**Children of God**

 *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.****2****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.****3****And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. (1 John 3:1-3, ESV)*

 We the followers of Jesus are the children of God. Greetings to you dear brothers and sisters in Christ, as we establish today (once again) the truth of who we are and how we are supposed to be in Christ. This topic of spiritual position or identity is appropriate for us to talk about because it is, after all, our Sunday School commencement. Therefore, today we’re going to see just what is entailed in being a “child” of God and what that means for our practical everyday life. So, let’s see this important aspect of our faith-walk, so that our spiritual life can continue to mature. Again, we as the followers of Jesus Christ are the children of God. Let’s delve a bit more into this truth…

 The status of God’s children is a function of both being given grace and being declared as such. This status establishes both our present lifestyle-calling as well as our future hope. At first, we read in the Scripture about God’s unimaginably great love. That love is an amazing, glorious, boundless, otherworldly, and foreign love – it is neither from this world, nor has it ever been seen before. It is a divine love, one that goes after the lost human being and is always trying to make him or her a part of God’s family. This is a love that is graced or granted – it is a gift that cannot be bought and has been freely given by God. It is never taken back from us, except in the case when we choose to put it aside in our life (in which case we simply ignore it, though it is there for us to live in). It is such an astonishing love that it becomes a part of our lives, once we have accepted Jesus as who He is into our lives. Later in the passage, it’s not only love that is talked about, but also the reality of being children of God.

 The children of God are that because of calling and grace. They are called children by nature. They are also called children because they accepted God’s grace. They (or we believers) have a different Father than those who are of the world (which are all human beings that do not know or want to know God.) The world is also the entirety of all the human systems that work against God.

The beloved children of God live also with hope (not just calling and grace). They live with the hope of Jesus appearance a second time in history, because they have received the Father’s love. That hope causes them to be prepared for that Final Day of Judgment. They do it by self-examination, and self-purification, day by day, to be ready for the Day of the appearance of the Lord.

For example, let’s say that someone received their diploma and was now going to enter the workforce. No matter what that person does, although they may humbly refrain from announcing their graduation and always consider themselves a student in their field, they are a graduate, a worker and no longer an official student. What’s more, a Christian who lives out their faith in following Jesus – no matter how sinful, weak, or unskilled they be in their profession, are still Christians. The status of the children of God is not like a toy that you can turn on or off. Rather, it is a constant process, during which we are called to be busy with the work of self-purification.

So today, let us rejoice that we are our Heavenly Father’s children! This has happened to us because of the grace that comes from Jesus. It has been given to us because God declared our and every believer’s status. It may be that world will not understand or even oppose us. However, we know that our Lord will appear again, that he will glorify us out of his love and goodness. He will glorify us because he has declared us and accepted us as his children. Furthermore, since we have the hope of Christ’s return, let each of us busy themselves with the business of living a holy and faith-filled life, following Jesus Christ, and carefully heeding the voice of the Holy Spirit.

The status of God’s children is a function of both being given grace and being declared as such. This status establishes both our present lifestyle-calling as well as our future hope. We the followers of Jesus are the children of God. He has declared us to be that; God has given his Son so we can be his children.

May the Lord Bless you all. Amen.