

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. (1 John 3:1) What wondrous love this is! The almighty Creator, the Ruler of the Universe, has called you His child!

Now, I've heard it many times—you probably have, too—that people will say, “We're all children of God.” But that's not true. According to the Bible, we are all *creatures* of God, created by Him, but no human being has a natural claim to be God's *child*.

We weren't born as children of God. On the contrary, we were born spiritually blind, dead, and enemies of God. That Father-child relationship was destroyed by sin way back in the Garden of Eden. Since then, we've been outside of God's family. Not children, but poor, miserable sinners.

But, as Paul wrote to the Romans, *God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us* (Romans 5:8). This is what Jesus' incarnation, life, suffering, death, and resurrection was all about! This is why, each year, the Church marks and celebrates Advent and Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday. Jesus came into this world to forgive your sins, take away your guilt, cover your shame, and restore you to a right relationship with your Creator God.

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. How does that happen? Not through anything you do. It's because of what Jesus has done for you. Children became children through the work of the Son. Because of Jesus, the Holy Spirit calls us to faith and adopts us into the family of God. At the Baptismal font, through water and the Word, our God becomes our Father, and each baptized believer becomes His beloved child.

This is a privileged relationship that no one naturally deserves. Purely out of His love and mercy, believers in Christ are given a new identity. One who believes in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is no longer merely God's creature. He or she is now His *child*.

Does that mean believers are now perfect? No, believers are not perfect, just forgiven. But that forgiveness means living in a new, restored relationship with God. Instead of being a distant and dangerous, wrathful Ruler of the Universe, God is a near and loving, personal and present Father. And there's more to come!

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 (1 John 3:2). What wondrous hope this is! One day, when Jesus appears, when Jesus returns to this earth, all who believe in Him, all the children of God, will be like Him!

What a wonderful, surprising, joyous Day that will be!