

Third Sunday of Easter  
I John 3:1,2 (Series B)  
“What We Will Be!”  
April 26, 2009

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and from our Risen Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Oh, friends, what we will be! What we will be on that day Jesus returns! What’s going to happen to us and what we will become way outruns our imaginations. We will be real actual people like we are now, but changed in an extraordinary way! There will be nothing wrong with us, no bad habits, no aches and pains. We will be a people with nothing to fear from ourselves or from anyone else, no danger around us. We will be a people with nothing to cry about, with nothing to stress over. We will be a people who will never be hungry, and, at the same time never worried that we eat too much. We will be always happy, and never sad, not even for split moments. Sound like Heaven to you? Oh, friends, what we will be!

This is something to really look forward to, isn’t it? And, what makes it even better,...we don’t have to pay for what we will be. We don’t have to give anything at all! It’s just going to happen. As sure as Jesus is returning can we be sure it’s going to happen! In a world where it’s taught that we all have to work to acquire what we want, this we don’t have to work for. In a world where it is taught you have to do something to deserve the greatest things in life, this is something we never have to and never will deserve. It’s going to be a great big surprise!

Oh, friends, what we will be! That is, what we will become, what we will be changed into. It’s a mystery, but we may be sure it will happen. It’s a mystery, but we have reason to be so ecstatic, so happy, and so joyful about it.

So, what are the problems and challenges we face as Christians until that day comes? Yes, their serious. They're real and they cause us to suffer. But, what are they when we are reminded of what we will be on the day Jesus returns?

We heard the reading this morning from I John 3. John wrote his letters to Christians in Asia around 90 A.D. from Ephesus. He was sure of their faith, but he also knew well they were being challenged. So, what he wrote he wrote to strengthen them in their faith.

At the time, many in the world recognized the joy Christians were experiencing in their lives. They didn't like it. And, these in the world who rejected Jesus as the Christ had gone out into the world, teaching and shouting, and in some cases forcing their antichrist, antichristian beliefs and teachings. Their intention was to persuade the new Christians out of their faith, to scare and intimidate them.

This had to have been very uncomfortable for Christians at that time, but what has changed? Don't we still live in a world where Christ and His message of promise is not accepted, and actually rejected fiercely? It is not comfortable for us out there, is it? Almost every where you go, anything you do, you will run into either someone or something that rejects what makes you so happy, the promise of Jesus' return. But, then again, what are these challenges anyway? What are they anyway when we are reminded of what we will be?

The world really doesn't understand us believers. They don't understand how we know God. They don't understand how we enjoy fellowship with Him, how we trust Him, and live with Him.

We are strangers in this world. Because the world is a stranger to God's love. It rejects Jesus as Lord. It doesn't listen to God's voice

expressed in the testimony of His Holy Word. The world is under the control of sin and the devil, and it is destined only for hell. It has no room for God, and it also has no room for believers. Our lives in Christ, our faith in the Risen Lord, are such a mystery and a threat to the world which fills itself with boasting and bragging. The world is filled with “look what we deserve” mentality. No wonder they reject the Lord Jesus. And, if they reject Jesus Christ, they reject us who have fellowship with Him.

And, no wonder it’s a challenge for us believers to exist in this world. God’s view and the world’s view cannot coexist.

In his letters to those Christians in Asia John addressed them in the status believers may take much joy in. He addressed them as dear children of God. And, in doing so he instilled an eager expectation of what they will be. By reminding them of what they were already at that point he reminded them of what they will be when Jesus returns. As beloved children of God they could be sure that there was much more to come. So, what were those challenges and difficulties they faced from all the antichristian beliefs in the world when it came to the glory and joy they were going to experience on the last day as children of God? And, friends, what has changed? Nothing.

Verse 2 of our reading this morning, “Beloved, we are God’s children now,…” Now, friends, now, we are God’s children now. This isn’t something yet to come. It isn’t some far off distant hope. It is now, we are children of God now, right at this very moment. There’s no waiting for this. Yes, many, many of us have been for quite some time. What makes a difference for us as we live in this world controlled by sin and the devil is that we are children of God NOW! And, God does not want this to change.

Verse 1: “See what kind of love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God.” John was reminding them of how God

loved them. Remember what He gave out of love for you, His own Son, Jesus Christ. God the Father watched as His Son was humiliated before the world He came to serve. How He was accused falsely by a world He came to serve. How He suffered horribly, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. How He died the most horrific death ever known to man. All of this is testimony enough of God's great love, agapa, for each and every one of us. And, what makes this love, this agapa, so magnificent, so extraordinary, is that we don't deserve it. We don't deserve what Jesus went through, or His suffering, His death. We don't deserve what He won for us—full pardon of our sins, adoption as His children, to know Him, to have fellowship with Him, to trust Him, to live with Him now and for eternity. When we deserve nothing but to be punished forever, God loved us that much.

No wonder the world, with all of its bragging and boasting, and “look what I deserve mentality” rejects God's promise in Jesus Christ. The world looks for what it deserves and expects to find good things. We believers look to Jesus Christ and find something wonderful that we don't deserve.

We are God's children now. Without us doing anything for it at all, while we deserve the complete opposite, God has made us His children. Right there in your baptism, with the promise of His Word, you were made as such. Through regular hearing of His Holy Word and receiving of His body and blood, He keeps you as such.

And, as God's children, we are privileged to look forward to that day when Jesus will return and we are able to say to each other and to the world, “oh, what we will be.”

As children of God, which we surely are, that's His promise, we get the whole package friends. With no sin standing between us and God, He

calls us His own. He knows us and we know Him. We get to enjoy this fellowship with Him. We have the relaxation and the comfort that even though God is Almighty and Just, we may trust Him that He is also a loving God and loves us, and that what He promises He promises. And, even when we live in this world which considers our Lord and us strange, we enjoy, right now, Him dwelling, living in our hearts. With all this, there is still more to come, because it's going to get even better on that day when Jesus comes again.

This is the message friends that John reminded those Christians in his time. And, this message is still strong and true in our time. He loved us, He suffered and died. He is Risen and, oh, what we will be because of it all.

We really have something to offer the world my friends. Yes, something to offer to a world that rejects us. When we consider the truth that we really deserve the same fate the unbelieving world faces, and then consider how it came to be that we no longer face that, we can't help but say to the world- "there is something wonderful we have to share with you." Amen.