

# Sermon for The Third Sunday of Easter

**Date:** April 18, 2021

**Location:** St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

**First Reading:** Acts 3:11-21

**Epistle Reading:** 1 John 3:1-7

**Gospel Reading:** Luke 24:36-49

**Sermon Text:** 1 John 3:1-7

**Sermon Title:** The Father's Love

**Introit:** Psalm 30:1-5; Antiphon: Psalm 16:11b

## Hymns:

LSB 475 – Good Christian Friends, Rejoice and Sing

LSB 725 – Children of the Heavenly Father

LSB 633 – At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing

LSB 813 – Rejoice O Pilgrim Throng

## Liturgy:

Divine Service IV, p. 203



## Songs:

Father Make Us One

Good Good Father

Our Father - Hillsong Worship

Hope Is Here - This Hope

Agnus Dei - M.W. Smith

Of the Father's Love Begotten

## Liturgy:

Creative Worship



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**Text: 1 John 3:1–7**

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 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. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous.

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Grace and peace in Jesus' name. Amen.

John was there with the other disciples. They were listening to the two travelers who had just arrived. The two men had set out for Emmaus but returned breathless with astonishing news. John's mind must have been filled with wonder and hope as the men described how the risen Lord had appeared to them.

John would have had growing hope that started with the women returning from the empty tomb earlier that morning. Then he and Peter witnessed, with their own eyes, that empty tomb. Now the men who had left for Emmaus returned with such excitement that John must have been getting excited himself.

Then it happened:

Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them,  
'Peace to you!'<sup>1</sup>

As Jesus showed them His scars and taught them, John and the others were filled with "joy and were marveling<sup>2</sup>" the Bible records. Then Jesus let them know the things He endured, the pain, the suffering, even their own abandonment of Him, all He went through, had to happen. John would later remember, understand, and convey to us that everything Jesus suffered and endured came from the Father's love. All that happened had to happen. It happened because:

God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son.<sup>3</sup>

Using the Scriptures, Jesus explained the Father's love and purpose to John and the other disciples. He said:

These are My words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations...

You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of My Father upon you.<sup>4</sup>

1 Luke 24:36

2 Luke 24:41

3 John 3:16

4 Luke 24:44-49

Jesus relayed to John and the others that the Father's love was made complete in the death and resurrection of Jesus. He let the eleven<sup>5</sup> know that this love is known to us through the forgiveness of sins that Jesus' work has earned. One might ask, "How do I get this forgiveness of sins, this love of the Father, that Jesus earned for me?"

John answered that question in his record of the Good News. In his Gospel account, John recorded Jesus' conversation with a man named Nicodemus, who wanted to know more about what Jesus was teaching. In this conversation, Jesus repeatedly taught Nicodemus of Holy Baptism.

Jesus told him, "Unless one is born of above he cannot see the kingdom of God."<sup>6</sup> Jesus also said, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."<sup>7</sup> Then He said, "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born of above'.<sup>8</sup>" Jesus continued to teach that the Holy Baptism we receive has its source in the Father's love, which comes to us, and is given its power, from the lifting up of Jesus on the cross.<sup>9</sup> Now, all who receive this love of the Father in Holy Baptism are saved from condemnation and eternal death.<sup>10</sup>

God loves you!

This is completely undeserved; it cannot be earned, grasped or attained by our efforts. Out of love, the Father sent His beloved Son to die for you. Love caused Jesus to suffer, bleed, and be buried for you. Everyone who receives this love of God in Holy Baptism is transformed into something new,<sup>11</sup> a child of God.<sup>12</sup>

What greater love can the Church convey than to call people of all ages, nations, and languages to the Sacred Waters, to received this love. We are born enemies of God. We are born the descendants of the serpent in the garden.<sup>13</sup> Jesus calls us to the waters of Holy Baptism, so that even though we were born enemies of God, through this miraculous gift God will reach down, touch you, and make you something new. He will make you one born from above; born again;<sup>14</sup> born a child of God.<sup>15</sup>

5 Judas the betrayer was dead.

6 John 3:3

7 John 3:5

8 John 3:7

9 John 3:12-16

10 John 3:16-17

11 Revelation 21:5

12 John 1:12-13

13 Genesis 3:15

14 John 3:3

15 1 John 3:1

All of this leads John to write:

See what kind of love the Father has given to us,  
that we should be called children of God;  
and so we are.<sup>16</sup>

Look what Jesus went through to make you His own. The season of Lent followed that love, through the horrid trek of Holy Week<sup>17</sup> all the way to the cross and that cold hard slab in the sealed tomb. Three days later, we found out, God's love did not let us down. God's is love and love is alive!<sup>18</sup> When you received Holy Baptism, that love was united to you. This love makes you and me into children of God! What a wonder. Even more when you look at what you are, what you have become while living in that love.

Who among us can say we've shared that love as we ought? Who among us can say we reflect that love to our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ? Which is why Jesus told the disciples to tell you:

... repentance for the forgiveness of sins  
should be proclaimed in His name to all nations...<sup>19</sup>

Including you.

This love, this gift, this miracle, this sacred holy act to make you holy, comes by nothing more complex than repentance. A simple apology for any sin. No matter how wide, how long, no matter high, no matter how deep, a simple apology give us freedom. Admit your wrongs to God:

so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, that  
you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have  
strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the  
width and length and height and depth, and to know the  
love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be  
filled with all the fullness of God.<sup>20</sup>

You have been declared a child of God. So has everyone here. We are all in the same boat. That boat is called the Ark of the Holy Christian Church. Would we who have received such a gift hold those who are on this boat with us in contempt?

16 1 John 3:1

17 The week before Jesus death.

18 1 John 4:8

19 Luke 24:47

20 Ephesians 3:17-19

The Bible asks:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?<sup>21</sup>

The answer is given:

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. [Paul states] For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.<sup>22</sup>

There is only one thing that can. There is only one thing that can separate you from that love. You. Your unrepentance. Your unwillingness to bow before the throne of God. Your unwillingness to see your brother or sister in Christ as a fellow child of God. Your unwillingness to admit your wrongs; to apologize; to repent.

This love of the Father sets us apart from the world around us. “The world does not know us” because “it did not know Him.”<sup>23</sup> We no longer find our identity in the things of this perishing world. By virtue of our Baptism, we are marked as one redeemed by Christ and bear our heavenly Father’s name. Our identity is found in His love.

We no longer live our lives seeking to fulfill the desires of our hearts, allowing the power of our pride to push us away from God. Like Jesus, the One who set us free, our desire is now to do the Father’s will. What is that? His will is to continue to love the world through His Son.<sup>24</sup> This love is made known through the Holy Word of God that we share with others as it was shared with us.

We live our lives abiding in Jesus’ love. We do this by receiving His Holy Word. We receive His love through the Word heard in preaching and the Holy Absolution. We receive His love as we read His Word throughout the week. We receive His love as we eat and drink His Holy Supper. Through all of these things, we live as God’s Baptized, born-again, children. This love in which we live is not for us alone. It is for all others as well.

21 Romans 8:35

22 Romans 8:37-39

23 1 John 3:1

24 John 3:16-17

As God's children, we should be quick to confess when we have sinned against God and others. By God's grace, we agree with His Holy Word and recognize that His Law is there because He lovingly desires to protect us and our neighbor. So we confess when we break God's Law; we are to be quick to forgive when others sin against us. We do this because we know God's great love caused Jesus to die for our sins. We know God's love transformed us from sinners to His beloved children. We love others because God in Christ first loved us.

See What Kind of Love the Father Has Given to Us!

Alleluia!

Amen.

**Proclaim God's Word,  
Encourage one another in faith,  
Witness to God's love and  
Serve all people**

