



1 JOHN 3:1A | He Became a Child to Make Us Children of God!

Sunday, December 21, 2014 – Children's Christmas Service

¹ *How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!*

Oh, to be young again! Wouldn't it be great to have that youthful energy that just doesn't quit? Wouldn't it be nice to wake up in the morning without all the aches and pains that you've become so accustomed to? Wouldn't it be nice to have the doctor say to you, "You know, you could really stand to add a few pounds"? Wouldn't it be nice to live a carefree life rather than stress over deadline after deadline?

I suppose there comes a point in life that you finally come to the realization, "I'm not a kid anymore." The days of running around the yard without struggling to get up are gone. It takes everything you have to play horse with your children or grandchildren. I'm sure there was a time when you felt invincible, but now, as fun as it is to play with the kids, it just takes a lot out of you.



Oh, to be young again—and not just physically young. There is something about adulthood that is taxing on the mind and the spirit. Do you ever long for the youthful ignorance of your childhood? Do you ever wish you could go back to the days before you were hardened by years of the real world?

Often people will say, "If only I knew then what I know now." Do you ever wish you could go back to having that youthful energy but also have the knowledge and experience you've gained over the years? Or would you just prefer youthful ignorance and take life as it comes?

I propose that it might not be a bad thing to go back to what it was like to be a child, with that vitality and blissful ignorance. Think about it: what has time done to adults? Besides wearing down our bodies physically, it has led us to lose simple trust. It has made us more skeptical and cynical. It has given us guilt that we carry every day.

And doesn't that skepticism and cynicism carry over to our attitudes toward Jesus Christ? How easily we can turn religion into something for the kids, but not for us. Is there any way we can go back to that simple childlike trust? Is there any way we can go back to the days when all inhibition was gone as we sang out "Away in a Manger" and "Jesus Loves Me"? Is there any way we can go back to the days when we were so excited to tell Mommy and Daddy that Jesus died on the cross for us?

We may call it youthful ignorance, but let's call it what it really is—faith. In today's Christmas service, you are going to see faith on display. You may see a few funny faces. A few children may wave their hands at Mommy and Daddy. A few children might stand at the wrong time.

But you're also going to see children proclaiming a truth that does not change with age. You are going to hear children proclaiming, "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ

the Lord.” Those words that come joyfully pouring out of the mouths of children are the words that are active in their hearts. They proclaim what they believe.

The youthful faith of these children is not beyond you. Listen to what John says in his first letter, chapter 3, verse 1: “How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!”

Oh, to be young again! My friends, look no farther than the manger to find a cure for your guilt, your cynicism, your skepticism, and your lack of faith. For in that manger is a child who was not blinded to the sin of this world. No, he knew exactly the world he was coming into. He knew how sinful this world is.

And not only that, but he knew exactly what he would be facing. He knew that he would be rejected. He knew he would be doubted. He knew he would die. That baby in the manger was not ignorant. He saw this world as it really is, and he still came.

He came for you and for me. He came to make us children again. Without Christ, we cannot call ourselves children of God. We came into this world as sinful enemies of God. So Jesus Christ came into this world and became what he was not so that we could be what we were not—children of God.

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us. It is a love that we did nothing to earn or deserve. It is a love that he freely gave us. That’s what God’s agape love is. It is a love that is a gift; a love that he chose to give, not a love that we chose.

This is a love that God freely gave when he sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to be a child for us. And this is a love that he freely gave to us in Baptism, where, connected with simple water, he marked us as redeemed children of God. When God says that we are called children of God, that’s because he made us children of God. So through faith in Jesus Christ, we can be confident that children of God is what we are!

Years of guilt are gone. Years of skepticism and cynicism toward God are gone. All that remains is a simple, childlike faith—a faith that does not get rattled by the doubting of the world but stands upon the truth of God’s unchanging Word; a faith that boldly and confidently proclaims, “My Savior has come”; a faith that eagerly waits for the day our Savior will come again.

And so we hear the voices of children proclaiming the mighty deeds of the Lord at Christmastime, and we sing with our voices and in our hearts right along with them as fellow children—children of God. How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And, God be praised, that is what we are! Amen.



Soli Deo Gloria!

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