

1 John 3:1–3 ▪ Delighting in the Father's Love

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Love; Adoption

The doctrine of adoption is precious and ought to cause great delight and give hope to our souls.

Intro: Why do people choose a church?

Church Answers gives top 7 Reasons.

churchanswers.com/blog/seven-key-reasons-people-choose-church

1. Quality of sermons (83%).
2. Feeling welcomed by leaders (79%).
3. Style of services (74%).
4. Location (70%).
5. Education for kids (56%).
6. Having friends/family in the congregation (48%).
7. Availability of volunteering opportunities (42%).

- When we visited TRB in the summer of 2003, there was really one thing I was looking for: doctrine.

*verses about doctrine

Doctrine is for:

—discipleship

—devotion

—delight

**That last one, delight, seems to be the direction of this text.

We are going to look at the doctrines of the regeneration and adoption this morning. The emphasis is on the delight we find in God through knowing the truth of these.

I've mentioned before the various ways that scripture speaks to us: encouragement, warning, rebuke, promise.

There is another one: invitation to delight and satisfaction.

Psalm 34:8 ESV

Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good!

Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!

Psalm 81:10 ESV

I am the LORD your God,

who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.

Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.

Who you are (v1)

- Several translations put exclamation marks here; that seems to be an appropriate move to help us hear the tone.
- Certainly, to hear about God's boundless, unconditional love, should not be a dry exercise.

When I was in northern India on a short-term mission trip, we had the opportunity to visit a Buddhist monastery. There were maybe a hundred or so very young boys sitting on the floor, reciting some of their religious scriptures—you could tell that there was zero engagement, or excitement.

It was dark and even depressing. Why: because there was no love!

It was very impersonal and disconnected.

This is far from that!

- First, we are called to direct our attention: *See—or behold.*

Take time to slow down. Contemplate. Soak it in.

It's what we do with sunsets. We slow down. soak it in, delight.

When was the last time you slowed down to soak in this truth?

3 Things that cause us to delight:

1. Wondrously Loved

- The word behind “what kind” is used only 6 times in the NT. It’s an interesting word.
- › When used, it communicates surprise, astonishment, urgency, and excitement. It’s not a dry word.

Clearest example:

Matthew 8:27 CSB

The men were amazed and asked, “What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the sea obey him!”

The things we are amazed at, are the things we delight in.

- › Here we are called to delight in one overwhelming truth: Being loved by the Father is an unimaginable privilege!

In Ephesians, the same surprise and excitement is heard when God’s love is mentioned.

Ephesians 3:17–19 CSB

and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. I pray that you, being rooted and firmly established in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the length and width, height and depth of God’s love, and to know Christ’s love that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

One commentator: “It’s like trying to measure the content of the ocean with a teacup” (David Allen Black, 1 John *Preaching the Word* commentary)

The picture, then, is a God who is zealous—passionate about loving his people.

Zephaniah 3:17 ESV

The LORD your God is in your midst,

a mighty one who will save;

he will rejoice over you with gladness;

he will quiet you by his love;

he will exult over you with loud singing.

Apply: Christian friends, know that you are wondrously loved. Young and old. Weary. Broken. Battered.

2. Graciously Gifted

- Our hearts are oriented to his grace when we hear that the love of God is a gift—*freely given*.
- We are pretty hard-wired to want to earn and repay.

Yet scripture points us to the radical fact that God's gift of love is free.

Romans 5:5–8 ESV

and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

The love of God is a gift—freely given, never to be repaid.

We are not just objects of God's love—we are objects of his *amazing* love!

Furthermore, God does not just say he loves, or shows his love—he *gives love so that it will be part of us*.

3. Given a new nature--

- The focal point of these verses is the status which the new birth brings:

Our status is children.

- There are two legal acts that happen when God calls us to himself through Christ.

1. Justification— God acquits us, lifts the condemnation, imputes to us Christ's righteousness.

2. Adoption—God brings us into his family.

*There seems to be an overlap of regeneration and adoption.

—It's God the Father who imparts (begets) spiritual life.

—That new life brings a new status: Children.

Adoption: It's found more often in Paul's letters.

Galatians 3:26 ESV

for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.

- In the book *Knowing God*, J.I. Packer rightly asserts that adoption is the highest privilege we have. (Chapter 19, Sons of God)

Adoption is the most exalted gospel blessing because it brings us into fellowship.

- › **Justification deals with law; adoption deals with love.
- › Adopted children are also the objects of pity, love, compassion, and mercy.

Gospel: There are some today listening who don't have this. Your life is empty, missing something.

Jesus Christ not only offers forgiveness, but a way to call God Father.

You can enjoy the wondrous love, gracious free gift, new nature and status by giving your life to Jesus Christ today.

- One final thing—Being a child of God is an unimaginable privilege and joy...but we do not gain any points, or greater respect with the world (unbelievers).

Do you know who you are? God can do a lot of amazing things in our lives and lifetime—he can answer big, faith mountain-moving prayers—and use us in remarkable ways.

But the most amazing thing you have...is what you are. A child loved by the Father, beyond all imagination.

It might even be good to remind ourselves, after receiving a blessing from the Lord—to say, “that's great, thank you....but it doesn't come close to comparing with the love you give.”

- › For too many of us probably don't remind ourselves or other, that we are love by God.

Spurgeon said of these verses: they are too precious to be lost.

What's coming? (v2)

- I'm one of those people who likes to know what's ahead. I love the world of the GPS, so if there is a traffic jam, I know how long I'll be delayed.

- God does not give us timetables, but does give us our destination, which is part of his design.
- Again, the believes are addressed affectionally “Beloved”
- Before we get what’s coming—we get what we have now.

If we are the personality type that always oriented to what’s coming—we can miss the moment.

“We are God’s children *now*”

- The legal standing of justification is something that we experience now (Rom 8:1)
- Same with the legal status of adoption

Children “follow in the footsteps of their parents”.

- This was true much more in the ancient world, than it is today.

For example, for most of history whatever your parents did for work, likely you would do. If dad was a farmer, the sons would farm. If dad had a trade—like a blacksmith, the sons took over the vocation.

Even last names reflect that: If you are a Taylor, Baker, Smith you have an idea of what your ancestors did.

It’s changed somewhat. When I grew up, my father who spent his whole career in law enforcement, said numerous times, “Whatever you do, don’t be a cop.”

As God’s children, we follow in his footsteps—we share the family trait of the Lord Jesus.

It’s Jesus’s nature to be righteous and holy; so if we are moving in that direction, we are moving in the right direction.

- The point of verse 2—If God has made us his children, then he will bring us home to him someday to reveal our full and complete identity.

The way that we knew every one of our children was ours was simple: they came home with us. They took up personal residence.

MJ Pritchett

Reesa Amberg

Judah Erhart

Sarah Jane Smith

Elise Ducharme

What's coming: God's taking each of his children home. In one sense that is sad. Jesus wept when Lazarus died.

But homecoming is also the mark that we are his children, when we share that hope.

- This hope also has a transformative aspect—we are growing in family likeness till that day comes.

Why it matters? (v3)

- Apply: You may have heard the saying: Beholding is becoming.

2 Corinthians 3:18 ESV

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

- This hope has purifying effect—and it's evidence of being born again.

The right hope also motivates us the right way.

Let me illustrate it this way. I was listening to a good sermon once by my pastor. I remember he got very passionate about how we need to leave and forsake sin. He pointed to a cross that hung behind the pulpit, and said: "It's because of what my sin did to Jesus that I don't want it in my life".

It moved me, and even motivated me to not want to sin. When we think of the pain that our sins caused Jesus, it should cause us to recoil at taking sin lightly.

*I call that the sorrow motivation. We think of how cruel and painful and gruesome the cross was, it grieves us that sin has to be paid with such a cost.

- But here the motivation goes in another direction. Not sorrow, but sight.

It's where we have our eyes set.

Maybe to illustrate from British Royal Life, The Prince of Wales will be the next King. His eyes are set in that direction; he's not inherited it yet....but his entire life is shaped by it.

If we are fellow heirs with Christ, our whole life will be shaped by that.

- It does include "everyone"
- › Everyone who has the eyes of their faith set on Jesus—does everything to put away all things that defile.

And again, the motivation always comes because we have been loved. (v1)

What would motivate a child? You tell her: behave this way and you will be loved? That would crush? Walking on eggshells.

Or, you are loved...may our love be the fuel that drives your behavior.

Conclusion:

"When one sees depression, randomness and immaturity in Christians, one cannot but wonder whether they have learned the health-giving habit of dwelling on the abiding security of the true children of God." (J.I Packer)

How do we make the connection from a sermon title to the heart?

1. By seeing and savoring. Don't just let the doctrine of adoption pass by. Linger and savor.
2. By it shaping our lives. It this is the most exalted gospel blessing, to shape the way we think and live.
3. By sharing it with others. What a wonderful was to evangelize!

May God cause our hearts to dwell and delight in this great security of being his children.