

Recipients of Grace

1 John 3: 1-2

Today is a very special day for the Fellowship family. In fact, these occasions are highlights in the ministry of a church, and certainly for me as a pastor. In a few moments we are going to baptize those who have been saved by grace and made a public profession of their faith. Through baptism, these are making a public profession of the inward change that took place the moment they received Christ as their Savior. The old man of sin died and they were resurrected a new creature in Christ Jesus.

While we celebrate baptism as the public profession of one's faith, I thought of the salvation necessary to step into the baptismal waters. Salvation always precedes baptism. The waters these will be baptized in have no saving effect. These are merely bearing witness of the marvelous grace they received in salvation.

As we celebrate with these today, I trust you will consider your position in Christ. For those who are saved, I hope today will be a stirring reminder of the grace and hope you received. If by chance you are yet unsaved, I pray you will see your need of salvation and respond to the provision of grace through the finished work of Christ. For a few moments, I want to consider the [certainties](#) revealed in the text as we think on: [Recipients of Grace](#).

I. The Provision (1a) – [Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God](#). John spoke of the gracious provision of salvation. Consider:

A. The Gift – [Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us](#). God the Father has lavished us with His great love. We were separated in sin and undeserving of any of His goodness and yet He chose to extend such a gift, providing for our salvation.

B. The Grace – [that we should be called the sons of God](#). Due to the sin of Adam in the garden, we all were born in sin and condemned before God. In order to be acceptable to Him, we must be righteous before Him. In ourselves this is impossible. God knew that, and He provided the remedy for sin – His only begotten Son. Christ died in our place, bearing our sin and enduring the judgment we deserved. Through this act of grace, God's unmerited favor, we are accepted of Him and considered His children!

II. The Separation (1b) – *therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.* As Jesus came to offer Himself the atonement for sin, He faced rejection from those He came to save. They refused to accept Him as the Christ. He was despised and rejected of His own. Like Jesus, those who come to Him in salvation are no longer accepted by the world. They do not know Christ and they cannot understand the believer.

- These coming for baptism today are now part of an elite and exclusive group. Jesus is the only means of salvation. They have received Him and are now separated from the world. While they will experience rejection from the world, they are now in Christ, accepted of God!

III. The Identification (2a) – *Beloved, now are we the sons of God.* Those who have received Christ, being saved by His grace are the children of God. They have become part of the body of Christ and adopted into the family of God. They do not have to wait for a future event, or meet certain criteria. The saved by grace are immediately and eternally placed within the body of Christ.

IV. The Anticipation (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.* Although John had spent much time with the Lord, he still didn't fully understand all that the believer would experience in the future. While John couldn't adequately describe his eternal future, he knew he would see the Lord in resurrection. Every believer will see the Lord as He returns for the church and we will be changed into a glorified body like Christ our Lord.

- As these prepare to step into the baptismal waters, they are bearing witness to the assurance they have in Christ. Not only are we reminded of the death of the old man of sin and the resurrection of a new creature in Christ, we are also reminded of the glorious promise of resurrection beyond the grave. Those saved by grace have been given eternal life. Just as Christ rose triumphant over sin, death, and hell, we too shall rise again when He comes for the church.

Conclusion: As we prepare for the baptismal service, I urge you to examine your heart and be sensitive to the Spirit. Have you been saved by His grace, repenting of sin and responding to the call for salvation. If so, rejoice in what you have received in Christ. If not, I urge you to come to Christ for salvation today!