

06 - 1 John 2:12-14 - 2018-05-27

Call to Worship: Isaiah 55:6-7

Scripture Reading: Daniel 9:4-19

Sermon: "Your Sins Are Forgiven" 1 John 2:12-14

Benediction: Jeremiah 31:33-34

1 John 2:12-14 I write to you, little children, Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. (13) I write to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, Because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, Because you have known the Father. (14) I have written to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one.

INTRODUCTION

These three verses, in which John writes almost a poem, are not part of the flow of the argument John is making. Instead, they are a gracious accommodation of our weakness as readers and hearers of the word of God. Up through this point in the letter, the message has been intense. We are not feeling it quite so much this moment, because we've been taking the letter a few verses at a time one day a week, and now we've had sermons on different subjects for the past two weeks. But it was getting pretty intense by the end of verse 11

1 John 2:11 But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

The reader or listener needs a moment to catch his breath, to get reoriented.

The bible was perfectly written by the work of the Holy Spirit in such human authors as John. So at this point we are offered a wonderful serving of spiritual refreshments before we get back to the hard work needed to take in the important matter in the rest of the letter.

I'm going to call this section the "poetic pause." This poetic pause here in 1 John 2:12-14 is in two pairs of lines, forming a total of six lines. They are parallel in 1 with 4, 2 with 5, and 3 with 6. Or, to put it another way, it is 1,2,3, then 1,2,3 again. As so much of God's word, it is simple, beautiful, and profound.

TEXT

1 John 2:12-14

BODY

I. John's Address to Us As Little Children

A. The word "little children"

1. one word: the word for "children" made diminutive
2. in English we have diminutive forms e.g. book - booklet
3. but we don't have a diminutive for "child" - childlet?
4. so we see in our English bibles "little children" but it is really just one word

B. We are addressed similarly in terms of needing milk

1. 1 Peter 2:1-3 Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, (2) as newborn babes, desire the **pure milk of the word**, that you may grow thereby, (3) if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.
2. Hebrews 5:12-14 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need **milk and not solid food**. (13) For everyone who partakes only of **milk** is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. (14) But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

C. Thinking of how the apostles speak to us in terms of babies who need the milk of simple bible doctrine on the basic truths of the faith, I see that we are addressed as little children by our Lord Jesus and His apostles when they are teaching us in simple, elementary terms, as you teach things to little children

1. the Lord Jesus: teaching us to love each other
 - a) John 13:33-35 **Little children**, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come,' so now I say to you. (34) A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. (35) By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."
2. Paul: teaching us that salvation is through faith in Christ crucified, not by works of the law, such as circumcision
 - a) Galatians 1:6-7 I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, (7) which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.
 - b) Galatians 2:3 Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.
 - c) Galatians 3:1-3 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? (2) This only I want to

- learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?-- (3) Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?
- d) Galatians 3:26-29 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. (27) For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. (28) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (29) And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.
 - e) Galatians 4:19 My **little children**, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you,
 - (1) Paul has, as it were, given birth to them by the labor pains of preaching the gospel of Christ to them
 - (2) now they seem not to be holding to what they professed; he is, as it were, having to go through the same labor pains over again to make sure they are indeed born
3. John: this letter of 1 John is like this from beginning to end: teaching us little children in simple terms, as you would teach a little child the simplest things about life in this world and about the academic subjects
- a) 1 John 2:1 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.
 - b) 1 John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.
 - c) 1 John 3:7 Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.
 - d) 1 John 3:18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.
 - e) 1 John 4:4 You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.
 - f) 1 John 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.
 - g) now back to today's verse: 1 John 2:12 I write to you, little children, Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.

John's address to us as little children

- II. Our Need to Be Addressed as Little Children (this thought is from John Calvin)
 - A. There is the need, in this letter, to warn sternly against a false version of Christianity; this is a hard message; although it is delivered in love, it also is delivered with a great deal of firmness

- B. As children, we disciples of Christ could be overwhelmed by all that is being said; it can sound very frightening
- C. You know what it's like when you have a child, and something tense is going on, maybe in a book you're reading, or a video you're watching; you know it's only a story, only actors you're watching, that nothing bad is actually going to happen to your beloved heroes or to yourselves; but the child loses track of that, and gets very nervous; you might stop reading for a moment, or pause the video, and comfort the child with such considerations, reminding him of the truth and of his situation

John's address to us as little children

Our need to be addressed as little children

III. John's Message to Us As Little Children: Your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake

A. Your sins are forgiven you

1. I've written to you

- a) about those who walk in darkness, who lie and do not practice the truth, who deceive themselves and do not have the truth in them, who say they have not sinned, and so make Christ a liar, and do not have His word in them;
 - b) about those who say they know Christ, but do not keep His commandments, and so they are liars, and do not have the truth in them;
 - c) about those who say they are in the light, but hate their brother, and so are in darkness
2. do not be frightened for yourself by these things; I do not write those things to you, the disciples of Jesus Christ
3. I write to you that your sins are forgiven you!
4. It could very well be that in all the frightening description of those who are living in lies and darkness, you became scared for your own soul; if that is the case, review what I have written that is for you, the believers in Christ

- a) 1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son **cleanses us from all sin.**
- b) 1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to **forgive us our sins** and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- c) 1 John 2:1-2 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. (2) And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

B. For His name's sake

1. in all the talk of keeping His commandments and loving your brother and walking in the light, a disciple of Jesus Christ can get confused about how exactly our sins get forgiven; we can get nervous with thoughts like, “I’ll be forgiven if I love my brother.” “God will forgive me if I keep His commandments.”
2. so John is writing to us as little children to make sure we understand and remember that God forgives our sins not because of what we do, but for the sake of Jesus, our Lord and Savior
 - a) 1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and **the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us** from all sin.
 - (1) we don’t wash ourselves by keeping God’s commandments; He washes us from sins in the blood of His Son
 - b) 1 John 1:9 If **we confess our sins**, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
 - (1) we confess our sins; He does the forgiving and the cleansing
 - c) 1 John 2:1-2 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. (2) And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.
 - (1) Jesus Christ is our Advocate with the Father
 - (2) He Himself is the propitiation for our sins

CONCLUSION

We see John’s address to us as little children

We feel our need to be addressed as little children

We hear our Lord’s Message to Us As Little Children: Your sins are forgiven you for His name’s sake

I write to you,

Gill:

the new commandment of love in particular

RWP:

referring to this epistle

little children G5040 *teknion*

Calvin (as Gill):

by little children he means men of all ages, as in the first verse

here, as a spiritual father, he calls the old as well as the young, *teknia*

He will presently address special words to different ages; yet they are mistaken who think that he begins to do so here

lest the preceding exhortation should obscure the free remission of sins, he again inculcates the doctrine which peculiarly belongs to faith, in order that the foundation may . . . be always retained, that salvation is laid up for us in Christ alone

Trapp:

A Christian hath his degrees of growth; childhood; youth or well grown age, when he is past the spoon, as here; old age

Poole:

being now set in contradistinction to others, must be understood to intend a distinct rank of Christians, viz. those more newly entered into the Christian state

Gill:

the apostle means in common all the saints he writes to, whom he afterwards distributes into fathers, young men, and little children

Barnes:

it seems more appropriate to suppose that he means in these verses to divide the body of Christians whom he addressed into three classes

he means children literally

Spurgeon:

in this case John really does divide the entire church into three classes---the babes in grace, or the children, or as one of the words might properly be translated, the boys---those who have not long been born into the family, these are an interesting company.

you that have newly been converted, whose first cries of repentance are still in our ears

You, I mean, whose grace is feeble; who are new to everything in the house of God, and as yet, need to be fed with the milk of simple elementary truth

RWP:

probably includes us all

JRY:

he cannot mean little children literally

John 13:33 **Little children**, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come,' so now I say to you.

Galatians 4:19 My **little children**, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you,

1 John 2:1 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

1 John 2:12 I write to you, little children, Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.

1 John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

1 John 3:7 Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.

1 John 3:18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

1 John 4:4 You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

1 John 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

to the Lord Jesus we are little children

to the apostles we are little children

Who among us should say he is not a little child when dealing with the Lord Jesus and His apostles?

believers in Christ, in your character as little children
in that you are like little children

inasmuch as you are like little children
you whose prevailing character can be likened to a little child
to know what is appropriate for childhood in the faith

children are addressed, but all who recognize their essential childhood in Christ get the
message

The apostle is drawing on something we understand

Just yesterday:

visited the Caylor home, where there is a new baby and a two-year-old

attended Noah's graduation

him and the other young men standing there together

visited Dale and Kathy in the hospital

we have characteristics of each

for His own name's sake

Calvin, Geneva, Gill, Clarke, Barnes: Christ

Barnes:

in virtue of what he has done for us

Prelude: Grace 68 "Holy Child"

Camille: flute

Noah: trumpet - see attached in G

Anna: piano 1

Sarah: piano 2

Trinity 27 "Great Is Thy Faithfulness"

Camille: piano 1 - transpose

Noah: trumpet

Anna: clarinet

Sarah: sing

Trinity 237 "Lo! He Comes"

Camille: piano 1 - see attached or maybe red Trinity Hymnal in D

Noah: trumpet - play from hymnal in E

Anna: clarinet - play from hymnal in E

Sarah: sing

Trinity 724 "Only Trust Him"

Camille: piano 1 - see attached in F

Noah: trumpet

Anna: sing

Sarah: piano 2 (if you want) - see attached in F

Grace 11 "Are You Washed in the Blood?"

Camille: sing

Noah: sing

Anna: piano 1

Sarah: piano 2 (if you want)

186 "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"

Grace 40 "Down at the Cross"

254 "Come, Holy Spirit, Come"

270 "The Church's One Foundation"

721 "Nor Silver Nor Gold"