**THAT WE SHOULD BE CALLED CHILDREN OF GOD**

1John 2:18-3:10

Key Verse 3:1

*See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.*

Introduction: In John’s day, many antichrists had come to lead God’s children astray. They rose up from within the Church, but did not remain. They went out from the fellowship with God’s people, showing that they did not really belong to them in the first place. They deny that Jesus is the Christ. But God’s children belong to God. God poured out his love on them, and they enjoy a loving fellowship with their Father God. He has given them an anointing through the Holy Spirit. Through this anointing they are able to discern God’s truth as God teaches them, and can overcome the lies of the antichrists. They just need to hold onto what they heard from the beginning through God’s apostles; the gospel and the promise of eternal life. In this way, they could remain in Jesus and in the Father by continuing to do what was right, and could be ready for Jesus’ second coming.

Identifying Antichrists (2:18-23)

1. Read 2:18-23. What shows that this is the last hour? (18) How can we recognize antichrists? (19-23)

*Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us. 20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.[e] 21 I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. 22 Who is the liar? It is whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the antichrist—denying the Father and the Son. 23 No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.*

* We know this is the last hour because:
  + Many antichrists have come.
    - *The antichrist is coming*: The antichrist is a person or governmental authority that will arise to oppose Christ and God’s people (Daniel 11:36, Revelation 13:2, 5-6, 2Thesalonians 2:4.
    - *Many antichrists have come*: Jesus spoke of the rise of false Christs and false prophets who will try to lead God’s people astray (Mark 13:21-22).
* We can recognize antichrists because:
  + They went out from us. They left the fellowship of God’s people and went back into the world.
    - They rose up from within the Church, but did not remain
    - They did not belong to us, but belong to the world
  + We know the truth
    - We have an anointing from God through the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth (John 16:13)
      * The Holy Spirit regenerates our spirit and enables us to discern the truth of God and lies of the devil.
  + They deny that Jesus is the Christ
    - When they deny the Son, they deny the Father and the Son

Remaining In The Son and in The Father (24-29)

2. Read 24-29. Why should the believers see to it that what they had heard from the beginning remained in them? (24) What did God promise them? (25) How could they overcome those who were trying to lead them astray? (26-27) How could they be confident and unashamed before Jesus at his second coming? (28-29)

*24 As for you, see that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. 25 And this is what he promised us—eternal life. 26 I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. 27 As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him.*

*28 And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming. 29 If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.*

* When what they had heard from the beginning remained in them they would remain in the Son and in the Father.
  + What they heard from the beginning was what they heard from John and the other apostles
    - They heard the truthful words of God
    - They heard the gospel message
    - They heard all the great promises of God
* God promised them eternal life
  + This promise was included in what they heard from the beginning
  + This promise is for those that hold onto this promise
  + This promise is for those that remain in the Son and in that Father
* They could overcome those that were trying to lead them astray through the anointing they received, the Holy Spirit.
  + This anointing taught them all things and they did not need anyone to teach them.
  + This anointing was real, not counterfeit
  + Especially, this anointing taught them to remain in Him--in the Son and in the Father
* They could be confident and unashamed before Jesus at his second coming:
  + When they continued to remain in him--in the Son and in the Father
  + When they continued to do what is right before God

God’s Love and Hope For His Children (3:1-6)

3. Read 3:1. What did the Father do for us? (1) What does this show about Him? Why doesn’t the world know us?

*3:1 See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.*

* The Father called us children of God
* The fact that the Father called us children of God demonstrates his great love for us
  + We were enemies of God, but God called us children of God
  + He called us children of God, and we are the children of God
* The reason the world does not know us is that the world did not know him
  + Like Father like children, so in order to know the children they need to know that Father.
  + There’s a loving fellowship between the Father and His children, but no loving fellowship between the Father and the world or between God’s children and the world.

4. Read 2-6. What is God’s hope for his children when Jesus comes again? (2) How should we respond to this hope? (3) How does the law help us to know what sin is? (4) How can our sins be taken away? (5) What are the consequences if we continue to sin? (6)

*2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 3 All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.*

*4 Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. 5 But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. 6 No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.*

* God’s hope for his children when Jesus comes again is that we will be like Him--we will be like Jesus
* When we have this hope we purify ourselves as Christ is pure
* The law helps us to know that sin is breaking God’s law, making us a law breaker before God. It helps us to identify sin as sin.
* Our sins can be taken away though Jesus Christ
  + Jesus is God, who appeared as a man, but without sin. Only Jesus is qualified to take away our sin
* If we continue to sin, we can’t say that we have seen Jesus or that we know Jesus

Doing What is Right and Not Sinning (7-10)

5. Read 7-10. Why is it important for us to do what is right as opposed to what is sinful? (7-8) Why can’t we go on sinning? (9) How can we know who the children of God are, and who the children of the devil are? (10)

*7 Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. 8 The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work. 9 No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God. 10 This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God’s child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister.*

* It is important to do what is right to show that we are righteous before. If we do what is sinful, we show that we belong to the devil, because the devil is the one that sins and has been sinning from the beginning
  + Children of God act like God’s children, but the children of the devil act like the devil’s children.
* We cannot go on sinning because we have been born of God. We have God's seed in us (the Holy Spirit), which means that we are children of God.
* The children of God do what is right, and love their brothers and sisters.

Conclusion: See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Our true identity is the children of God. It is very important for us to identify many antichrists and remain in the Son, Jesus Christ and the Father and the Holy Spirit as we have heard from the beginning. As the children of God, we have the hope that we shall be like Jesus when He appears again. That is why we are willing to purify our sins willingly. In Him is no sin. No one who lives in Him keeps on sinning. May the Lord help us to do what is right by loving our brother and sister for this is how we know who the children of God are in our daily lives. Amen.

One word: That is what we are!