



Saturday, 4/17 at 4:00 | Sunday, 4/18 at 9:00

Third Sunday of Easter – 2021

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: **We live in a world full of VARIETY or DIFFERENCES!** Some differences are obvious – *like the taste of sweet versus sour*, but some are difficult to identify – *like who is in Christ and who is not*.

In today's sermon text from **1 John chapter 3**, the Holy Spirit will work through God's Word to help us to better understand **who is in Christ and who is not** – so that **those who are in Christ will rejoice and those who are not in Christ will be moved by God to repent and believe!**

- Wow! Children of God:** ¹ **See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are.** // Imagine being a child of **a great US president, a famous singer, or a billionaire...** That might be amazing, **but how much MORE AMAZING to be a child of God!** Not just some so-called God, **but the TRUE GOD**, who **is almighty, designed the universe, saved us through His Son, provides all we need, and invites us to live with Him forever and ever!**

2. **Oh! That's Why:** **For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.** // Are you aware of the differences between those who know God and those who do not? *Here are a few examples:*
- How we talk:** **We try to say what is pleasing to God – regardless of where we are or to whom we are speaking!** ^{NAU} **Eph. 5:4** “...there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.”
 - What we do:** **We try to do whatever agrees with the Bible – in every circumstance of our lives!** ^{NAU} **1 Cor. 10:31** “Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”
 - Our attitude about Divine Service:** **We make it a top priority – to gather and receive each week!** ^{NAU} **Heb. 10:25** “...not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the [last] day drawing near.”
3. **Blessed Now, But Much More Is Coming:** ² **Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He [Jesus] appears [thus, when He returns], we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.** // When Jesus appeared to various people after He was raised, He **✦**was recognizable, **✦**had the nail marks on His body, **✦**could be touched, and **✦**ate a piece of broiled fish. In other words, the bodies we will have in eternity will be like what we have now, **yet MUCH BETTER**; some of the GREAT ADVANTAGES include **✦**no weakness, **✦**no sickness, **✦**no pain, and **✦**no death!

4. **The Proper Response of All Believers:** ³ **And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.** // What is “this hope”? ▶ *Jesus will come back and ▶ we will be like Him.* For all who believe those things, they try to ▶ **AVOID sin and ▶ DO what is pleasing to God!**
5. **Let’s Not Sugarcoat Sin:** ⁴ **Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.** // God tells us in His Word ▶ what is right and ▶ what is wrong. **Take note:** In the past we have all sinned AND, *going forward as Christians*, we cannot completely stop sinning (Eccl. 7:20). But there is an important distinction to make:
- Believers in Jesus:** They are controlled by the **new nature**, so **they mostly follow the will of God**, which means **avoiding sin** (see *Galatians 5:16*)!
 - People without Jesus:** They are controlled by the **old nature**, so **they mostly follow their sinful hearts**, which means **living in sin** (see *Judges 21:25*)! Dr. Kretzmann wrote: “Here the apostle shows that deliberate, malicious sinning is incompatible with the new life of the Christians...”
- Ask yourself:** Where am I with Jesus – only believing in His existence or trusting in Him as my only Savior? What is the practice of my life – avoiding sin or living in sin?
6. **The Truth About Jesus:** ⁵ **You know that He [the Son of God] appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.** // Since Adam fell, *sin passed to all future people* (Romans 5:12)☹. Since no one can make himself right with God – *by somehow washing off or canceling out his sins*☹, the sinless Son of God came to remove the **HUGE DIVIDING WALL OF SIN** between God and all people☺!

7. **Hmmm! Tough Statement:** ⁶ **No one who abides in Him [Jesus] sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.** // To “abide” in Him is to “remain” in Him, thus, **to keep trusting in Him and benefitting from His saving work!** **Christians have a LIVING faith**, not a mere memory of a former relationship with Jesus.
- According to the new nature, *Christians do not sin*; however, the old nature is always present to deceive us and pull us into sin. So, it is important to **keep on** **feeding the new and starving the old!**
 - Sometimes we fall into sin, but – **through Jesus** – we are **sinless / saints / holy ones** in God’s sight!
8. **Oh! Those Who Believe in Jesus Practice What Is Right:** ⁷ **Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous...** // How might we be deceived? When **we or others SAY they are Christians and yet LIVE like the devil**. Since we saved through Jesus, *let us practice what is right!*

Conclusion:

- **Truth** – Some are children of God **and** some are not.
- **Relevance** – When we know God, **it will show!**
- **Inspiration** – Since we are saved through Jesus, **let us practice what is right and call others to repent!**

Let Us Pray: Dear Holy Spirit, TY for ☞opening our eyes to the truth, ☞giving us faith in Jesus, and ☞keeping us in Christ! *Help us to honor God and show true love for others!*