

Sermon Notes on I Jn. 3:1-6, Trinity Sunday

1. I Jn. 2:28-3:10 form a section which can be entitled "Children of God." Here we find the life of the Christian between Christ's two appearances (2:28 and 3:2, the second coming; 3:5 and 8, the first coming). His first coming took away sin and conquered Satan. His second coming will be our introduction to eternal glory.
2. In this larger section John alternates between what Christ did for us (justification) and what we now do for Him (sanctification). The word "faith" does not occur but the thought is expressed in different words: To remain in Him, 2:28; 3:6; His seed remains in him, 3:9; To know that He is righteous, 2:29; To know that we shall be like Him, 3:2; To have this hope, 3:3; To know that He took sin away, 3:5; To be born of God, 3:9. These expressions show what Christ did for us. On the other hand, what we now do for Him: To have boldness and not be ashamed of Him, 2:28; To do righteousness, 2:29; To sanctify oneself, 3:3; To do no sin, 3:6; He cannot sin, 3:9.
3. Notice carefully that the Christian life is impossible apart from believing in, remaining in Christ. The Law does not make people better. The Gospel makes them productive, even though these people are still sinners.
4. Never was there love like that described in 3:1. God's highest love is evident in the fact that I am called a child of God. That means not only to have a name but also what we actually are. What are we? We are forgiven, we have the strength to sanctify ourselves, God sees no sin in us (even though we are still sinners) in fact we cannot sin (vs. 9) so long as His seed remains in us.
5. Vs. 9 is truly amazing and very comforting. Like St. Paul we must all admit that we are foremost among sinners (I Tim. 1:15) and that, because of our sinfulness, we do not understand what we are doing (Rom. 7:15). But, at the same time, "Everyone who is born of God does not do sin because His seed remains in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God." Vs. 9 of our text. This is what Luther meant when he said: "A Christian is at one and the same time a saint and a sinner." This is why the NT frequently calls Christians "saints" even though the NT is constantly urging these very saints to repent and believe. Now we can understand why John says: "Behold what great love the Father has given us that we be called the children of God, and we are."
6. Today is Trinity Sunday, the day on which we remind ourselves that God is three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in one essence. The Triune God is the saving God. The Father sent the Son to save mankind. When He ascended into heaven the Son sent the Holy Spirit in the Word of God to bring people into this inexpressible love of God. Vss. 1-2 tell us what Father and Son have done for us. Vs. 3 tells us of the Spirit causing to sanctify ourselves, to live for Jesus, even though the Holy Spirit is not mentioned.
7. Vs. 4 tells us that the deliberate sinner is a lawless man. Vs. 5 tells us how to rid ourselves of this lawlessness. Vs. 6 tells us that the person who is constantly repentant is charged with no sin. Vs. 7 tells us that the person who lives according to the will of God is righteous. Vs. 8 again reminds us that the deliberate sinner really belongs to the devil. Vs. 9 tells us that the person who has been born of God does not sin, in fact, cannot sin. And, finally, vs. 10 tells us how we can distinguish the children of God and the children of the devil. Vss. 4-10 explain vs. 3. Vss. 4, 8, 10 warn us not to live in sin. Vss. 5 and 8 tell us why Christ came. In vss. 3, 5, 7 Jesus is described as He Who is pure, sinless and just. In vss. 5 and 8 He is described as the One Who is total Victor over our great enemies. All He did is God's gift of love to us. He gave it to us. Now we are and are called the children of God for time and eternity. Slava Bogu!

# Sermon Outline on I Jn. 3:1-6, Trinity Sunday

Theme: CHILDREN OF GOD NOW AND FOREVER

Introduction: Jn. 1:12 tells us that as many as have received Jesus, to them God has given the right to become the children of God. to those who believe in Jesus' name. This is the ONLY right we have before God, and it is entirely of God's grace. That is why our text begins by calling our status the evidence of God's great love for us. We are called and ARE the children of God now and forever.

## I-Children of God Now

A-Vs. 5 tells us: "You know that He (Christ) appeared to take away sin." That is our greatest problem. In fact, it is the cause of all of our problems, especially death and eternal damnation. But even more: Vs. 6 reads: "Everyone who remains in Him does not sin." To remain in Christ means to believe in Him. Cf. Jn. 15:1-8. Can it really be that believers do not sin? Yes, from God's point of view. John says elsewhere: "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin." I Jn. 1:9. When we wash our face, all dirt is gone. When Jesus cleanses us, all sin is gone. God not only forgives but also forgets. When we forgive, we don't forget. But God does. Vs. 9 goes so far as to say that he who is born of God CANNOT sin because He has God's seed in him.

B-Vs. 3 tells us: "He who has this hope (everlasting life) in himself sanctifies himself." What does that mean? It means that he lives a godly life. He listens to the warning in vs. 4: "Everyone who does sin also does lawlessness because sin is lawlessness." Christian faith gives a person a fear of sinning. Christian faith gives man the shield of faith to ward off Satan's arrows. Eph. 5. He listens to the warning in vs. 8: "The one who lives in sin is of the devil because the devil sins right from the beginning." The believer is dead to sin. Rom. 6:1.2.11.

## II-Children of God Forever

A-It does not yet appear what we shall be. David (Ps. 16) says: "In your presence is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore." Paul says that words cannot express what Paradise is like. II Cor. 12:4. I Cor. 15:35-54 gives us the best account of what we shall be. The body will be incorruptible, glorious, strong, spiritual, free from the flesh, with the heavenly image, immortal. But, as our text says, "It does not yet appear what we shall be." We live by faith and not by sight. We live by hope and not by experience. So long as we carry this sinful flesh about with us, just that long we do not experience the actual joys of everlasting life, though we have that life.

B-When He appears we shall be like Him. We will see Him as He is.

1-We will have the heavenly image. We have the image of God now only by faith. Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24. Because of our faith in Christ God sees His image in us. But when Christ appears for the second time we will be just like Christ. We will be heirs of God right along with Christ. Rom. 8:17. In fact, we will be everything that Christ is except that we will not be God.

2-We will have the heavenly vision. The holy angels see Him already. Rev. 22:4 reads: "They shall see His face." Think of the wonderful confession of suffering Job (19:25-27) who said that his very eyes would see his Redeemer. No sinner has ever seen God in this life. But in everlasting life every believer will be like Jesus and see Him, the Father and the Holy Spirit, just as they are.

Conclusion: I have the right to be a child of God because Christ died for me. I became a child of God in baptism. Gal. 3:26. Because I am a child of God, God's seed lives in me and, from God's point of view, I do not sin. Everlasting life is mine now already by hope. But when Christ appears I shall be like Him and see Him as He is.