

JJ¹

Think of that time you did something so bad, you weren't sure if your parents would let you back into the house, or might kick you out of the house. Was your fear legitimate? Were you threatened with that very thing? Did you actually get kicked out? It happens.

I can't remember if I ever got to that point, but I do remember one time when one of my younger brothers was pushing toward that outcome. He and my dad butted heads A LOT. Norman, I'm sure you've never done something like that, right???

While there are things we could do that would risk our being kicked out of our homes for a time or maybe for good, none of them compares to what the Apostle John holds before our eyes today. Again, we see our eternal home with God in heaven with all its beauty, splendor and magnificence described in human language. Giant gates, each made of a single giant pearl. Streets of gold. No darkness at all, but an eternal glorious day. And, best of all, a place completely devoid of all sin and all its consequences.

John writes: **Nothing that is unclean and no one who does what is detestable or who tells lies will ever enter it, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.**

How wonderful to know! But stop and think about that for a bit. **Nothing that is unclean and no one who does what is detestable or who tells lies will ever enter it...** Can you say that of yourself???

No one here is clean, that is, completely spiritually pure—no sin whatsoever. Norman, you're a good kid, but I know your parents know better than anyone else (just like any parent) that you are sinner.

No one here has perfectly kept their thoughts, words, and actions completely wholesome and pleasing. We all have done things to disgust our parents, or siblings, or friends, or spouses. Norman, it's that thing you did that at the time made it hard for your mom or dad to be in the same room with you.

No one here has only ever spoken the truth. Each one of us has told lies and to claim to have never lied itself makes you a liar!

You see the problem we have here???
**Nothing unclean...no one detestable...
no one who tells lies...WILL EVER
ENTER IT!!!**

What hope could there ever be for us???
How could any of us do anything but hold our heads down low in shame...so

¹ JJ is the acronym for *Jesus Juve*, which is Latin for "Jesus Help". It is a short prayer used by many ministers and sacred musicians at the beginning of their work.

unworthy of the glory of God's heaven??? By ourselves, we cannot. This is something Norman heard and was drilled into him every Catechism class these last three years and with every assignment. You are by nature dead in your transgressions and sins. You cannot by your own thinking or choosing believe in Jesus Christ or come to him. You cannot work your way into God's good graces and his holy heaven.

That's why John writes: **...but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.** We are all those things, but the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, was not. He was pure and sinless his whole life through. He did only that which was pleasing in his Father's eyes, **"You are my Son, whom I love, with you I am well pleased!"** Jesus always spoke the truth, even though it would lead to his death because he knew that through it, it would lead to your life.

He who was sacrificed for you also, before time began, wrote down your name in his Book of Life. Jesus wrote down your name in his Book of Life, NOT because he knew that one day you would believe. No! He wrote down your name in his Book of Life so that one day you would believe by his grace through

his gift of faith to you. And he did that for you at your baptism.

And that, Norman, is one of the main reasons we are here today. Although some of the ways we do things can make Confirmation seem like a graduation, it isn't at all. Confirmation is just that, it is a time where you publicly confirm to this group of believers that you are a baptized child of Christ and that you have continued to grow in that faith through God's Word and intend to continue to do so. Not only that, you are confirming to this congregation that with me, you have studied the Scriptures regarding the

Lord's Supper and the other foundational teachings of Scripture and can rightly receive this holy meal with a repentant and believing heart that Jesus truly gives his real body and blood together with bread and

wine for the forgiveness of your sins, the strengthening of your faith, and for God's grace to serve him with a pleasing life.

These are your great blessings because your name has been **written in the Lamb's Book of Life.** Therefore you can **KEEP YOUR HEAD UP** no matter what you face in life because Jesus is with you and heaven is yours. Amen.

SDG²

² SDG is an acronym for *Soli Deo Gloria*, which is Latin for "To God Alone Be The Glory". This is a statement of humility used by many ministers and sacred musicians at the end of their work to let themselves and others know that it isn't about getting glory for themselves, but about giving all glory to God.

