

Small Group Guide

Based on 1 John 2:18 - 3:11 | "Children of God"

Overview

This week's sermon explored what it means to truly belong to God's family. Drawing from 1 John 2-3, the message challenged us to recognize the reality of false teaching, stand firm in the truth of the gospel, and live boldly as children of God -- not because of our own perfection, but because of what Christ has done for us.

Key Takeaways

- The devil is clever and uses partial truths to lead believers astray. Recognizing his tactics requires knowing the full truth of Scripture.
- Every genuine believer has been anointed by the Holy Spirit, who teaches, guides, and confirms that we belong to God.
- We do not obey God in order to become his children. We obey because we already are his children.
- Our identity as children of God should shape how we live, how we love others, and how we respond to the lies of the world.
- Jesus appeared to destroy the devil's work. His death on the cross removed the barrier of sin and made a way for us to belong fully to God's family.
- Remaining in Christ is an active, ongoing choice -- through reading Scripture, prayer, community, and surrender.

Discussion Questions

Opening

1. When you hear the phrase "children of God," what comes to mind? Does that identity feel natural to you, or is it something you struggle to fully embrace? Why?
2. The pastor shared a personal story about being adopted and taking on a new family name. How does the picture of adoption help you understand what it means to belong to God's family?

Going Deeper

3. The sermon described the devil as someone who takes partial truths and twists them. Can you think of an example -- from culture, social media, or even inside the church -- where a partial truth has been used to lead people away from the full gospel?
4. John warned his readers about false teachers who had left the community. What do you think it looks like today when someone walks away from the truth? How should the church respond?
5. The pastor referenced Jesus' words in John 8:43-44, where Jesus described the devil as the father of lies and someone who once knew the truth but chose a different path. What does it say about the danger of knowing the truth but not holding on to it?
6. John tells his readers that they have been anointed by the Holy Spirit and do not need false teachers to instruct them. What does it look like practically to rely on the Holy Spirit and Scripture rather than simply following whatever sounds convincing?
7. The sermon drew a connection between love and obedience. Jesus said in John 13:34-35 that love for one another would be the sign that identifies his disciples. How well do you think your life -- and your community -- reflects that kind of love? Where is there room to grow?
8. The pastor made the point that we obey God because we are his children, not in order to become his children. Why does that distinction matter? How does getting that backwards affect the way people experience their faith?

Reflection

9. The sermon described Satan whispering that we do not belong, that we do not measure up. Have you ever experienced that kind of spiritual discouragement? How did you respond, and what helped you hold on to the truth?
10. John's tone shifts in 1 John 3:1-2 from instructing to celebrating. He becomes genuinely excited that believers are called children of God. When was the last time your faith felt like something worth celebrating rather than just something to maintain?

Practical Applications

This week, choose at least one of the following:

- **Read the Word daily.** Set aside even ten to fifteen minutes each day to read Scripture. Start with 1 John if you have not already. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you as you read.

- **Examine what voices you are listening to.** Take stock of the podcasts, social media accounts, and voices that are shaping your thinking. Ask honestly whether those voices align with the gospel or subtly pull you away from it.
- **Speak your identity out loud.** When discouragement or shame tells you that you do not belong, counter it with the truth. Write out 1 John 3:1 in your own words and keep it somewhere visible.
- **Love someone in a concrete way.** Jesus said the world would know his disciples by their love for one another. Identify one person in your group or church community and do something specific this week to love and serve them.
- **Have an honest conversation.** If you have been wandering or feel distant from God, talk to someone you trust -- a group member, a pastor, or a mentor. Do not walk through it alone.

Closing Prayer Focus

Close your time together by praying over these areas:

- Gratitude for the identity God has given us as his children
- Protection from deception and false teaching
- Courage to stand firm in the truth of the gospel
- Growth in love for one another as a community
- Anyone in the group or in your lives who has walked away and needs to come home

"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God. And that is what we are." -- 1 John 3:1