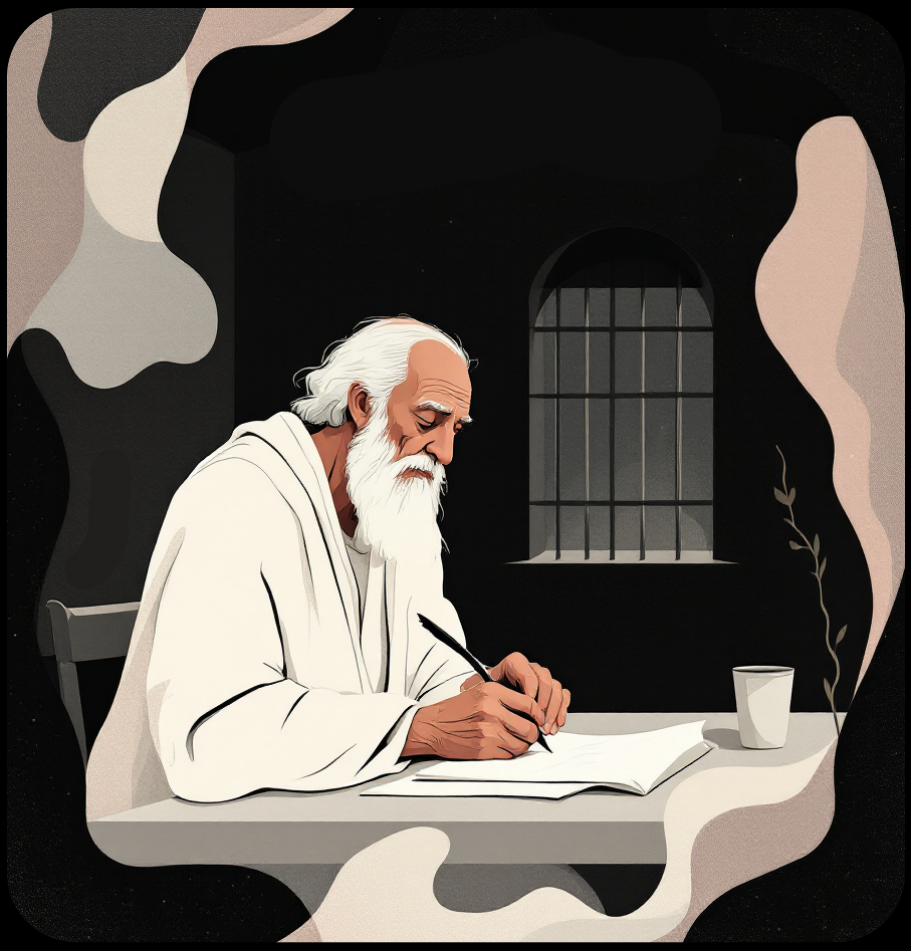
A Letter to God's Dear Children



... for those whose sins are forgiven ...

PART ONE: John makes it crystal clear to whom he is writing–Those whose sins are forgiven, 2:12-14.

1. John is writing to those whose sins are forgiven, 2:12.

- (1 John 2:12 ESV) I am writing to you, little children, **because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake**.

A. John is not writing to everyone.

i. He is not identifying the recipients as those who have been in church since a child.

ii. He is not identifying the recipients as good Christian people.

B. John is very specific as to whom he is writing—those whose sins are forgiven.

2. So each one of us needs to ask — Are my sins forgiven? And how do I know?

A. Problem: We were all under the power of sin.

- (Romans 3:9b–10 NLT) ... we have already shown that **all people**, whether Jews or Gentiles, **are under the power of sin**. 10 As the Scriptures say, "**No one is righteous— not even one**."
- (Galatians 3:22 NLT) **But the Scriptures declare that we are all prisoners of sin**, so we receive God's promise of freedom only by believing in Jesus Christ.

B. Solution: Christ came to earth to die for our sins.

- (1 Corinthians 15:3–4 ESV) For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: **that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures**, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

C. Response: Our sins are forgiven when we believe in him who died for our sins.

- (Acts 10:43 ESV) **To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name**.
- (Acts 13:38 ESV) Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, **that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you**.

3. John gets even more exacting and precise when he adds ... *"for his name's sake."*

A. For his name's sake means that the person believes and trusts in everything Scripture reveals regarding the identity and work of Jesus Christ.

- (1 John 2:12 ESV) I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven **for his name's sake**.

Name ... ὄνομα [onoma] – the name is used for everything which the name covers, everything that is true about the one of whom the name represents; any rational entity (human being, God) understood by their name; perhaps understood according to the reputation and character of the person.

- (Acts 4:12 ESV) And there is **salvation in no one else**, for there is **no other name under heaven** given among men by which we must be saved.

B. For instance *"for his name's sake"* would include believing in the deity of Christ—that he is God—as he is so clearly revealed in the Scriptures.

- (John 20:31 ESV) ... but these are written **so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ**, **the Son of God**, and that by believing you may have life in his name.
- (Mark 1:1 ESV) The beginning of **the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God**.
- (1 John 5:5 ESV) Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who **believes that Jesus is the Son of God**?
- (Hebrews 1:3a ESV) **He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature**, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.
- (Hebrews 1:8 ESV) **But of the Son he says**, "**Your throne, O God**, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom."

C. Using the example of Christ making known the name of the Father might help us understand the importance as to what it means to believe in the Person as fully revealed in Scripture.

- (John 17:6 ESV) **I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world**. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.

Manifest ... φανερόω [phaneroo] – to cause to become clearly revealed to the mind, the senses, or judgment; to make visible or known what has been hidden or unknown, whether by words, or deeds, or in any other way; make actual and visible, realized.

D. Conclusion: Only those whose sins are forgiven are part of God's beloved family.

If your sins have not been forgiven, then you are not part of God's family and John is not writing to you and none of this is relevant to you.

E. Conclusion: God will assure only those who are part of his beloved family that they have eternal life.

- (1 John 5:13 ESV) I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

4. John is writing to God's dear children to assure and commend them in the various stages of their maturing, victorious lives of faith in God, 2:13-14.

- (1 John 2:13–14 ESV) I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, children, because you know the Father. 14 I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

A. John writes to the spiritually mature (fathers) to assure them that knowing Christ for who he is as the eternal one shows spiritual maturity and is evidence of eternal life.

B. John writes to those who are maturing in the faith (young men) and commends them for their victory over the evil one.

- (Acts 26:18 ESV) … to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.
- (Colossians 1:13–14 ESV) He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

C. John writes to new believers and encourages them that they truly know the Father since there are many who profess to know God do not know God at all.

- (John 8:19 ESV) They said to him therefore, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also."
- (John 14:7 ESV) If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

D. John writes and repeats his commendation to the spiritually mature for their in-depth knowledge of Jesus the Son of God who was from the beginning.

- (John 1:1–2 ESV) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God.

E. John writes and further explains his commendation to the young believers who are maturing in the faith because the word of God abides in them and they have overcome the evil one.

- (John 8:31–32 ESV) So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

PART TWO: John is writing to warn them away from loving the world and the things of the world, 2:15-17.

5. Refresher: John writes these things to those who believe in the name of the Son of God that they may know that they have eternal life.

- (1 John 5:13 ESV) I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

6. John warns them away from loving the world, 2:15.

- (1 John 2:15 ESV) Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

A. John writes a clear and unmistakable warning to those who may be tempted to love the world and the things of the world—Do not love the world or the things of the world.

B. He then informs them of the stark reality of the one who loves the world—the love of the Father is not in that person.

C. If the love of the Father is not in the person, then the love of the Son is not in the person.

- (John 17:26 ESV) I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.
- (John 14:23–24 ESV) Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24 Whoever does not love me does not keep

my words. **And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me**."

D. If the love of the Father is not in the person, then God is neither living in the person nor is his love perfecting him and preparing him for glory.

- (1 John 4:12 ESV) No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, **God abides in us and his love is perfected in us**.

E. In contrast the love of God is perfecting the person who keeps God's word and by this that person may know that he is in God.

- (1 John 2:5 ESV) … but whoever keeps his word, **in him truly the love of God is perfected**. **By this we may know that we are in him**.

7. Why the stark warning? All that is in the world is not from the Father but from the world and will one day go up in flames, 2:16-17.

- (1 John 2:16–17 ESV) **For all that is in the world**—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—**is not from the Father but is from the world**. 17 **And the world is passing away along with its desires**, **but whoever does the will of God abides forever**.

A. Explanation: By the common grace of God everyone receives goodness from God.

- (Matthew 5:45b ESV) … your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his **sun rise on the evil and on the good**, and **sends rain on the just and on the unjus**t.

B. But that is not what John is speaking of here.

C. The love of this world and the love of the things of this world are not from God.

D. Explanation: What the world offers is a perverted, twisted version of what God offered at creation.

i. Strong, intense desires for physical, sensual pleasure.

ii. Greedy desires for what a person sees.

iii. Pride in self, accomplishments and possessions.

E. These things are the result of an illegitimate love from the sinful human heart in which the person loves the things of this life more than he loves God.

F. What the world offers is very short lived as the earth and its works will one day be disintegrated in the fire of God's judgment.

- (2 Peter 3:10 ESV) **But the day of the Lord will come like a thief**, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and **the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved**, and **the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed**.

G. In contrast the one who does the will of God is part of God's eternal kingdom and will abide forever.

CONCLUSION: It is the time for asking ourselves questions in the presence of God …

- (Psalm 139:23–24 NIV) **Search me, God, and know my heart**; test me and know my anxious thoughts. 24 **See if there is any offensive way in me**, **and lead me in the way everlasting**.

Who/what do I truly love?

- (1 John 3:1 NIV) **See what great love the Father has lavished on us**, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.
- (1 John 4:9–10 NLT) **God showed how much he loved us** by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. 10 **This is real love**—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.
- (1 John 4:16 NLT) **We know how much God loves us**, **and we have put our trust in his love**. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.
- (Psalm 36:5 NLT) **Your unfailing love, O Lord, is as vast as the heavens**; your faithfulness reaches beyond the clouds.

Where do I find joy?

- (Psalm 16:11 ESV) You make known to me the path of life; **in your presence there is fullness of joy**; **at your right hand are pleasures forevermore**.
- (Psalm 21:6 ESV) For you make him most blessed forever; **you make him glad with the joy of your presence**.

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