

Becoming a Child of God

Message Notes | Pleasant Valley Church | 09-18-22

I. Introduction

Last week, several people gave their lives to Christ. They publicly asked Jesus to forgive them of their sins and to come into their lives and become the Lord of their lives. The Bible calls that being “born again.” It also describes it as becoming a child of God. It is a supernatural miracle! Jesus said that when just one person repents and genuinely recognizes their need for God, and turns to Him, the angels in God’s very presence rejoice (Lk. 15:11, 17).

Today, I believe God’s Spirit wants to help us rediscover the wonder of who Christ is and the wonder of what happens when we welcome Him into our lives.

For some of us, that initially happened last week. For others, it might have happened last year or even last decade. But **saying “yes” to Jesus is *both* an initial, one-time event, and an ongoing transformation. And every time we truly welcome Jesus into our hearts and lives, he gives us power to become and his beloved son or daughter.**

II. Main Scripture—John 1:11-13

He (Jesus) came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God (John 1:11-14).

III. Bigger Picture or Backdrop — John 1:1-5, 14, and 11-13

- A. Before we unpack John 1:11-14, let’s look at the beginning of Chapter 1 to see the bigger picture or backdrop of where these verses are located. It provides a stunning view of who Christ was before he came to earth and was called Jesus.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:1-5, NIV).

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1:14).

“He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God” (John 1:11-13).

IV. Discovering the Wonder and Greatness of Christ

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made” (John 1:1-3).

A. In the beginning ...

This is a direct reference to Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” It means eternity past, before anything was created. The writer is taking us as far back as our minds can imagine.

B. Was the Word

1. Before anything was created, the eternal Word simply was. He has no beginning and no end. He is self-existent. There never was a time in which the Word did not exist. Thinking about the endlessness of Christ will smoke our brain cells. It’s a mystery. We cannot fully grasp eternal self existence. Just when we think we can wrap our minds around it, the bottom drops out and we fall to our knees. Christ’s eternalness is a mystery that is meant to awaken wonder, fascination, and worship. It’s also meant to build our faith. He is beyond what we can think or imagine.
2. In Greek, the “Word” is translated as “Logos.” It means words that are spoken and words before they are spoken (thoughts). In other words, this Person called “the Word” (Christ) was and is the internal thought life of God brought out into the open. Jesus Christ is God’s heart, mind, and wisdom revealed. He is God’s logic and intelligence unveiled. He is the knowledge of God. He is the imagination of God. In Christ, God reveals, his dreams, hopes, and desires.
3. In Exodus 3:14-15, God revealed his proper name, “Yahweh,” to Moses at the burning bush. This is often translated as “Jehovah.” In Hebrew, it means “I AM.” By revealing his name, God was revealing an attribute of who he is (his nature). He was saying, “I am eternally self-existent. I am endless and forever. I am transcendent and will forever be.”

In John 8, Jesus used this same name of God (I AM) when he claimed that he existed before Abraham, the ancient patriarch of the Jewish people. “Very truly I tell you...before Abraham was born, I am! At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple guards” (John 8:58-59).

C. And the Word was with God in the beginning

1. The Word was eternally in relationship and fellowship with God (the Father and Spirit).
2. John 1:18 (NIV) — “No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father (bosom, intimate presence, very heart of God), has made him known (made him plain as day).”

3. John 1:18 (The Message) — “No one has ever seen God, not so much as a glimpse. This one-of-a-kind God-Expression, who exists at the very heart of the Father, has made him plain as day.”
4. Other translations use the word “side,” “bosom,” or “chest.” In ancient times, “bosom” referred to a fold or pocket in a robe near the chest area, close to the heart.
5. Christ, before he became Jesus, forever dwelt in eternity past as the Word, at the most intimate, closest place to the Father’s heart. He was forever in a fellowship of perfect love, joy, and enjoyment, with the God the Father and God the Spirit. And guess what, he invites you and I to share in that!

D. ... and the Word was God

1. This Divine Person, this Word of God (Jesus Christ) is the eternal heart and mind of God. He is the divine expression and manifestation of God. He is the very essence and fullness of the uncreated God.
2. Colossians 2:9 — “In Christ dwells ALL the fullness of God.”
3. Hebrews 1:3 — “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.”
4. When you welcome or receive Christ into your life, you are receiving much more than forgiveness of sins. You are receiving more than a Get-Outta-Hell Free Card. You are receiving more than an impersonal “Plan of salvation.” You are receiving God’s heart and mind. You are receiving the very life of God.

E. **Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.**

1. Absolutely mind blowing! Stunning! Everything that was or will be created, came into existence through Christ. From the tiniest subatomic particle to the largest galaxy. *The Message* translation puts it this way: “Everything was created through him; nothing—not one thing!— came into being without him.”
2. Colossians 1:16-17 — “For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”
3. Jesus Christ is the raw building materials of creation. He is also the architect, designer, builder, and blueprint itself. What’s more, He is the Superglue and rebar that holds everything together.
4. Christ is also the goal for which everything exists. Ephesians 1:10 states that when time reaches it’s climax, God will “sum up” everything in Christ. That means that everything in heaven and earth will be brought under Jesus’ leadership and through Him, everything will be brought into a state of complete perfection and fullness.

5. Jesus + nothing = everything
Everything - Jesus = nothing
6. There is nothing that you have experienced in the past, nothing that you are facing now, or will face in the future, that is bigger than Christ.
7. When you read scripture like we are doing this morning, turn it into simple, conversational prayer. Thank God for the truth of what you're reading and ask Him for help to understand and apply it. Example: *Thank you, Jesus that you are the Word of God. You are beyond what I can think or imagine. Holy Spirit, teach me. Show me more. Help me grow in awe and wonder of Christ and to apply this truth of who He is to my everyday life.*

V. John 1:4-5

“In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

A. Jesus is the very life of God.

1. John 14:6 — “I am the way [of God] and the truth [of God] and the life [of God]. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).
 - a) Many spiritual leaders claim to point you to a path to God, but no one in history, except Jesus, claimed to be the path itself. This should shock us!
2. John 11:25 — “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die.” The resurrection is not simply a future event. It is Jesus.”
3. John 6:35 — “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

B. Jesus is the light and glory of God. He brings spiritual illumination. His life in you imparts God's light. This light overcomes spiritual darkness. It enables you to spiritually perceive God's beauty in small doses over time and to become transformed by it.

1. Hebrews 1:3 — “The Son is the radiance of God's glory...”
2. 2 Corinthians 4:6 — “For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.”
3. 2 Corinthians 3:18 — “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord [in Christ], are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”

VI. John 1:14

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us (pitched his tent among us).

This one sentence should blow our minds. It is unthinkable. The uncreated, eternal Word stepped out of heaven and became something he was never before. He parked his glory, stepped out of eternity, and became fully human. Yet he was still fully, 100% God.

Somehow the Word implanted himself into the uterus of a young virgin (whom he created) and became an embryo. The Maker of the Pacific Ocean floated in the amniotic fluid of his Mary's womb. For nine months, he grew. When he was born, he was wrapped in swaddling cloths and placed in a feeding trough.

For 33 years, he experienced everything that you and I will ever experience. He showed people what God was truly like. He laughed and cried. He healed the sick and cast out demons. He raised the dead and exercised authority over nature. He rebuked religious hypocrites and showed compassion to sinners who recognized their need for mercy. He endured rejection, loss, sadness, injustice, and the worst evil ever perpetrated. He was tortured, mocked, spit upon, beaten, and crucified.

He was tempted in every single way that you are tempted. Yet he did not sin. He perfectly and lovingly obeyed every law that God required. He achieved perfect righteousness and holiness on your behalf. If he had sinned just once, he would have been disqualified to die for your sins. Yet he did not sin, not once, not even in the slightest. God's law required perfect obedience and that is what He achieved.

When he died on the cross, God somehow took your sin and placed it upon Christ. Jesus willingly took your place. He became the sin bearer and took on the rightful punishment that you deserved. He did all this so you could not only be forgiven, but brought into God's family as a deeply loved child of God.

A. For additional study and prayer see: Philippians 2:6-11

VII. John 11:11-13

“He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.”

A. **Receive him**

1. Implies more than simply welcoming or inviting. It is not passive. It is an active taking hold of that which is offered. It means to grasp or to lay hold of something in order to make it your own. It's seeing something valuable and saying, “I want that,” and then reaching out to take what is offered.

a) Parable of the hidden treasure (Matt. 13:44).

B. Believe in his name

1. “Believe” means to be convinced or persuaded. It means to entrust yourself to the care of another. It can also mean to cling to—think of Velcro or plastic wrap that clings. Another meaning is to lean your entire personality onto.
2. “In his name.” In biblical times, when people named their children, it often revealed a little something about their character or what God had called them to do or be. To trust who Jesus is as person—his character—and what he has accomplished.
3. “Jesus” in Hebrew is Yeshua. It means that God will save, rescue or deliver. It means salvation.
4. When the Spirit of God gives us little glimpses of the beauty and wonder of Jesus, hope, trust, and faith grows. Fascination, wonder and spiritual hunger also awakens in our hearts.

C. The right to become children of God

1. “Right” in this verse means power and authority to act.

D. Become children of God

1. “Become” means to come into being; to come into existence. It means to emerge. It implies movement, development and growth. It means to transition or move from one point (state of being or condition) to another.

E. Children of God — children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

1. Becoming a child of God is a supernatural miracle. It should fill us with a sense of wonder. Sometimes we need to slow down and ponder what has happened to us and its implications.
 - a) 1 John 3:1 — “Behold what manner of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God. And that is what we are!”
 - b) 1 John 3:1 (TPT) — Look with wonder at the depth of the Father’s marvelous love that he has lavished on us! He has called us and made us his very own beloved children.
2. Our sins are not only forgiven, God has impregnated us with the life of Christ. He has somehow implanted the indestructible seed of Christ’s life in us.
 - a) 1 Peter 1:23 (TPT) — “For through the eternal and living Word of God [logos] you have been born again. And this “seed” (DNA, genetic code, principle of life) that he planted within you can never be destroyed but will live and grow inside of you forever.
 - b) Galatians 2:20 — “My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.”

F. **Becoming God's Child Means You Have a New Identity.**

1. You are no longer a spiritual orphan. You have a brand new identity! You are a deeply loved son or daughter of God. You have been adopted into God's family. You are beloved. One of your main jobs is to be loved. The Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of adoption. He helps us learn how to continually receive the Father's love.
 - a) Romans 8:15 (NIV) — "The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."
 - b) Romans 8:15 (TPT) — "you did not receive the "spirit of religious duty," leading you back into the fear of never being good enough. But you have received the "Spirit of full acceptance," enfolding you into the family of God. And you will never feel orphaned, for as he rises up within us, our spirits join him in saying the words of tender affection, "Beloved Father!"

G. **As God's child, your future is safe and secure and really, really bright!**

1. 1 John 3:2 — "Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."
2. Colossians 3:4 (NLT) — "... when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in his glory."
3. Proverbs 4:18 (NLT) — "... the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until the full day."

H. **Becoming a child of God is both an initial, one-time act but it also involves ongoing growth and transformation. God's ultimate goal is to form Jesus' character and likeness in us.**

1. Galatians 4:19 — "Oh, my dear children! I feel as if I'm going through labor pains for you again, and they will continue until Christ is fully developed (formed) in your lives."
2. Romans 8:28-29 (NLT) — "And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. ²⁹ For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son (conformed to his likeness, character), so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters."

I. God has given us everything we need to live this new life as his child

1. 1 Peter 1:3-4 — “His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him (ongoing, experiential) who called us by (and to) his own glory and goodness. ⁴ Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.
2. Illustration of a homeless beggar learning his new identity and having to learn how to write checks.

J. How God is teaching me to apply John 12 regularly

1. John 1:12 — “He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who did receive him (ongoing, regularly), to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God (respond to pressure as his deeply loved child).”
2. “When you actively welcome Jesus into a pressure or uncertainty, He will give you power to become his child.

Impression: “Everytime, you invite Me into a situation you are facing, I will come. When I come, I will fill you with My love. I will remind you of who I am in you and you who are in Me. I will quiet your heart with my love. I will back you down off the ledges. Then I will give you wisdom, authority, and power IN THAT MOMENT to respond as a secure, deeply loved son whose future is secure and bright in me.”

3. “Check engine light.” When the “Check Engine” light appears on your dashboard, you don’t tell the mechanic, “Fix that light.” Rather, it’s an indication that there’s something that needs attention. Hidden within every pressure or agitation, there is an opportunity to invite Jesus to take a look “under the hood.” It’s an opportunity to welcome and receive His perspective and presence.