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St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
March 24, 2021
6th Midweek Lent

Responsive Reading: Psalm 23
Passion History Lesson: Jesus Is Crucified
Hymns: 155; 154; 353:1-3, 6 554:1,5,6

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: 1 John 1:1-3

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ²Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, God our Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: It Is All about Our Redemption

When we recite Luther's explanation to the second article of the Apostle's Creed we realize that it is all about redemption, OUR redemption. That has been the focus of our meditations this Lenten season. We have considered our lost state and that we needed to be purchased or redeemed from that lost state., We have considered how Jesus set us free from sin, from death, and then

also from the power of the devil. This evening we take the next big step in our meditations, in considering the spiritual implications and thinking about where that takes us, or where that leaves us. Some might think that all is well and good, Jesus delivered me from all this bad stuff, so I am free to go my own way. Jesus actually addressed that in one of His confrontations with His critics. Jesus said: *“When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’* ²⁵ *And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order.* ²⁶ *Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first.”* (Luke 7:24-26)

So we see that when Jesus redeemed us it was not to abandon us and leave us to our own devices and our own spiritual destiny. That would have ended in ruin! That would have been a disaster, leaving us in a worse situation than that from which Jesus rescued us. Jesus redeemed us to bring us into a better position both here in time and hereafter in eternity.--

THEME: He Made Me His Own Forever.

In our profession of faith this evening we confessed: “He did this that I should be His very own, live under Him in His Kingdom, and serve Him in eternal righteousness, innocence, and joy.” (Luther’s Explanation to the Second Article) This is a very special measure of the grace of God toward undeserving sinners. He redeemed me, and as a result of that redemption our text explains:

I. We are Called Children of God.

1 John 3:1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

This is an expression of the magnitude of the love of God toward us. It is indeed greater than we can comprehend. We who were lost and condemned sinners, who by nature were children of **wrath**, not children of God, but children of wrath, rebels who deserved eternal condemnation, we have been called “Children of God!”

God in heaven has His grace and love has received us as His children. Not by birth, for we were born with enmity towards God, but by adoption. The words of Paul to the Galatians are so precious: “But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’” (Galatians 4:4-6) What all this tell us is that this was God’s plan, to secure us as His children to bestow upon us this blessed status, not just some honorary title, but a special entitlement, that we should be received into the household as heirs, that we should inherit eternal life. Behold indeed! Look what manner of love this is that god should receive us as His children!

What our text impresses upon us is that this also changes our standing or status with the world. WE were part of the world. That is holding to the values of the world that puts man and the fulfillment of man’s sinful desires ahead of God and God’s holy will, even God’s gracious will for our salvation. The world does not know us. The world cannot because thinks in a very different way about the nature of man, about righteousness, about life and its ends and goals. And what’s really important in life. It all comes down to material wants and fleshly desires. Earlier in this epistle John warns all Christians: “*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* ¹⁶ *For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.* ¹⁷ *And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*” (1 John 2:15-17)

The world cannot relate to what we say about grace and salvation . The world does not know or believe in Jesus, or care about the salvation Jesus brings. and so it cannot know us, because we are His disciples and so children of Gd through faith in Jesus’ merits.

The result of this is that we condemn behavior as sinful and dangerous that the world embraces as good and healthy. So the world may describe us as deplorable because we condemn sin, and hold to the Word and will of God to determine what is good and proper for us in our lives. More and more the world would apply pressure upon us to embrace and even celebrate sin that leads

many to eternal destruction. If we don't that we are not open and accepting, but rather loveless and bigoted.

What we need to comprehend for our meditation this evening is that Christ has redeemed us to deliver us from the world that we might be His own forever. We must maintain the awareness that we can't have it both ways. One cannot be of Christ" and also "of the world."

There is an eternal future at stake, a prospect of a bright future which Christ has reserved for us. Consider --

II. The Glory that Awaits Us.

Our text presents this amazing truth: "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is!" (1 John 3:2)

We cannot begin to imagine the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ as He is exalted in the heavens. However, we live in the hope of everlasting life. Jesus redeemed us so that we would be His own, not just now but forever. We live in this hope, which means much more than wishful thinking, but a reasonable expectation. We look forward to being with the Lord in heaven. But what does that mean? Let's read the entire verse, "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is!"

WE come back to the wonder of Jesus being glorified as the Son of Man. Jesus continues to be both true God and true man, even now as He is exalted and sitting at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. Even as His body has been glorified, and we shall see Him in His glory, so we also as children of God will be received into like glory! That is amazing grace beyond our comprehension.

Now think what that means for this life. We have this hope of heavenly glory given us freely by grace through faith in Christ Jesus. What difference should that make in our lives? Some might be tempted to think that we are free to live as we wish, but faith truly appreciating this grace responds another way. "And everyone

who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”
(v.3) We shall be like Him. Let us honor Him by purifying our lives now even as Jesus Himself is pure and holy. Let us weed out all evil desires and call upon the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit to lead us in paths of righteousness. Let us show the world What this redemption is all about that he has redeemed us from sin and called us to be children of God. May all see this in our daily walk and glorify our Savior and our God.

AMEN.

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Amen. (Romans15:13)