



Children of Light

John Mark Coon

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by John Mark Coon

Story and symbolism

I have 3 children who are 6, 4 and 2. While they are a little too young to fully understand the intricacies of Salvation and the Christian life, I wanted to create a painting (a visual narrative) that provides a platform for us to discuss what they see and how it connects to their experiences as children. So what I want them to see is a picture of three children (they are the children in the painting) who are coming to the porch from playing outside. They are taking off their muddy clothes so that they can come inside. There are towels to clean off their muddy feet and wrap them up to get warm inside the house. This is what I want MY CHILDREN to see right now at their young ages...But I would like for YOU to see something more. Throughout history, artists have used a variety of symbolic devices to make the message within the picture more clear. God sends a message to us through the words in the Bible.

Ephesians 5

1 Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children **2** and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light **9** (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)**10** and find out what pleases the Lord. **11** Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.

The idea of the painting came from several conversations that I have had with people who think that God is asking us to follow a bunch of rules before we get His love. When I think about this point of view, I get an image of a parent giving a child a long list of rules while the child is standing there, frustrated and irritated. I

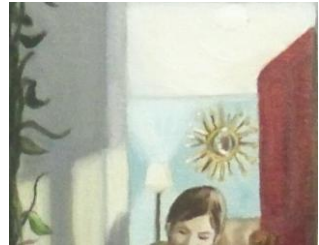
think about how many rules and consequences I expect my children to abide by because I love them, I want them to be safe, and I want them to make right choices. God's love, like the love of a parent, is not predicated on following rules. His love is unconditional. However, there are consequences for doing things which are wrong. God cannot allow an unrepentant sinner to have a life with Him any more than a parent would allow a child (or anyone) into the house if they were covered head to toe in mud.

This image of my children covered in mud, waiting outside to come in reminds me of the choice that each of us have...it's the choice to live in darkness or to live in the light...this is the choice that our loving God has given us. He sent his son to live a life of love and to die as a sacrifice for our sins so that we do not have to stay in the darkness, but can live forever in the light with Him...

Colors

Blue – the color of the home's interior. Blue symbolizes heavenly love.

Gray – the interior of the porch where the children are shedding their muddy clothes. Gray symbolizes the death of the body and the immortality of the spirit.



Red – the door to the home. Red is the color of blood and symbolic of the Lord's passion and sacrificial love.



White – depicted in the white towels and in the clothes of the parents. White is symbolic of innocence of soul, of purity and of holiness.



Yellow/Gold – seen in the flowers, the candle plate, the mirror inside the home and the room through the window. Yellow/Gold is a symbol of divinity.

Objects

Candle – the candle is sitting above the towels. One candle represents Jesus Christ, the “Light of the World”

Cross – a decorative cross is hanging on the entrance to the porch. The cross represents salvation and suffering.

Shoes – discarded shoes are seen on the porch. Discarded shoes symbolize standing on holy ground.

Lamp – seen inside the house. A lamp represents wisdom and piety.



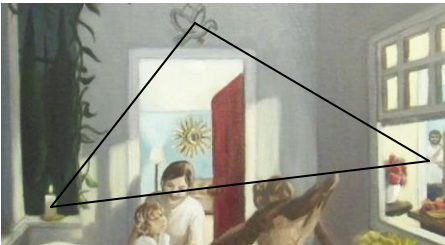
Mirror – seen next to the lamp inside the house. The mirror represents purity.

Towel – Three towels are present on the porch and are being used by the mother (the Holy Spirit) to clean the children before entering the house. Towels symbolize purification.



Geometric Shapes

Circle – the shape of the mirror inside the house. A circle represents eternity.



Triangle – The candle (Christ), the dove (the Holy Spirit), and the father(God) form a triangle in the painting. A triangle represents the Doctrine of the Trinity.

Earth and Sky

Darkness – depicted in the night sky. Darkness symbolizes spiritual darkness.

East – the home and all of the light in the painting is positioned to the east. The east is the direction in which the sunrise appears and is symbolic of the Lord, God.

Gold – the mirror inside the home is made of gold. Gold is a precious metal and is used as the symbol of pure light.

Light – radiates from the inside of the house out onto the porch. More importantly, candlelight is symbolic of Christ.



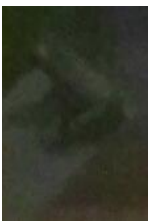
West – the night sky and the origin of all the darkness in the painting are positioned to the west. The west signifies the seat of darkness and the abode of demons.

Animals, Birds and Insects



Blackbird – blackbirds are on the wires outside the porch. The blackbirds are a symbol of the darkness of sin and the alluring temptations of the flesh.

Falcon – seen flying through the sky. The falcon symbolizes evil thought or action.



Frog – there is a frog on the steps of the porch. The frog represents worldly things.

Dog – a dog is right inside the door of the house, next to the mother. The dog is a symbol of faithfulness and watchfulness.

Rabbit – under the table on the porch. The rabbit is a symbol of men who put the hope of their salvation in Christ and His Passion.



Fish – seen swimming in the fish bowl on the table on the porch. The fish is a symbol of Christianity.

Dove – a dove is mother. The Holy spirit, purity



on the wall above the dove is a symbol of the and peace.

Flowers, Trees, and Plants

Carnation – inside the window. Red carnations are a symbol of pure love.

Dandelions – there is a pot of dandelions on the table on the porch. Dandelions are a symbol of the Passion.

Fruit – a bowl of fruit inside the window. Fruit is used to suggest the twelve fruits of the Spirit.





Cypress trees – out in the yard. The cypress tree is associated with death.

Roses – sitting on the porch under the cross. The roses symbolize sacrificial love.

Vines – creeping in from the outside of the house. Vines symbolize the relationship between God and Christians through Jesus.