Behold, What Manner of Love!

Sermon Delivered on May 30th, 2021
AM Service

By: Pastor Greg Hocson

Text:
1 John 2:29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

1 John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2: Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3: And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Introduction
The term "**born of Him**", "**born of God**" and "**begotten of Him**" are some of John's favorite terms. He uses these terms seven times in this little epistle of John. The first time he used this term in this epistle is in ...
1 John 2:29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is **born of him**.
If anyone wants to know how to recognize one who has been truly "**born again**," the apostle John gives us **several marks of a born-again person.**

The first such mark is in our text. According to our text, such a person who is born of God is one "**that doeth righteousness**." The second is found in 1 John 3:9, "Whosoever is born of God **doth not commit sin**; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." 1 John 5:18, "We know that whosoever is born of God **sinneth not**; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." That is, **he will not practice sin** because God's own nature has been implanted in him.

Another mark of a born-again person is **genuine love**. "Love is of God; and **every one that loveth** is born of God, and knoweth God" (1 John 4:7). Still another is **genuine faith** in Christ, which in turn **produces genuine love for God**. "**Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ** is born of God: and **every one that loveth him** that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him" (1 John 5:1).

Finally, another mark of those who are truly born again **will not be permanently defeated by the world**. "For whatsoever is born of God **overcometh the world**: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that **overcometh the world**, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:4-5).

These are the marks or evidence of new birth, but it is not my purpose to speak about these in today's sermon. We will cover them when we get to the verses that deal with them. But today, I invite you to consider with me **what made the new birth possible**, which is **the love of God**. Having stated that Christians are born of God or begotten of God, John now draws his readers' attention to **the love of God that has brought about our new birth**. If the Lord had not loved us, we would never have been offered His forgiveness and restoration. If the Lord had not loved us, we would never have been given the privilege to become part of His family. It was His great love that compelled God to send His Son to die for our sin. Let's take a moment to consider the vastness of God's love for us, in three headings, namely, the **Reality** of God's Great Love, the **Result** of God's Great Love, and the **Rejection** of God's Great Love.

I - The Reality of God's Great Love

1 John 3:1 **Behold, what manner of love** the Father hath bestowed upon us ...

John opens this third chapter of his letter with the word "**Behold.**" He opens this section with **a word of amazement**. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!" The word "**behold**" is both a command and an exclamation that calls his readers to pay careful attention. As if John is saying, *"Stop everything you're doing! Look at this! Think about it! Consider its weight and significance!"* And what is John inviting his readers and us to look at, to think upon, and to consider? It is the love of the Father that He bestowed upon us. John is calling all God's people to wonder at the great love of the Father wherewith He loved us. Look at how John describes the love of God. "Behold, **what manner of love** the Father hath bestowed upon us!"

D. Edmond Hiebert wrote, *"The adjective rendered "**what manner**" occurs only seven times in the New Testament and **implies a reaction of astonishment**, and usually of **admiration**, upon viewing some person or thing. The expression conveys both qualitative and quantitative force, "**what glorious, measureless love!**"*

The love of God that brought about our new birth is a love that is **impossible to describe and articulate**. John is lost for words when describing the love of the Father. All he can say about the love of the Father is "**what manner**." Vine says, "**what manner**" means, "**from what country**," then, "**of what sort**." This is what God's love is for sinners. There's **nothing like it** in this world! It is **not naturally found in man**. It is **only found in God**. It's a **strange kind of love**, an **unusual** kind of love, a kind of love to which **we are not accustomed.** It is a love that is **out of this world**. It's a love that originates **from a foreign place called Heaven**.

Chris Benfield wrote, *"Take a moment to consider the abundance of that thought. Consider the manner of love that is offered to humanity from God the Father. This carries the idea of "**from what country and of which sort it is**;" it speaks of "the character and quality possessed." The love that we enjoy is **much greater than the love offered by the world.** The love of God is not of the world; its character and very essence is much different than that known of the world."*

He loved us so much that He gave Himself for us. He so loved us that He laid down His life for us. God's love for us His children is amazing in the light of what we were.
Romans 5:6 For when **we were yet without strength**, in due time Christ died for the **ungodly**. 7: For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8: But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, **while we were yet sinners**, Christ died for us. 9: Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10: For if, **when we were enemies**, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.
He loved us who **deserve nothing but death, judgment, and hell**. God loves us not because of anything lovable about us. He loves us not because we are lovely. No! He loves us in spite of us. God loves us because He is love. It is His nature to love.

I stand amazed in the presence
Of Jesus the Nazarene,
And wonder how He could love me,
A sinner, condemned, unclean.

He took my sins and my sorrows,
He made them His very own;
He bore the burden to Calv'ry,
And suffered and died alone.

Refrain:
How marvelous! How wonderful!
And my song shall ever be;
How marvelous! How wonderful!
Is my Saviour's love for me!

Oh, don't forget what you were when Jesus Christ found you, saved you and brought you into the family of God! Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!

II - The Result of God's Great Love

1 John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, **that we should be called the sons of God** ...
Here is one of the results of the Father's great love for us. Because of the Father's great love and the sacrifice of His Son, **the saved people are now the children of God.** We are literally and eternally part of God's family.

Anne Dutton wrote, *"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!* ***And that is what we are!*** *What! Did the Lord of all love us, and give Himself for us? For us creatures, for us sinners, for rebels against His crown, for His enemies, and for haters of His ways, who deserved to be companions with devils, and were fit fuel for everlasting burnings!* ***Oh, free, rich, glorious grace!****"*

The Father's great love has made us His children. We are **not only called** children of God; **we really are** His children. We are **not only named** and **counted** the children of God! **That's what we are!** That's what we really are! Children of God!

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God." That is easy to read; but it is not so easy to feel and comprehend. **Every believer belongs to the family of God.** All who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ are children of God. Regardless of what we were and what we have been, now we are the children of God. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." John is not speaking of future reality, but he is speaking of **present reality**. He is speaking of the present position of every believer in Jesus Christ. **Right now**, we are the children of God. This is **not something** that we look forward to **becoming reality in the future**. This is **not something we hope to be**. No, right now, we are the children of Almighty God. If you have been born again by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ, you can confidently and humbly sing,

Dr Martyn-Lloyd Jones gives us a loving and gentle rebuke, *"I do feel that this is perhaps the greatest weakness of all in the Christian church, that **we fail to realize what we are, or who we are**. We spend our time in arguing about the implications of the Christian truth or the application of this, that and the other. But the central thing is to realize what the Christian is. We grumble and complain, and it is all due to the fact that we have not really seen ourselves in terms of this picture. Surely, as we read these words, we must of necessity be humbled, indeed in a sense humiliated, as we realize the inadequacy of our ideas and the unworthiness of our view of ourselves as Christian people."*

Oh, how **we all need to constantly meditate** on what or who we are in Christ. How **we need to constantly think** on the wonderful reality that we are NOW children of God and greatly loved by our Heavenly Father. Oh, may the Lord awaken us to this reality!

III - The Rejection of God's Great Love

1 John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: **therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.**

As John calls his readers to contemplate on the great and amazing love of God, he also reminds them of a very sad truth that **not everyone knows and accepts that love**. God loves the world. He desires that all might be saved, but sadly **not all will receive His love.** It is that sad not all receives His love that offers grace, mercy, forgiveness and salvation. One way the world's rejection of the love of God is demonstrated in **not knowing us for who we are**—God's children.

"Therefore, the world knoweth us not." The word "**world**" means the **unregenerate humanity**. The apostle John is referring to the **unsaved people** of the world. The world does not know us because it is in an unregenerate condition. **The natural man does not understand** spiritual realities. Paul spoke about this in 1 Corinthians 2:14, "But the natural man [the unsaved,

unregenerate person] receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."
In their unregenerate condition, they **do not**, they **cannot**, and **will not** understand spiritual things. So, **we should not be surprised** to read in this text that the world does not know us for who we are. **They do not recognize us** as children of God. There are **two basic reasons** for the world's lack of recognition for who we are. First, **because God has made us His children**. In the new birth God has done an inward supernatural spiritual transformation within us. God has **changed our nature** and **made us different from the world** and therefore the world does not understand us. Secondly, the reason the world does not know us is **because they do not know Christ**. The unregenerate world did not recognize who Christ is when He came.
John 1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and **the world knew him not**. 11: He came unto his own, and **his own received him not.**
This is the tragedy of tragedies. Here is one of the saddest verses in the whole Bible. The world He created did not recognize Him as He is. **Men whom He had made, made nothing of Him**. Now, if the world did not recognize God's Son when He was incarnate, we should not be surprised that it does not recognize us too. This is John's warning in 1 John 3:13-14, "**Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.** We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." (cf Matthew 10:22)

Do not be surprised if the world hates you. Do not expect the world to understand for who you are and do not expect favorable reception from the world. In the gospel according to John, **our Lord spoke about this and forewarns His disciples** in John 15:18-21, "If the world hate you, ye know that **it hated me before it hated you."** The world's hatred and hostility to believers is rooted in its rejection of their Lord. "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But **all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.**"

John 16:1 These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. 2: They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. 3: And **these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.**
In these passages, we see our Lord speaking to believers and forewarns them that the world would not know and recognize the children of God because **they do not know the Father and the Son**. Since the unregenerate world does not know the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, therefore, they will not recognize those who belong to Christ. They couldn't recognize Christ for who He was, the Son of God in the flesh. So, we should not be surprise that they would not recognize us for who we are, sons of God, children of God.

Now, no one wants to be hated and to be rejected, not even by the world. To be hated and rejected by the world is not a pleasant thing. But as unpleasant as that is, it should give us reassurance that we are not of this world and as John says in 1 John 3:13, "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life ..." To be rejected and hated by the world may be unpleasant, but ultimately it should reassure us that we are the objects of God's great love, and that we have passed from death unto life, that we are now the children of God, which is far more important than the world's rejection and hatred. Amen? Amen!

Closing Thoughts

As I have said many times, **God does not call everyone His children**. Only those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ are children of God. But while not everyone is a child of God, **our Lord Jesus extends the invitation to everyone to become one**. I pray that you would know what it is like to be a child of God, to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and to experience the forgiveness and love of the Father. May God help you to realize that Christ has died for sinners that they might be saved, and you may have the experience of that new birth and the confidence that you belong to Him and you are part of God's family.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we are God's children now. This is **not something we just think, or wish, or merely hope,** we know we are. May we never forget what we were, but most specially what we are and what we shall be. May we never forget that we are the children of God now and we shall be like Jesus Christ at His return. May this truth radically impact our daily lives. May it produce in us a resolve to walk worthy of this high honor and privilege of being part of the family of God.

From the door of an orphanage
To the house of the King
No longer an outcast
A new song I sing
From rags unto riches
From the weak to the strong
I'm not worthy to be here
But, praise God, I belong

Brothers and sisters in Christ remember who you are and whose you are and what you shall be!

AMEN!