

Luke 24: 36b-48

1 John 3 1-7

1 John 3:2 "Beloved, NOW are we the sons of God, and it does 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." Gender discrimination is much in the news these days. To be honest, it should have been in the news centuries ago. A couple of years ago, many female newsreaders were horrified when through freedom of information, they found out that their male counterparts were receiving salaries much greater than they were, despite doing the same job.

Here's a wonderful truth: in Christ God has taken that difference away! Gal. 3:28 says; "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." We could add, that includes colour, race, rich or poor.

John's Gospel tells us that Jesus is the Father's only genetic Son. The angels are sons by creation, we are sons by adoption, but Jesus is "The Son". Jesus alone is of one substance with the Father.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus called God, "Abba, Father!" (Mk. 14:36), using the intimate words a child might use to say "Daddy!"

During the American Civil War, a man's son deserted his post in battle and was to be shot by a firing squad. So, the father went to Washington DC seeking the President's pardon. But he couldn't get past the front gate to the White House; the guards denied him access. So, he sat on the bench outside crying, fearing his son's death. Day after day, hundreds of people went past him, but no one noticed....

One day a small boy saw him crying and asked him why, what was going on. He told the boy about his son and what was going to happen. The boy was touched. He said, "Follow me." He walked up to the front gate, looked up at the soldiers guarding it and said, "It's okay. He's with me." The gate opened.

The boy and the man marched right up to the front door of the White House, opened it and walked in. He knew exactly where the President was.

He knocked on the door and entered a meeting of the President with his cabinet. The little boy nudged his way through to the President and jumped up on his lap. An intermission was called.

The boy said, "Daddy, I want you to meet a man. He needs your help." The man was brought and told his story. Lincoln took out his pen, signed a document and handed it to the man. "Presidential Pardon, Signed, Abraham Lincoln, President of the U.S."

The man's SON had been pardoned! His tears of sadness became tears of joy. As he was leaving, he turned to the President and asked, "Why did you do this for me?" Lincoln replied, "I did it because my SON took an interest in your situation!" (David A. Sargent)

So, we see how Jesus is eternally the Son of the Father, having existed forever in loving union with Him. There is no other Son, and He and the Father are so closely united that all life, creative force, and wisdom are shared.

It's to this Son that all life and blessings flow. The key to us having God's life and blessings is to be in relationship with the Son, Jesus Christ. We do not possess eternal life independently of the Son.

Paul often uses the formula "in Christ" or "in Him" to refer to the new position of the believer:

Now, being in Christ," isn't a communion that exists only in certain sublime moments, but rather is an abiding reality for the Christian.

"Be filled (present continuous imperative) with the Spirit!" Eph. 5:18.

We're to "abide" in Jesus! John spoke of this union when he said, "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life" 1 John 5:11-12.

It's THE SON in us that constitutes us as Sons.

It's the Spirit of Jesus in us which is the Spirit of adoption. Gal. 4:6, "God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father.'" Without Him we're nothing. With Him, we're part of God's family.

"In Christ," we are also partakers of His unique relationship with the Father. The relationship HE has, is the relationship WE can have!

It's an incredible act of the love of the Father that we should be called the Sons of God! 1 Jn. 3:1.

1 John 3:2, "Beloved, NOW are we the sons of God, and it does 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."

We're in this world, but not of it! We have a different origin, a different destination, a different nature, and different goals. We may look like them, but we're very different! Don't try to be like the world, instead try to be like Jesus!

Once a ruler of a country had 2 daughters. They went to private schools with other elite children.

They came home one day wanting to get a ridiculous haircut because it was in style at their school. Their father, the elected ruler, sat down with them. "Girls, you're not like anyone else. You're the daughters of the highest official in the world. You don't follow the fads other's set – you make the fads and others will follow what you do."

If we're sons and daughters of God, we should think, act, and be different from everyone else. Rom. 12:2, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

We should exhibit the fruit and the gifts of the Spirit. We should expect the miraculous and point others to Christ and to heaven. We are on our way to our mansions!

Listen to Paul's insight in Col. 3:1-4; "Since then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory."

Some of you may not have Jesus in your hearts. Realize that the key is not church membership or receiving sacraments, or even being a "good person." The key is relationship with Jesus.

For all who are Christians, where do you need improvement in becoming more like Jesus? Are your priorities focused on heavenly things or earthly? Amen.