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What Kind of Love?

1 John 3.1-3

Series: Blessed Assurance (Communion Series)

The Village Church

April 6, 2025

I. Introduction

- A. “Toto, I have a feeling we’re not in Kansas anymore.”
 - 1. So says Dorothy in the classic tale of the Wizard of Oz
- B. As the movie begins – in black and white – Dorothy has retrieved Toto who had run away to escape their nasty neighbor
 - 1. They return to the old farmhouse just as a tornado approaches
 - 2. Unable to get into the locked storm cellar, they end up in the house, she is knocked unconscious, and wakes up to find the house spinning around in the air
- C. When the house comes down, they find themselves in a land unlike anything they had ever seen before
 - 1. First, it’s a land of color
 - a. The contrast between the depression era, gray, storm-laden conditions of the flat Kansas landscape couldn’t be greater
 - b. Remember, the Wizard of Oz movie was acclaimed for its early use of technicolor which revolutionized cinematography
 - 2. There was life, greenery, and great beauty
 - a. Mind-blowing beauty
 - 3. Which prompts one of the greatest of movie quotes: “Toto, I have a feeling we’re not in Kansas anymore... We must be over the rainbow!”
- D. We have a similar quote in our text this morning
 - 1. A similar quote designed to evoke an even greater degree of mind-blowing beauty and awe
- E. **1 John 3:1–3** (ESV) —
 - 1. 1 See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.
 - 2. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.
 - 3. 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.
 - 4. 3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.
- F. **“See what kind of love...”**
 - 1. Literally, the Greek word is **potapos (Gk) = from what country**
 - 2. The notion that the Father is so loving, that we should be called His children, is so astonishing, and breathtaking, that John exclaims, “Where did this come from?”

- a. In what kind of country did this originate?
 - 3. This is not from around here; we're not in Kansas anymore!
- G. We have another similar saying that people use today
 - 1. Often it's used pejoratively, in a negative way, as a put-down
 - a. But it can be used in the positive sense of wonder
 - 2. "What planet are you from?"
 - 3. John is so enraptured with what God has done for us in Jesus Christ that he's taken away as if he's been transported by a divine tornado into a country that is mind-blowing in its beauty
- H. "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God;
 - 1. "And so we are."
 - 2. This is not a figment of John's imagination
 - a. This is not Dorothy's storm-driven dream
 - 3. This is the reality of all who trust in Jesus Christ as Savior
 - 4. Where did this come from?
 - a. Not from Kansas
 - b. Not from the USA – in it's most imaginative glory days
 - c. Not even from planet earth!
 - 5. But it's real!
 - a. "And so we are!"

II. **Building Assurance**

- A. We return this morning to our communion series Blessed Assurance
 - 1. It is our study of 1 John
- B. The purpose of 1 John is, simply put, the assurance of salvation for those who belong to God by faith in Jesus Christ
 - 1. **1 John 5:13** (ESV) —
 - a. 13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.
 - 2. John wants to do everything possible to give believers confidence, assurance, that you do indeed belong to God
 - a. And that He will never leave you nor forsake you
 - b. And that, as Paul has been teaching us, He who chose you before the foundation of the world, has called you, has justified you, and has glorified you
 - c. That He who began a good work in you will carry it to completion until the day of Jesus Christ
- C. Now the way John accomplishes assurance is interesting
 - 1. As one who has had a career in education I can say that I have witnessed a lifetime of experiments in our schools
 - a. One of the most notable was the self-esteem experiment
 - b. If the goal was to make sure students feel good about themselves, what teachers needed to do was tell them all the time that they were good and fine and wonderful

- c. And that if we told them that enough, they would be good and fine and wonderful
 - d. And would then do well in their work
 - 2. Well, it didn't work
 - a. First, they didn't do well in their work
 - b. Second, they didn't feel any better about themselves either; often worse
 - 3. The better way to make sure students feel good about themselves is to make sure they did well in their school work
 - a. That they actually acquired skills
 - b. That they actually performed well in their academics
 - c. That they really accomplished things they could not do before
 - 4. That approach works much better
 - a. Because students actually do better in their studies
 - b. And as a result, they feel better about themselves
- D. Well, John approaches the issue of assurance in the way a wise teacher approaches his or her students
 - 1. He does what good teachers do in good classes
 - a. He lays out the main issues which drive assurance
 - b. And then he provides tests that help the students see where they stand
 - 2. And as the students master and pass the tests, they are assured of their salvation
 - a. Not with a false sense of assurance, in which a person believes they are saved when in fact they are not
 - b. But with true assurance, rooted in a genuine relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ
 - c. Which can be seen and observed as they pass the tests
- E. So John, the schoolmaster, has provided four tests that are helpful in building our assurance
- F. **Test of Obedience**
 - 1. **1 John 2:3-5** (ESV) —
 - a. 3 And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.
 - b. 4 Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him,
 - c. 5 but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected.
 - 2. So the first test – do we keep the commandments of Christ?
 - a. Not perfectly, of course
 - b. But increasingly, as a matter of our lifestyles
- G. **Test of Love**
 - 1. **1 John 2:9-10** (ESV) —
 - a. 9 Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness.

4. The fruitful Christian life is the assured Christian life
 - a. Assurance that is not false – based on erroneous or false or worldly foundations
 - b. But true, genuine assurance
 - c. Rooted in the relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ that produces a life of obedience, love, truth, and abiding
 5. So how do we enjoy our assurance?
- B. **The Love of the Father**
1. The first thing is to consider the love of the Father
 2. **1 John 3:1** (ESV) —
 - a. I See what kind of love the Father has given to us,
 - b. that we should be called children of God;
 - c. and so we are....
 3. We are to stop long enough to be amazed at what God has done for us
 - a. “See from what country – from what universe – this love of the Father has come from!”
 4. A number of years ago Jean and I were doing a month of ministry in Paris while Fred and Carrol Henry were on home assignment
 - a. And while we were there Matt and Kate came over for a week during the Christmas holidays
 - b. And we went to the Louvre – magnificent museum, one of the greatest, if not the greatest, in the world
 - c. Matt was in college at the time
 - d. When we got to the Louvre, he took his guidebook, showing where all the exhibits were
 - e. And he set out, like a man on a mission, to see all of the Louvre in two hours
 - f. He went room to room, exhibit to exhibit, checking off everything he could
 - g. Mona Lisa – check; what’s next
 - h. Statue of Venus – check; next room
 5. I don’t know that he actually got to everything
 - a. You can’t really see the Louvre in two hours
 - b. It takes more like two weeks
 - c. But I do know that he didn’t take the time to appreciate, to contemplate, to enjoy the artistry
 - d. And I’m sure if he were to do it again he would take more time in the exhibits that were most interesting to him
 6. But we need to stop and see what kind of love the Father has given to us!
 - a. We need to become enraptured with His love
 - b. We need to be overwhelmed with His grace
 - c. We need to be ravished with His condescension
 7. He has taken us sinners and has adopted us into His family
 - a. Sinners, who by right He could easily have been cast into the waste bin of eternity

- b. But He rescued us from the pit of destruction; lifted us out of our poverty of wickedness and exalted us to the right hand of God
8. **Ephesians 2:4–7** (ESV) —
- a. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,
 - b. 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—
 - c. 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,
 - d. 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
9. It is that kind of love that has taken us from the outhouse to the penthouse
- a. From outcasts to being His children
 - b. All because of love
10. It is the kind of love which we celebrate in the Lord’s Supper
- a. In which the emblems of the death of God’s Son – His death in our place
 - b. Remind us of what it cost God to render us His beloved children
11. One way to help us “see what kind of love” is to consider what it has taken to effect such a transformation
- a. What did it take for us to become children in the family of God?
12. Boice: In human birth there is first a conception in which the seed of the father unites with the egg of the mother to begin a new life. There is a period of gestation in which that which was begun in such a quiet and small way begins to grow and take form. At last there is the actual birth. In the birth the first cries of the child are heard, and those who stand by rejoice in a new human being. In the same way, men and women become God’s children when God the Father of his own will takes the seed of his Word and plants it within the heart, causing it to unite with the ovum of saving faith, which together begin to grow. At this stage of God’s work, those without cannot tell whether spiritual life is present or not. But in time the life within grows and the actual birth takes place. As those standing by hear the public confession of Christ by the newborn they know of the new life and rejoice in it with the Father.
13. These words echo those of John in his gospel
14. **John 1:12–13** (ESV) —
- a. 12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,
 - b. 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.
15. Do you regularly stop and take the time to “see what kind of love the Father has given to us that we should be called children of God?”
16. And then to consider – “and so we are!”
17. **1 John 3:2** (ESV) —
- a. 2 Beloved, we are God’s children now...

18. This is not “pie-in-the-sky-bye-and-bye”
 - a. This is who we are in this very moment!
 - b. You’re not on the edge of your seat wondering if, like Little Orphan Annie, anybody will come to take you out of the orphanage
19. If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have eternal life – now
 - a. Your eternal life has already begun
 - b. You have been adopted by the One who is Love
 - c. You’re not in Kansas anymore!

C. **Understanding the World**

1. But you know, there are a lot of things working against us in this fight for assurance
 - a. We don’t often feel like we are “seated in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” – even though we are!
 - b. We sometimes don’t feel the Father is all that close to us
 - c. Our life challenges and afflictions and diminishment often blow dark clouds of doubt into our souls
2. But those thoughts do not come from the Father
 - a. They come from the world
 - b. Or from the Prince of this world who wants us to believe that God really doesn’t love His own children
3. **1 John 3:1** (ESV) —
 - a. 1 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.
4. The way to enjoy the assurance of God is to stop listening to the world!
 - a. Just like if the world situation and politics is pushing you to depression, stop watching so much news!
 - b. And when you do watch it, don’t let it give you the impression that God is not on His throne working out His plan and bringing it to a glorious conclusion
 - c. Because no matter what news feed you prefer – Fox News, or CNN, or MSNBC – none of them will stop in the middle of describing the disasters du jour and say, “But let’s all remember the sovereignty of God! Let’s not forget that Jesus Christ is on the throne and He is King of kings and Lord of lords!”
5. The world doesn’t know Jesus
 - a. So when the world gives you its messages – consider the source
 - b. The world doesn’t know squat about what’s happening
 - c. You do!
 - d. You know that by faith in Jesus Christ, you are His beloved children
6. You will always be an oddity to the world
 - a. “The world does not know us”
 - b. It never will
 - c. Why?

- d. Because “it did not know him”
- 7. So enjoy your assurance
 - a. By seeing, considering, what kind of love the Father has given us that we should be called children of God
 - b. And by knowing that the world doesn’t know what it’s talking about because the world doesn’t know Jesus

D. **Anticipating Our Future**

- 1. And then, the best is yet to come
 - a. There is still our future
 - b. And as wonderful as our present is – that we are His children – the future is even more glorious
 - c. And anticipating our future is yet another fuel for our enjoyment of assurance
- 2. **1 John 3:2** (ESV) —
 - a. 2 Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared;
 - b. but we know that when he appears we shall be like him,
 - c. because we shall see him as he is.
- 3. So we are to wonder about who we are as children of God
 - a. But so to wonder about the transformation that will take place in our future
 - b. We don’t know what that will be like – can’t even imagine it!
 - c. But something special awaits us
 - d. And it will put every limitation, every challenge, every affliction, every anxiety, any obstacle in our rear-view mirror
 - e. Casting them all aside as they are eclipsed by the glory of the exalted Christ
- 4. Note the order
- 5. First, he will appear
 - a. The glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ is the Christian’s greatest longing and hope and expectation
 - b. He will appear – do you expect Him?
 - c. Could it be today?
- 6. Then we shall see Him
 - a. This will not be a mere spiritual sense of His presence; we have that now by the Holy Spirit
 - b. It will be personal and visible
- 7. **Acts 1:11** (ESV) —
 - a. 11 and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”
- 8. And then third, we shall be made like Him!
 - a. There will be a transformation that will take us beyond our imagination

9. We can't really imagine a life without our limitations, our troubles, and our sins
 - a. In Christ Jesus, He has saved us from the penalty of our sins through justification
 - b. In Christ Jesus, He has rescued us from the power of sin in our lives – we are no longer under obligation to sin; sin is no longer our master
 - c. And yet, we still have the residue of our sinful natures to contend with
 - d. That's the spiritual battle that Paul was talking about in Romans 7
10. But there will be that moment when, by the mere sight of our Savior, we will be transformed
 - a. Our natures will be forever changed
 - b. Then will our sinful natures be, not just rendered powerless – but eradicated altogether
 - c. Then will any obstacle to our affections for our Savior be cast aside
 - d. Then will any contention with our brothers and sisters be forgotten, erased from the hard drive of our memories
11. This is what theologians call the **Beatific Vision**
 - a. It will make Moses' facial transformation when he came down from the mountain pale in insignificance
12. For our transformation will be final and complete
 - a. Not temporary like Moses'
 - b. We shall be like Jesus
13. And that is what we were predestined for! (**Romans 8.29**)
 - a. Predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son
14. This is when the curse is reversed
15. All of this hearkens back to Genesis
 - a. We were made in the image of God – able to do God-like things as much as a creature is able to do and to be like the Creator
 - b. But Satan comes along and said we needed to transgress the command of God so we would be like God
 - c. But the result was anything but God-like; instead of love and beauty and holiness it was death and destruction and dysfunction
16. But God promised redemption – even in the garden
 - a. The seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent
 - b. A redeemer would come from the seed of the woman
 - c. And ultimately the 2nd Adam – Jesus Christ – would fulfill the holy Law of God on our behalf
 - d. And He would die in our place, paying the penalty for our sins that we deserved
 - e. And by faith in Jesus, He would give us eternal life
 - f. So that when He appears the second time for our salvation, we would be transformed into His image
 - g. And our image of God would be restored!

- h. We can't even imagine it!
- 17. But that is our hope – and why we shall enjoy our assurance now by anticipating our future

E. **Pursuing Our Present**

- 1. So what does that mean for us today?
 - a. Our temptation would be to be carried away in a tsunami of mysticism
 - b. That we would imagine being transported to a sort of Oz like Dorothy and Toto
- 2. But no!
 - a. We are still here! Still in this world, though not of it!
 - b. Enjoying our assurance is no pie-in-the-sky that we are so heavenly-minded that we are no earthly good
- 3. **1 John 3:3** (ESV) —
 - a. 3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.
- 4. As we enjoy our assurance, we are also buoyed by our pursuit of our present
 - a. We participate in our sanctification
 - b. We “work out our salvation” because it is “God who works in us to will and to do”
- 5. It's as if John has said, “Do you believe in this Jesus?”
 - a. “Do you trust in Him as your Savior?”
 - b. “Do you have the hope of Christ?”
 - c. “Are you assured of your salvation in Jesus?”
 - d. “Are you enjoying your assurance?”
 - e. “Then act like it!”
- 6. For “... everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.” (**1 John 3.3**)
- 7. And, dear friends, that purification is in fact a part of our enjoyment of our assurance in Him

IV. Conclusion

- A. So enjoy the assurance God has for you
 - 1. By seeing the love of the Father
 - 2. By understanding the world
 - 3. By anticipating your future
 - 4. And by pursuing our present purity