

Children of God 1 John 3:1-7 Easter 3 April 15, 2018

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. 1 John 3:1

Today we hear about being children of God.

Dear friends in Christ, have you ever been part of a team, say a basketball team. And we will use my middle school experience, our team was the Indians. We'd been training hard - working on shooting and dribbling and controlling the ball, and thought we were doing well doing well. Until we got to our first game. And we got to the game, excited, and team took a bad shot and the other team gets the ball and scores. Then we try to force a pass and turn the ball over again. Suddenly, we are down by 10 and don't quite know what is going on. In the shock of how badly it is going, we forget what you learned. So coach calls a time out, and as we gather round. He tells you that you are the Indians, we play like we practiced. We are patient and don't force the shot. He reminds us who we are to tell us how we should play. It was meant to encourage us. Not to kick us off the team, but to make sure we are on it, to get us to act as the team we were.

We look at the text today, at least the last half, and it makes us wonder. It says, "No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him." And we look at ourselves and see that we sin. In fact, we keep on sinning, and it seems like our confession of sins is on repeat, because the same hits keep playing. And we wonder what is wrong with us. We can think we are being kicked off the team.

But that is not what this text is about. It isn't telling us we can attain sinless perfection and if we don't, we don't believe. John has made that clear. Last week we heard, If we say we have not sinned, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar. WE cannot ever claim to be without sin. We are warned against that.

We also know who we are, and if we have trouble remembering, he tells us again. "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. " WE have been brought into the family of God already, through the son. We are being conformed to his image, and we will be like him who rose and is with the father. He doesn't declare this conditionally. In Christ, His father is your father, and we are children of God.

How much we tell our children that no daughter of mine would dress like that, that no son of mine would lie to me. We do this not to deny their parentage, but to let them live as our children. So Hohn does here.

The text is not a philosophical rumination on salvation, but encouragement to us to live out our calling. John reminds us as we stumble that those stumbles don't define us. They do not make us who we are, for God, who is greater than your struggle has declared you as his child. He declares the final result, that sin has been taken away, and will no longer rule over you. You have a new master.

God is not tearing us down but encouraging us. The struggle may look bad but is won. Your hope and the final result is certain. You are children of God now, and how fully that will be seen is not yet fully known, because our eyes see but dimly. But God brings it about.

So do not try looking at yourself harder for salvation. Instead look to God and his word. Let God remind you who you are. Let him remind you what he gave for you that you would be presented blameless to him. And live as the person he bought you to be. For how great is the love the father has lavished upon us, that we should be called children of God.