

Being the Family of God – Part One (Introduction)

1. Rhetorical questions.
 - a. How many sinners are there in this room? Can I see your hands? (Some of you know I've asked this before so you know better don't you?)
 - i. Why do so many of us see ourselves as sinners? Is it because...well, because we sin.
 - ii. For many of us that *was* our identity before we met Jesus, but once we trusted Christ and became born again, we got a brand new identity.
 - iii. In fact, according to the bible, when we trusted Christ, we ceased being sinners and started being called saints.
 - b. Let's pursue this identity issue just for a moment.
 - i. Are you a sinner because you sin?
 - ii. Are you a thief because you stole something?
 - iii. Are you a failure because you failed at something?
 - iv. Many of us would say so.
 - v. These statements are statements of identity. They identify us with an action or series of actions.
 - vi. People have always associated their identity with their actions, with what they do.
 1. For example, if you do carpentry for a living, you are a carpenter.
 2. If you manage people, you are a manager.
 3. If you play the piano, you are a pianist.
 4. If you play the drums, you are a drummer.
 - c. I would like to suggest that I believe that the devil wants us to think this way.
 - i. **It is the devil's strategy that we believe we are what we do.**
 - ii. He wants us to believe that our identity comes from what we do.
 - iii. It is through this that he can keep us imprisoned in shame, worthlessness, and weakness.
 - iv. He can make us feel powerless to change our lives.
 - v. He can chain us to performance based living and hopelessness to ever achieving the elusive golden ring on the merry go round of life.
 - d. But God works differently.
 - i. God calls into being that which is not.
 - ii. God calls us to trust His Son as our Savior and in so doing, He declares that we have a brand new identity and nature. .
 - iii. You see, God gets it right side up.
 - iv. He declares what we are (saints or sons) and then our actions begin to conform to that identity.
 - e. There is a fundamental principle at work in this.
 - i. God knows that **what we believe about ourselves will ultimately influence our behavior.**
 - ii. (EXPLAIN THIS MORE! GIVE EXAMPLES)
 - iii. He knows that *how we see ourselves has power over how we live.*
 - iv. He knows that when we see ourselves the way He sees us, it will change our lives!
 - v. And He declares every Christian to have a brand new identity, an identity that is so revolutionary in its meaning that it will change not only our lives but the world itself!
 - vi. And the devil has a stake in preventing you from doing this!
2. John 1:12-13 *"Yet to all who received him, to those who believed (trust in) in his name, he gave the right (and the power) to become (what they were not before) children of God - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God."*
 - a. Before we trusted Jesus Christ, the bible called us "children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3) or "children of the devil." Why is this?
 - i. Because we were separated from God because of sin.

- ii. Because our hearts were opposed to God and at war with His purposes.
 - iii. Because our lives were lived according to the flesh
 - 1. Romans 9:8.—"*The children of the flesh, these are not the children of God.*"
 - b. But there is good news. **God desires that you become His child.**
 - i. God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus, to take on human form and flesh and to bear your sins and mine, and to bear the penalty that they deserved. He died with those sins on his body and rose again on the third day.
 - ii. He did this so that by believing in Him, you could become a child of God!
 - c. According to the passage in John 1:12-13 it says "*to ALL who received Him, to those who believed (trusted in Him), He gave...*"
 - i. All includes you.
 - ii. The condition is belief and trust, the reception of His gift of love.
 - iii. The context is to turn from a self-led life and to let God take over.
 - d. Our passage continues. "*he gave the right (e power) to become children of God*"
 - i. When you place your trust in Jesus Christ for your life, for your sins, for your acceptance before God, the bible says that He makes you His child.
 - 1. The word become isn't speaking about a process but about the transformation into something that we were not before.
 - 2. When you place your trust in Christ, God changes you from a child of wrath to a child of God!
 - ii. By the phrase, "he gave the power to become children of God," means that God gives you the power to become what you could not become on your own. It is explained further in the next verse.
 - e. "*...children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.*" (v13)
 - i. **Becoming a child of God is a sovereign act of God, not an achievement by man.**
 - 1. Going to church, being good, being raised in the church or getting baptized seven times won't make you a child of God. Having Christian parents, uncles and aunts, won't make you a child of God. It will only make you a child of wrath born of Christian parents.
 - 2. You become a child of God by faith, by responding to the fact that God is calling your name.
 - 3. Ga 3:26 - *For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*
 - ii. You become a child of God by God's choice...He draws you, He calls your name and you get a choice to respond to His invitation or to reject His invitation to trust Jesus Christ and to become His child by faith.
 - 1. We respond to Christ's work on the cross by acknowledging our need for forgiveness and by trusting what Jesus did on our behalf, we are changed from the inside out.
 - 2. God puts a brand new spirit and a brand new set of desires (heart) inside of us.
 - f. Ask this question to yourself right now, "Am I a child of God?"
 - i. I believe God is calling your name today. If He is, you can become His child today. You can respond to His invitation to follow Him today. By faith.
 - ii. **I would like us to bow your heads and pray.**
3. Perhaps your answer to this question was "yes, I am His child."
- a. If so, the rest of this sermon is for you. It is also for everyone who prayed a moment ago to become a child of God.
 - b. I would like you to leave here understanding and fully comprehending the wonderful privileges that you have as a child of God.
 - c. So many of us address God as "Father" when we pray.

4. **Our second passage:** 1 Jn 3:1 *How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!*
- a. John is overwhelmed by the degree of love that the Father has shown. He marvels at how great that love really is. He says that it is lavished on us. And when you think of it, there is every reason to be amazed.
 - i. How great is the love the Father has lavished on us!
 - ii. Lavished...what does that mean? To give freely, to bestow in abundance.
 - iii. That is the love God has given us. Freely, in abundance. And He has done it so richly that He now calls us His children!
 1. He hasn't just saved you from hell or given you a ticket to heaven.
 2. He has called you into His family, as His child. Not as a subject of His kingdom or a slave in His household. You are His child!
 3. In the Roman Empire, ownership of slaves was commonplace. They were the captives of other countries, brought back to work without compensation for a master. Many masters were brutal, treating them as property. A few were kind and treated them well. Occasionally, a master would not have any children of his own so he would take a slave that he favored, and "adopt" him as his son. That person would no longer be a slave but a heir. He would rule in the home, he wouldn't be the slave any longer!
 4. Imagine being that slave being freed from bondage and duty and now being a loved heir? With all the rights of the household, of the family name, of the master himself? That is lavish love!
 - b. What is more amazing, is we weren't that favored slave. We were living in opposition to God.
 - i. We weren't even interested in God, yet He called us by name, He invited you to come to Him and become His child!
 - ii. That is nothing short of amazing!
 - iii. It should change the way we think about ourselves and about God!
5. I would like you to take a moment and think about some of these feelings of worthlessness that many of us have experienced in our lives:
- i. As a child, I felt worthless each of the many times I dropped and broke one of my mother's dinner plates and waited for her to yell at me.
 - ii. As a teenager, I felt worthless when I made an error at second base during a key varsity game.
 - iii. As a young man, I felt worthless when a girlfriend told me to get lost.
 - iv. I have felt worthless after making three wrong turns and ending up miles off track,
 - v. I have felt worthless after the time I backed into a parked car.
 - vi. I've felt worthless after making mistakes on the job and getting chewed out by the boss.
 - vii. I have felt clumsy, untalented, unwanted, ignorant and worthless.
 1. I can't count the number of times I've felt that way about myself.
 2. You've probably all had similar experiences and emotions.
 - b. But there is no reason for me to feel worthless. There is no reason for you to feel worthless.
 - i. The words of God, spoken to us in this text provide an eternal message of comfort.
 - ii. No matter how worthless you or I might feel, God tells us otherwise. He says, "CHILD OF GOD, YOU ARE WORTH SOMETHING!"
 1. This is true only because of the Father's love lavished on us (John 3:16).
 2. We are worthwhile because God purchased and won us by his blood.
 3. We were nothing -- God made us something in Christ.
 4. He sees us as a precious child for whom he died.
 - iii. Look at our value in Christ.
 1. **God does not love us because we are valuable, rather we are valuable because God loves us.**

2. Our value comes from being the objects of God's love.
 3. God's love is constant, never fluctuating -- so is our worth.
 - a. Unlike equipment and facilities do not depreciate in value.
 - b. Our value does not diminish when we make mistakes.
 - c. Our value does not diminish when we gain 20 pounds.
 - d. Our value does not diminish when our boss treats us badly.
 - e. Our value does not diminish if a best friend rejects us.
 4. Because our worth comes from God, not from within ourselves.
6. God sees us "as his children."
- a. God does not want our main image of ourselves to be negative.
 - b. We need to see ourselves through His eyes.
 - i. What does God say about us? How does God see me or you?
 - ii. Knowing how God judges worth changes our perspective on worth.
 - iii. It starts with the way you judge yourself, measure your own self-esteem.
 1. Do you see yourself as unattractive, ugly? Do you look in the mirror and go, "Blech!?"
 - a. **God says**, "Look at my beautiful child, dressed in Christ's clothes.
 2. Are you not as intelligent as you'd like? Do you feel like a dummy? Ignorant?
 - a. **God says**, "Look at my brilliant child, filled with the wisdom and knowledge of Christ.!"
 3. Do you believe your personality is dull or boring?
 - a. **God says**, "Look at my exciting child, who has the joy of the gospel in his heart!"
 4. Do you feel poor because you have less than someone else?
 - a. **God says**, "Look at my wealthy child, possessing all the glorious riches of Christ."
 5. Are you getting old? Are you conscious of your age?
 - a. **God says**, "Look at my vibrant young child, who has brand new life each day in Christ."
7. Last week I spoke about paying attention to the prophetic, edification that God raises up in our congregation. I talked about how at its root, in its most basic definition, prophetic edification is nothing more than seeing through God's eyes...seeing what God sees (as opposed to what we see).
- a. This is at the root of what I want you to see and hear this morning.
 - i. God sees you far differently that you see yourself.
 - ii. God does not want you to remain in captivity to the lies of Satan.
 - iii. God desires that you see the freedom and privilege that comes with being a child of God.
 - iv. God says so many things positively about you and I in His word. Why don't we believe Him? Perhaps we have never come to grips with all that being a child of God contains.
 - b. When those lies about your value come, renounce them with the truth. I urge you to "hold every thought captive," and "to cast down the vain imaginations that rise up against the knowledge of God."
 - c. If you have been struggling with self-depreciating thoughts, with negative self image, or with getting your value from what you do or can't do...come forward for prayer that you might be released from this bondage.