“Like Him” – Pastor Jim Sprengle – All Saints’ Day
November 2, 2025

I. **1 John 3:1a-2** – [1]See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are….[2]Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.

II. **Who are you**?

a. I think I’ve started other sermons with that question but today is especially important to answer with confidence.

b. Michele and I are reading a book called “Loved and Sent” by Jeff Cloeter.

   i. Pastor Cloeter goes to great lengths to describe the many ways we attempt to claim our identity.

      1. When we get the question, “Who are you?” we might answer with our name and consider our family of origin.
      2. Others will give their vocation… I’m a pastor, or I’m a stockbroker, or I’m a stay-at-home mom.
      3. Still others will tell you about their identity in terms of what sex they are attracted to, or that they are a man or a woman, or of a certain ethnicity – like Asian, Black, White, Native American…
      4. Yet, all these ways people try to answer the question of identity falls short of what God has in mind.

   ii. Most of us spend much of our lives trying answer the “who am I” question with conviction.

      1. We go to school to get a specific education… we get jobs that show that we can earn money or get promoted… we make friends and try to impress them and be a likeable person… we seek out relationships that make us look or feel better…
      2. Yet, all along there is this discontent and uneasiness that we are not being fulfilled… or we are missing something...
      3. In this quest for identity, we usually come up empty.

c. Now, Pastor Cloeter describes our identity as… “loved”.

   i. Deep down, most of us just want to know that we matter… that our lives count for something and have real meaning.

   ii. Unfortunately, we seek that meaning and validity from the world, which usually leads us into chasing things that hurt us… getting into relationships that damage us… investing our time in building ourselves up… when only God can do that.

   iii. So, as Christians, we should be very clear that who we are is “loved” – a child of God sought out and loved by Him in spite of our unworthiness.

d. The very core of our being is not who <u>we</u> think we are… or what we have made of ourselves… the core of our being is what God calls us…

i. God says you are My child… we have been adopted into His family as He called us His own.
ii. So when I ask, "Who are you?" the answer should come easily, "I'm a child of God."
iii. I'm a child of God no matter what my background… male, female… age, race, or vocation… which may be how the world sees me, but God says different – above all else, I'm God's child.

III. **St. John declares the Father's great love for us as His children**.

a. "See what kind of love the Father has given us…?" can be translated as, "See how glorious a love the Father has given us?" or "See how wonderful a love the Father has given us?"
   i. It is fitting that last week we talked about the grace of God and how it sets us free because of God's work through Jesus Christ and not anything we could do on our own part.
   ii. God bestows on us His love while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8), and even though we keep trying make our own way – make our own identity – He breaks through the sin and grants us His love and grace.
   iii. It's almost as if John is truly amazed as he writes these words, because he knows that we are all unworthy to be loved by God, but more than that, called His children.
b. Now, John does not explicitly say how we became children of the Heavenly Father, but we know from the rest of Scripture how that happens – through Holy Baptism and faith.
   i. As Galatians says, "[26] for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. [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 no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:26-28)
   ii. We are God's children through our faith, and as we were baptized we put on Christ, so we no longer have the identity of Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female – but we are one in Christ.
   iii. Yes, at one time we might have considered our identity as it relates to the world, but we no longer see it that way because we are now beloved children of the Father.

IV. **In Baptism, God answered the "who am I" question forever**.

a. We know that baptism is where God's Word is combined with water to deliver the gift of grace and forgiveness to us.
b. Yet, I also see it as God welcoming us into a family that is eternal.
   i. As we receive the name, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we are claimed out of this world of sin and death… and set apart for the rest of eternity with God and in His presence.

ii. It is the very place that God says to us… "I choose you to be My very own child."
    1. I remember talking with a man who was adopted as a child… and after his father died, he said, "I loved my dad so much because of all the kids he could have picked, he chose me."
    2. Yes, just like God… He chose you.

c. One of the greatest blessings we have is that our baptism and faith connect us as God's children for eternity – so we may be separated by death from our loved ones for a time, but we are connected now and will see them again.
    i. It is the great picture we see in our Revelation reading of the saints in white robes, waving palm branches and praising God for delivering them.
    ii. Not only that but what does it say, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Revelation 7:14)
        1. Yes, the tribulation is all that we face now, but we will come out of this with white robes that are made white by the precious blood of Jesus.
        2. The white robe you may have worn as a little baby in baptism… and the white robe that you might have worn for your day of Confirmation… represents the robe of righteousness that you will wear with the saints in glory.
        3. The blood of the Lamb is how we can be made right in God's eyes… how we can stand in the presence of the Most High… and we have been covered in it since the moment we came to faith.

V. **John declares that our eyes will be opened** one day to see the fullness of God's love and our full potential in future glory.

a. It's really hard to imagine what life beyond our current state will be like – even the Bible says that "now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face." (1 Corinthians 13:12)
    i. What will it be like? Rather than seeing God in this indirect way, muddled by the world and all its trouble, we will see it all in person.
    ii. Just as the saints in glory now see fully, we also will see these things that are now a part of our hope and faith.
    iii. So John says that what we will be has not yet arrived… However, he can say with confidence that when it comes to the Last Day and Jesus returning… we will be like Him.
    iv. In other words, after Jesus rose from the dead, He was in His glorified state…
    v. That is also our future as well… future glory… as the saints in glory… forever blessed.

b. No matter how much you have put your identity into this world, the only true identity for believers is “Child of God”.
    i. I am God’s child, loved by Him beyond my understanding… and one day it will all become clear as I look into my Savior’s eyes, face to face… and proclaim, “Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.” (Revelation 7:12)