

1 John 3:1–2

April 15, 2018

“Like Father – Love as God’s Children”

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

3rd Sunday of Easter

Pastor Hartwig

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God, Our Heavenly Fathers
And Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

[Introduction]

About a decade ago there was a song on country radio that I liked.

The up and coming star, Rodney Atkins sung about a father and son.

The chorus went like this:

He said, "I've been watching you, dad. Ain't that cool?

I'm your buckaroo, I wanna be like you.

And eat all my food and grow as tall as you are.

We got cowboy boots and camo pants.

Yeah, we're just alike. Hey, ain't we, dad?

I wanna do everything you do.

So I've been watching you."

Like father, like son. Ain't it true?

The fact is... children are very much like their fathers and mothers.

Kara and I do it all the time. That is you. Yeah and that's you.

And it is not only their actions

but also in their physical and emotional traits,
attitudes, dreams, and abilities.

[Illustration] People say... “*Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.*”

Dennis Wise imitated. He was such an Elvis Presley fan.

OH! He so admired Elvis Presley that, not long after Elvis died,

Dennis had his face changed to look like Elvis

and his hair contoured to resemble his hero.

During an interview Dennis said,

“Presley is my model. He has been my idol . . . ever since I was 5 years old. I have every record he ever made, twice over. I have pictures in the thousands.

I have books, magazines, pillows, and even a couple books in Japanese and Chinese about him. I have tree leaves from the tree in front of his house. . . .

When Elvis was wearing white boots, I went out and bought white boots

I never met Elvis Presley. I saw him on the stage four times”

[Illustration]

Many of you know that I spent last week with my parents in Florida.

I worked on my dissertation proposal
and I participated in my nephew's confirmation.

But I also when out to eat with my parents.

Oh, they have a routine.

Tuesday's Redfrog and McToad – Thursday's Leroy's Café
and Sunday's the Oasis – although we went Monday morning instead.

With the routine comes familiarity. The waitresses are their friends.

One of the waitresses said, "I could tell you where his son. You look just like him."

[Like God]

People say, "You have your father's eyes," or "You have your father's sense of humor."

And our Father in heaven wants us to look like Him.

In fact, He wants us to be perfect like Him.

Our Father makes us perfect, just as he is perfect.

Some fathers think they are perfect.

During a family argument a man shouted, "I am a model father!"

"Yes, dear," calmly his wife replied,

"and the dictionary defines a model as a small imitation of the real thing."

Human fathers often fall tragically short of the kind of love that God intends.

But God's perfect love is the real thing.

[Children of God]

We, you and I *ARE* children of God, our heavenly Father.

We are children of God, not by our natural birth but by our rebirth in Holy Baptism
(Jn 1:13; 3:5).

By our natural birth we are only enemies of God, orphaned and estranged from him.

But by his grace, we have become his children by spiritual adoption,
which he initiated and completed.

AND What was God's motive in choosing us?

Did he look into the future ...and foresee our obedience, our faithfulness to him? *NO*.

John tells us plainly that God's only motive is his "*LAVISH LOVE*."

Not our obedience AND

Not our response to that love, but solely his grace and mercy caused him to adopt us
(Eph 2:8, 9).

By His grace, we are “just like our Father.”

Like father, like son and daughter.

As God’s children, we do want to be like him.

The human model for purity is our Brother, Jesus Christ.

We see in him what it means to be pure
—in motive, in action, in speech, in thought.

Not only is Jesus the model for our purity,
but he is also the means of our purity.

God’s command to “Be perfect” is accomplished for us—as a gift—in Jesus Christ,
and God works in us so that we will stand before him as perfect on the Last Day
(Col 1:28).

He makes us “pure,” (v 3) even as he is pure.

We who are children of God by grace are purified by the blood of Christ (1 Jn 1:7).

Like father, like son and daughter.

[Illustration]

A motorist was arrested for speeding while driving through a small community.

The judge told him that he had the option of paying for his ticket with cash or by giving a pint of blood at the local blood bank. The motorist chose the latter.

When he brought the receipt for the blood to the judge, the judge stamped his ticket “Paid with blood,” and the motorist was released.

We who are children of God are purified by the blood of Christ,
which “purifies us from all sin.”

It purifies us and makes us His children.

[Live Now]

And because we are God’s children, he makes us like himself.

Aware of his return, we live as his children now. Not tomorrow, but now!

SO We live just like God when we do “what is right” (v 7),

We live just like God when we imitate God’s righteousness.

The children of God resist sin just as God opposes sin.

Are you opposing sin?
Are you resisting sin?
Or are you saying that is who I am? I can't help it.

As God's children we resist and we fight, but when we fall, we confess.
Yes, God's children live like God and also love like God.
We love one another (v 11) as Christ loves us,
ready even to "lay down [our] life for [our] brothers" (v 16).

[Illustration]

A man had been beaten in an alley.
A pedestrian heard his cries and rushed to help the victim.
Later, in the hospital,

the victim said to the rescuer, "When I saw you coming to help me, I thought you were Jesus."	The rescuer replied, "And when I saw you lying there in need, I thought you were Jesus."
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That's the way children of God respond to those in need—as Jesus would,
not only with "words and tongue," but "with actions and in truth" (v 18).

[Conclusion]

Like father, like son and daughter.

You know it reminds me of another song, a folk song from 1974 – "Cat's in the Cradle"

In the beginning of the song the son promises:

*He'd say, I'm gonna be like you, dad
You know I'm gonna be like you*

And in the end, the Father realizes:

*And as I hung up the phone, it occurred to me
He'd grown up just like me
My boy was just like me*

Baptized as God's children,
in our confirmation promises
and in our daily walk of faith, we say, "Father, I'll be like you."

Like father, like son and daughter. Let us be like you Father. Amen.

"Now may the God of peace... equip you with everything good
that you may do his will, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.
Amen." (Heb 13:20-21)
