

1 John 3:1–7
See the Father’s Love!
Easter 3

April 18, 2018
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
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Grace, Mercy, and Peace be unto you from Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior and God our Heavenly Father. Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

Alleluia! Christ is risen! *He is risen indeed! Alleluia!*

[*Love Complete*]

[1] John was there with the other disciples.

They were listening to and questioning the two travelers
who had just run to their meeting place.

[2] These two men had set out for Emmaus in sorrow

[3] but returned breathless with astonishing news.

It was an Emmaus walk followed by the Jerusalem job.

[4] John’s mind was filled with wonder and hope

[5] as the men described how the risen Lord Jesus
was made known to them

“in the breaking of the bread” (Lk 24:35).

[6] John had a growing hope...

[7] It started with the women returning from the empty tomb [8] in the early morning.

[9] Then he and Peter witnessed with their own eyes that the tomb [10] was indeed empty.

[11] And now the men who had left for Emmaus
returned with such fervor and excitement

[12] that John must have been getting excited himself.

[13] Then it happened:

“Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, ‘Peace to you!’” (24:36).

And as Jesus showed them various signs and taught them,

John and the others were filled with “joy and were marveling” (24:41).

Then Jesus let them know... that all he went through... had to happen.

John would later remember, understand, and relay to us
that everything Jesus suffered and endured
sprang forth from the Father’s love.

All that happened

indeed had to happen.

[14] It happened because “God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son”

(Jn 3:16).

[Love Applied]

[15] That is what Jesus told Nicodemus.

You know, Nic who came at night,

Nic who secretly desired to know more about what Jesus was teaching.

[16] In this conversation, Jesus repeatedly reminded Nicodemus of Baptism—perhaps hinting that Nicodemus’s Pharisee brethren had previously rejected John the Baptist’s “baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Mk 1:4; Lk 3:3; see 7:30).

[17] Jesus told him,

“Unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God” (Jn 3:3).

Again, Jesus told him,

“Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (3:5).

And finally, Jesus said,

“Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again’” (3:7).

[18] Moreover, all who receive this love of the Father in Baptism are saved from condemnation and eternal death (3:16–17).

God loves you!

This is completely undeserved; it cannot be earned.

Out of love, the Father sent his beloved Son to die in your place.

Love caused Jesus to suffer, bleed, and be buried for you!

And everyone who receives this love of God in Baptism

is made into a child of God (Jn 1:12–13).

All of this leads John to write in our text,

“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are” (1 Jn 3:1).

[Love Sets Us Apart]

[19] 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” (v 1).

We no longer find our identity in the things of this perishing world.

By virtue of our Baptism, we bear our heavenly Father's name,
and our identity is found in his love.

[20] We live our lives abiding in Jesus' love.

We do this by receiving his Word.

We receive his love through the Word heard in preaching and the absolution.

We receive his love as we read his Word throughout the week.

We receive his love as we eat and drink his Supper.

Through all of these things, we live as God's baptized, born-again children.

And this love in which we live is not for us alone.

The Father's love sanctifies us and causes us to live our lives
so that our neighbor would know God's love as well.

As God's children, we are quick to confess when we have sinned against God
and other people.

[21] By God's grace, we agree with his 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.

And as God's children, we are quick to forgive when others sin against us.

We do this because we know and understand that God's great love
caused Jesus to die for our sins.

We know God's love transformed us from sinners,
who were objects of God's wrath,
into his beloved children.

We love others because God in Christ first loved and continues to love us.

[22] That is the miracle of Easter.

God's love that gave Jesus to die and then raised him again
takes hopeless sinners and gives them hope.

And that hope is a noun, not a verb.

As a verb it is uncertain. We hope we win the game.

As a noun it is certain. And sure.

Because Jesus died and rose from the grave,
When we die, we too shall rise. That is our HOPE!

[*Conclusion*]

[23] It is truly hard to believe,
and that's why John calls us to reflect on this miraculous truth over and over again,
as I'm sure he did.

John's life was transformed by the truth of Jesus' death and resurrection.
It enabled him to
see what kind of love the father has given to us!

[24] God's love in Christ's death and resurrection
was united to John in his Baptism,
and his identity
was wrapped up in God's love for him.

In the writing of his Gospel account,
John even refers to himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

[25] As a witness of God's love for the world,
John couldn't help but eagerly persuade you to believe that this love,
which he witnessed,
is also for you:
"See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we,"
even sinners like you and me,
"should be called children of God; and so we are" (v 1)!

Alleluia! Christ is risen! *He is risen indeed! Alleluia!* Amen.

So we... Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among the people. AMEN! (Psalm 96:3)
