

The First Epistle of John

(Week 28 – 1John 3:2-3)

- I. Review: The power of love!
 - A. The power of the Father's love!
 - 1. His love was given to us – we don't deserve it!
 - 2. His love has made us His children!
 - 3. His love has also made us different from the world!
- II. Purifying Hope
 - A. According to a popular religious magazine, "Christianity Today," April 2005 edition...
 - 1. Of those surveyed who professed to be "born again"...
 - a. 90% get divorced after claiming to have received Christ as Lord
 - b. The youth are about 10% less sexual immoral than the youth of the world.
 - c. About a third said that premarital sex is OK.
 - d. About 15% polled said adultery is OK.
 - e. Average contribution is about two-fifths of a tithe (10% of income)
 - 2. **Optional Question: What are some of the causes that create the above situation?**
 - a. The wrong plan of salvation was taught (false conversion)
 - b. Lack of bible study and prayer (too busy for God)
 - c. Lack of discipleship (conforming to the world)
 - d. Poor spiritual examples (duplicity)
 - e. Complacency (lack of spiritual fervor)
 - B. A personal observation is this...
 - 1. Many who profess to be 'born again' seem deeply interested in biblical prophecy yet ignore the call to holiness
 - 2. In fact, many label those who teach on holiness as Pharisees, legalists or teachers of a "works-based" gospel.
 - 3. However, the apostle John tells us that those who are truly born again, if they truly understands biblical prophecy, especially the prophecy of Christ's second return, they will purify themselves from sin (1John 3:2-3)
 - C. 1John 3:2 (ESV), "*Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is!*"
 - 1. In verse 1, John tells us that we are children of God.
 - 2. He repeats the same point in verse 2 saying, "*Beloved, we are God's children now.*"
 - a. **Question: Why did he repeat this truth again in verse 2?**
 - i. It is said that repetition equals retention!
 - 1. There is a rule of thumb that says:
 - Tell them what you are going to say
 - Tell them
 - Tell them what you just told them
 - 2. Doing this will help your audience to remember important points
 - ii. John wants us to engrave this point into our minds so that it can dominate every aspect of our lives!

- b. Godly behavior rests on understanding our current position: we are children of God!
 - i. Allowing this truth to shape your identity will cause the following to happen:
 - 1. Scenario 1:
 - You are tempted to engage in some sin or to join the world in some degrading form of entertainment.
 - But you say to yourself: “I can’t do that because I’m a child of God and it would disgrace the name of my heavenly Father.”
 - 2. Scenario 2:
 - You’re reading the Bible and it convicts you that some of your behavior is not godly.
 - a. It may be lustful thoughts or a grumbling, ungrateful attitude or words that put down others.
 - b. Or perhaps you frequently bend the truth to cover up your own misdeeds.
 - But when Scripture confronts you, you say to yourself: “I’m a child of God. I need to stop those ungodly actions!”
 - ii. Your new identity – being a child of God -- motivates you to grow in holiness!
3. Our future hope is that when Jesus comes, we shall be like Him!
 - a. 1John 3:2b...*“and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is!”*
 - i. Notice three things:
 - 1. Our future state is not revealed or known
 - *“we shall be like Him”* denotes that right now, we are not like Him
 - a. Note: We will not be a deity!
 - b. John does not say we shall BE Him, but LIKE Him, that is, in bodily form, with no sin! (cf. Phil. 3:20-21)
 - Right now, we are not in a glorified, perfect state, therefore, we will be struggling against sin
 - However, while in this present state, we who hope for in Him continually and habitually grow in purity as John states in verse 3...
 - a. 1John 3:3 (ESV), *“And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.”*
 - i. The phrase *“purifies himself”* is in the *present active indicative*, which denotes a continuous, habitual action

- Like a seed that is buried in the earth and goes from seedling to a mature tree, we, in this present state, who are hidden in Christ, are becoming more and more like Jesus!
 - a. Paul puts it this way:
 - i. *“For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (4)When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory” (Col. 3:3-4 ESV)*
- 2. When Christ appears, we shall be transformed completely into His image (cf. Romans 8:29).
 - Philippians 3:20-21 gives us this encouragement as children of God...
 - a. *“But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, (21) who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.”*
 - Since we are in our earthly bodies, we have to do battle against sin until we die or until Jesus returns.
 - But when He returns, we will instantly receive our new bodies (1Cor 15:50-53).
 - Then we shall be like Him!
- 3. Our transformation is certain and instantaneous!
 - John says *“but we know that when he appears we shall be like him”*
 - a. Biblical hope is not a “good guess” that this will happen! It WILL happen!

III. Conclusion

- A. If you have time left, ask the class for comments or ask the following question:
 “What has the Lord personally taught you in this lesson?”