

April 11, 2021  
1 John 3:1-13

The Funeral Service for Roger Jahr  
Rev. Matthew C. Rauh

### **Who We Are and What We Will Be**

***“How great is the 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. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.”***

Where has the time gone? It is almost five years since I moved here. Roger is one of those members that made me wish I had lived here longer maybe my whole life. Roger had a sense of humor. In fact, I get the impression he joked around with people a lot. I wouldn't put it past him to play some practical jokes, too. I imagine him as a kid in our school, caught by the teacher for goofing off, sheepish but still smiling. He must have been fun to have known him all these years. You can say he was a kid at heart, that he never grew up.

Roger also didn't grow up when it came to his Lord. When it came to God and his Word, Roger and Myra were all ears, weren't they. He loved to hear from the Bible. And when it came to his relationship with God, Roger approached God as a child. He prayed to God as a child relies on his parent for everything. He ran to his Father whenever he was scared. He relied on him alone for his salvation. Roger was a child when it came to joking. He was also a child of God in his relationship with God the Father.

This reading from 1 John includes Roger's confirmation verse. I also tacked on the following two verses. In it we are told that we are children of God, not in an immature sense, but in a wonderful sense. Let's see what it means that Roger and you and me are children of God. And it tells us how in a wonderful way. It tells us who we are now and what we will be later.

Before we can see what we are now, we must first understand what we were. I have seen these apps and programs for cell phones and computers that are interesting. You upload a picture of yourself and the program will show you what you might look like five, ten or twenty or fifty years from now. That's amazing. You can put up a picture of a nine year old and see what they might look like at age thirty, forty, seventy. But what happens to every picture you do that to? They all eventually grow old, gray, wrinkled and frail. It happens to everyone. This is a symptom that there is something wrong.

You, I, everyone enters this world cursed and condemned already. Aging and dying is merely a reminder of it. The Bible tells us why. It uses adjectives and synonyms like being God's enemies, disobedient, deceived, enslaved, objects of wrath. Our underlying emotions and desires betray what is wrong. They are inclined to evil all the time and filled with anger, jealousy. It is sin. It is the curse of sin that affects us and condemns us already at birth. That is what we were.

But look at us now! ***“How great is the 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.”*** God calls us the children of God. This is not a demeaning term as if we were crybabies. The point is God wants us to know he loves us as his own children and he will do what any good Father would do for his children. He will provide for us, protect us. He will bail us out of trouble. He is there in any emergency as a good father. When we pray to him, we are not praying to some stranger. We are talking to our Father. That is what we are now, the children of God the Father.

We are his children because of the love he lavished on us. Lavished means in an overflowing way. He loved us so much that would do anything, and he did anything. He traded his holy Son, Jesus, for us unholy sinners. Only love would do that, and not just any love, but the love of a holy, perfect God in heaven. I wouldn't trade my son for an inmate on death row. But God did. Jesus became sin for us, and he trades his holiness with us. So we are the children of God. You want proof? Look at your Baptism certificate. It is your adoption papers into God's family. We are the children of God and we are all brothers and sisters of Jesus the Christ.

Because we are God's children now, we know something will happen to us later. ***“Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.”*** We don't know exactly how our heavenly bodies will differ from our earthly bodies. It hasn't happened yet. But we know it will be amazing because we will be like Jesus. Paul says in Philippians 3:21 that Jesus will come and he will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. In 1 Corinthians it contrasts what we are now to then. What is perishable now will be imperishable then, what is sown in dishonor now will be glorified then, what is mortal will be immortal. Isn't this something worth waiting for?

As I understand it, Roger played trumpet and did so for Easter here in church. Of course, he couldn't play these past years. His hands couldn't hold a trumpet anymore. He needed assistance. He relied on a wheelchair. What will we be like when Christ comes back for us? I don't think it is wrong to assume Roger can play the trumpet again, and better than ever. But the ability to walk, dance, and so on pale in comparison that we will be like Christ, immortal, without sin, holy. The sinful image of man will be gone and we will be the image of God in all his righteousness and holiness. If we had an app that would let us see what we look like in the future, you can go to age fifty, sixty or eighty and see the person age and become feeble. But keep going. In an instant, the image becomes perfect, glorious, just like Christ.

Right now, that world doesn't see us that way. They see us crippled, getting old, suffering and dying. To the naked eye we don't look like princes and princesses, which we are as the children of the Lord of the universe. In fact, the world looks down on us as fools. But don't let that bother you. They refused to see Jesus as God's son, too, so they don't see us as God's children. But don't let that diminish the fact that is what we are now, the children of God. And it doesn't diminish what we will be, the glorified sons and daughters of God in heaven. Amen.