “identity problems” – the kids may have trouble knowing where they fit. We were warned there could be (and would be) hurtful and insensitive comments that could rattle us and our children to the core. I remember saying to my wife: I don't think it'll be an issue for us or for our daughter – because we have something they don't. We know what God's Word (and our Second Lesson for today) teaches: our #1

identity is in CHRIST – as **God's own adopted children**. That truth is so much more powerful than anything a secular seminar could ever teach you.

I do remember one guy in our adoption group talking about insensitive comments he heard – and it made him so furious he said he wanted to explode! But . . . I've heard comments that would fall under that same category – and they didn't bother me at all, in fact I simply laughed at them and moved on . . . *why?* Because **we are God's children** and we have a place in HIS family – and we know how powerful this amazing truth really is:

1 John 2:28–3:3 (NIV84)

3:1 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

Over and over again in this book of **1 John** the Apostle refers to us as “**God's children**” – emphasizing that status we have / that certainty we have / the unimaginable love and mercy of God that make it all a reality in Christ!

However, John also **warns us** – not to neglect our relationship with God / not to wander from Him – *or* – God forbid, to give up our place in His family; to slide back into the darkness and loneliness / the uncertainty and fear of unbelief . . . where people *think* they are free to do whatever they want / to believe whatever they want – but in reality they are slaves to sin and all alone in their guilt with no way out and no hope for the future. Satan can't STAND it when people are rescued from his clutches and brought into the family of God – he wants them back in the darkness and will fight hard to pull us away from our Heavenly Father.

To avoid that horrible fate – John encourages us to **keep growing as God's children!** We hit milestones in our Christians lives (and confirmation is one of those) but we do not and we dare not stop growing there! Children NEED to grow up and mature – and – as God's children that's true of us all too:

28 And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he

appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming. 29 If [since] you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

As children of God / students of His Word – we know the high standards our Lord has set for us / we know right from wrong – and we know what God wants to see from us and in our lives . . . but we are **“works in progress”** – as all children are!

As His naughty children we’ve got into those things God has told us to stay far away from. We’ve taddled, and gossiped, and picked on our spiritual siblings. We’ve turned away from those who needed our help. We’ve horsed around and there are plenty of “broken lamps” and ugly messes in our spiritual houses. We’ve neglected our “chores” and failed in the responsibilities God has given us . . . *over and over and over again.*

Thankfully / mercifully – God doesn’t kick us out of His family for being naughty and snotty children. He would never do that. Instead He calls us to repent and be honest about our failures. He forgives us; our Heavenly Father is rich in patience and overflowing with grace. He does (and He will) hand out consequences as He sees fit – but it’s always in love. He bears with us as we continue to grow up and mature.

It may, at times, seem like a rather SLOW process – and there can be times of backsliding . . . but God is working as his children gather together in His House – to learn from Him / to receive His forgiveness / to hear about His love / to receive His teaching and instruction – the Spirit is here and He’s producing fruit as His children grow and mature in their faith.

It’s **His plan** for us / **His will** for us – because He’s got a wonderful future planned for ALL His children:

2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 3 Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

You see right there in **verse 3** – the doctrines of Justification (just as he **is** pure) and Sanctification (everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself). These teachings are NOT just meaningless words – **they are life!** Doctrine is LIFE – and every aspect of life is connected to what God's Word says and teaches. As we mature and **grow** – He **purifies** our lives more and more, and God's amazing plans come to fruition. God does (and accomplishes) amazing things in (and through) His children down here.

The future is BRIGHT – because ***we are the children of God*** – therefore we can always say that! The future down here may not always be easy, smooth, pain-free, trouble-free, or necessarily happy . . . but it **is** BRIGHT! God's got good plans for His kids – and that's a fact. Even when the doctor comes in with a sad face and says, *"I don't have good news for you / I'm really sorry – there's nothing more we can do."* At that dark moment your bright and glorious future is right around the corner and so close you can almost taste it! Unbelievers, sadly, cannot understand that and have nothing but darkness in such times – but we, the children of God, can tell them what we know and talk about the amazing future that Jesus Christ has won for us all! Often you hear young adults being asked, *"What do you want to be when you grow up?"* It's fun and exciting at that age to consider that and to have dreams and goals. As children of God we can ALL think about that question, no matter what age we happen to be. *"What are we going to be – when we're finally grown up / that is: in heaven / what will we be after the resurrection? What will our eternal lives look like?"* We don't know, but it's fun to think about – especially when times are rough and tough down here.

The future is so amazingly BRIGHT – because of this one glorious little FACT that God has hammered home for us today: ***we are the children of God!*** How great is the love the father has LAVISHED on us . . . never forget that, it's our new identity, our eternal identity, and it's more valuable than anything else!

In Christ, the Way, the Truth, the Life -

Pastor Wayne Halldorson
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