

“Words of Jesus: ‘All My Children’”
Hebrew 1:1-3a, 6-8a, 10-12; Mark 10:13-16

Chan Willis – F.P.C.-L.C./Welsh
Oct. 3, 2021 – World Communion Sun

We have just read of how Jesus fussed at his disciples for their dismissal of the young people that were brought to Him for His blessing. His stern words to them about the importance of those who could so easily be overlooked were a reminder of Jesus’ concern for all of God’s creation... especially the smallest ones. In the words of another classic Christian children’s song, *“Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in his sight, Jesus loves the little children of the world.”* His words and actions declare, without any doubt, “I love ALL my children.”

As I thought about that unconditional, universal love of Christ, that phrase stuck in my head. **“All my children.”** Does that phrase ring a bell with any of you? At the risk of dating myself... an ongoing problem for me as I advance in years... how many of you remember a soap opera by that name? A show that first aired in 1970 and ran for over 50 years, at one point being the most widely ‘taped’ TV show in the US. (‘taped’. Another ‘dated’ reference...) It was a show that, despite being in a ‘genre’ normally associated with females, actually had more than **30% male viewers**. It starred a ‘legend’ in daytime TV, Susan Lucci (aka, ‘Erica Kane’), as well as a few others you might recognize, like Sarah Michelle Geller (Buffy, the Vampire Slayer), Kelly Ripa, and even Carol Burnett.(?!)

Now, you may be struggling to think just HOW I might use THIS as a cultural illustration of the love Jesus has for ‘all my children.’ (NOT the soap.) The answer is, I’m NOT! Tho I did learn that there is a term familiar to us Christians that screenwriters like the ones for soaps use: the “Story bible.” (little ‘b’) It is the ‘reference document’ used by the film industry to describe the characters, settings, and back stories for a particular production. And that there are assistants on the set that are to carry that info around in their heads; and they are known as “walking bibles.”

We too have a ‘story bible’ which is to be our reference for this ‘production’ we call LIFE. One that contains the valuable ‘back stories’ of our ancestors in the Christian faith. Information that we are to ‘carry around’ with us as we seek to be ‘walking Bibles’... CAPITAL ‘B’...

The only spiritually applicable aspect of this show might come from descriptions of the theme for it: that it was designed to focus on 'social issues' and 'young love.' And that the title was to communicate the "bonds of humanity" shared by all.

In the passages today, we will be reminded of the 'social issues' that Jesus touches on with regard to the 'young' whom we 'love.' Mindful of the 'bonds of humanity' shared by... in Jesus' eyes... "ALL MY CHILDREN"...

There are two ways that I want to consider these 'bonds of humanity' that we share with one another as the 'Children of God.' The first is of us to think about what the Scriptures say about you and me. How does God ... the 'family' of Father and Son... SEE US? And second, how do WE SEE GOD... in our own life, and in the lives of others.

How one is 'perceived' by others is very important to many of us... some, of course, more than others. As I get older, that has become less important. (Tho unlike one person I know, who believes that by virtue of their age they can say ANYTHING that they want to others, I so believe that there are still standards of respect I must live by). I would give you one word in proof that we do care about what others think of us: "Facebook." For people to see just how great our life is, there is no place more visible than 'Facebook.' Or as it is cynically called by some, 'FAKEbook.' But the truth is that the opinion that matters most is not our 'Facebook friends' (I hope that they are much more than that)... or our family... or even our fellow church members. Who we should be most concerned about in terms of how this 'book of our lives' is 'judged by its cover' is GOD. Father, Son, and Spirit. Our 'FAITH-book' friends.

And the author of Hebrews has some pretty encouraging ways to describe just how God SEES us. Beginning in verse 6, we read that **"someone has testified somewhere"...** (I LOVE that statement! As my recall gets worse and worse, I definitely hear myself saying that... [repeat])... ***What are human beings that you are mindful of them... mere mortals, that you care for them?"*** Have you ever asked God that question? 'God, why would you care about little old, fallible, wayward, broken ME? Mere mortal that I am?'

And THERE's your answer! ***"You (GOD) have made them (US) a little* lower than the angels."*** (NRSV – ****"for a little while..."***) ***"You have crowned them (US) with glory and honor."*** (Heb. 1:7) Just THINK about that for a minute. YOU have been created by your Heavenly Father

to be just a bit lower than the ANGELS in heaven! The King of all creation has crowned YOU with glory and honor! Whenever the world wants to make you feel small, insignificant, unimportant, I want you to think about these statements. Please repeat it with me. *"I am just a little lower than the ANGELS."* *"I have been crowned with glory and honor."*

God made you... and GOD DON'T MAKE JUNK. AMEN?!

And if you don't believe that, did you listen to what was said about God's only begotten Son... our adopted brother... Jesus? *"...**the one who sanctifies/makes holy (Jesus) and those who are sanctified/made holy (US) all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters,¹² saying, "I (Jesus) will proclaim your name to my **brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you."*****

You and I are part of Jesus' family... we share the same Father. And because of that, Jesus is not ashamed to call you brothers and sisters. Think on THAT one. Can we always, without hesitation, NEVER be ashamed of our brothers and sisters? Has our family ever done anything to betray our love for them? And yet, even though we have done MUCH to betray our brother Jesus, by his unconditional love, He will yet PROCLAIM your name; in the midst of the church congregation Jesus says, *"I will praise you,"* brother and sister? Do YOU always feel like praising YOUR true 'brothers and sisters?'

Cognizant of just how much we are loved by God the Father and God the Son, we should in turn be mindful of how **WE SEE GOD**. We see God through His Written Word. This book IS, in the words of one of our confessions, *"the witness without parallel."* In the words of Scripture, God *"sustains ALL things by his powerful word."* God speaking throughout all the ages, to all peoples in all places, that those who trust in Him might, in our own ways, become **'walking Bibles'**...

We 'SEE GOD' through the life and ministry of God's Son Jesus. The One described here as *"a reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being."* When Jesus took up those children into his arms, held them, and blessed them, He is a 'reflection' of the same 'glorious love' that His Father has for US, HIS children. How many times does Jesus say, sometimes in so many words, *"I and the Father are one."* As we study and follow the examples of Jesus, we ARE 'studying' and 'following' GOD... We are 'one' with the Father.

But to see God most clearly through His Word and His Son, we must LOOK through the **eyes of a CHILD**. Let's consider this scenario we just read about with Jesus and the children. How readily do you think that they came up to Jesus? This perfect stranger... emphasis on 'perfect'... whom they didn't know from 'Adam' 😊... do you think that they might have approached him just a little hesitantly? With their parents pushing them towards this mysterious man from Galilee? Believe me, it has taken me a LONG time for these kids to come up to me like they did this morning!

And yet, it would certainly appear that these children came to him willingly, openly, without hesitation. They came without the prejudices, the fears, the cynicism that our world feeds its people with, young and old. They came with the type of attitude expressed so beautifully by Jesus in the 14th Chapter of John: ***"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give as the world gives; so let not your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid."*** (John 14:27)

And because there are so many of God's children, of any age, whose hearts ARE troubled... who ARE afraid... who listen to the lies of what the world gives... That is why that as recall how 'God sees us' as his beloved, crowned angels... as 'we see God' in His Word and in His Son, with a childlike faith... we MUST be diligent to "SEE GOD IN OTHERS." And most especially, in those young children who are in need. In need of food, and clothing, and shelter. In need of education and opportunity. In need of LOVE! YES, right here in our very own community! We need to have the eyes of Jesus to see the God that dwells in the 'least of these,' His younger sisters and brothers. How are WE fulfilling that *admonition* of Christ: ***"Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for the kingdom of God belongs to JUST such as these."*** (Mark 10:14) How are WE fulfilling the *actions* of Christ: *"taking them up in their arms, holding on to them, blessing them."*

Today is a very special day for both individual and corporate Christian believers: a day we collectively celebrate our worldwide 'communion' of the saints, and on a local basis, officially commemorate the beginning of ministry in a new mission field for TWO churches. The future hope that we hold on to as both individual members of the body and the 'gathered' church is in our CHILDREN. We must ask ourselves, 'How am I furthering the cause of those children, both in

their earthly and eternal futures? Whether young or old, around the world or right next door, how are we living out a 'child-like' (not child-ish) faith as an example to our young people? As we consider, each day, how God sees us... how we see God... and how we see God in others... may we know the truth that sets us free. God says to you and me, you ARE 'ALL MY CHILDREN.' And that is NO 'soap opera'... but it IS God's 'reality show'... that His Kingdom belongs to those who receive it as a little child...

CHARGE: Go out into the world and **live as children, dependent on God** and **on each other, obedient to the will of God, holding tight to God's hand, fellow citizens of God's kingdom.**

BLESSING:

May **God, our Father**, be with us through good and bad,

giving us **wisdom** to **recognize** each **lesson** and each **blessing**.

May **Jesus Christ, our Brother**, **embrace us** each day in his **loving arms** that make us **feel** as if **we belong**, as if **we are loved**, as if **we have a home**.

May the **Holy Spirit**, our **Counselor**, continually show us **God's actions in our lives** as we are **reconciled to one another**, brothers and sisters, **one family**, in **God**.