**Sunday 5th April**

1 John 3: 1

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

All of us are spending our days differently from the way that we were just 3 weeks ago. Our usual patterns of activity have changed radically. For some people this has been a great challenge. I have spoken to people in our community this week who have required help with shopping or prescriptions, and for some this has been enormously difficult. They have explained that they are usually the ones who are out there helping others, and now they find that they need to be on the receiving end of help. Many of us have been involved in serving others in different areas of church ministry, but for the moment those ministries have had to stop. It can be challenging. Sometimes our identity can become tied up with what we do. It is good that we gain satisfaction from helping others and reaching out to them. But we are of infinite, intrinsic worth, even when we can do nothing! If we know Jesus, we are children of God! What an extraordinary gift! That becomes our primary identity! It is not because of anything that we have done.  I think it was Philip Yancy who said ‘There is nothing you can do to make god love you more, and there is nothing you can do to make him love you less’. There is no way that we can earn His love – it is all gift! When we were still lost and far from God, Jesus died for us! By His grace alone can we become adopted into the family of God. Spend some time enjoy your Father’s love that He has lavished on you! Listen to Reckless Love by Cory Ashbury if you have access to it.

*Father, how can we ever thank you?! Your love is beyond any that we can imagine. Thank you for the gift of Jesus. Thank you that you have rescued and saved us, called us by name, adopted us into your family, made us your children! We ask you to help us to grow in that identity. As we start Holy Week, we pray that you would increase our understanding of what Jesus has done for us, and of the love that took him to the cross. Amen*

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