

Series: The Confident, Loving Church – week 12

CDOBC – beginning on 2/14/10

Title: **“Our Eternal Hope”**

1 John 2:28-3:3 ~ May 30, 2010

OBJECTIVE: To encourage righteous living – and to celebrate our adoption into God’s family.

Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- Women of Faith Conf. – tickets available in courtyard
- “Serve” page on website
- Missions – Youth “Rent-A-Kid” - \$ needed by the end of May for Latvia
- VBS Registration – visit table in courtyard

Opening Prayer

Open your Bibles to 1 John 2:28

As John continues in this letter to the churches throughout Asia Minor, he now begins a new train of thought that looks forward to Christ’s return and celebrates our adoption by faith into the family of God.

Read 1 John 2:28-29

Remain in Him as we await His return. vs. 28-29

28 - And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.

29 - If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

John once again uses the term of endearment – “dear children” – which reflects the heart of the pastor who truly cares for his flock.

He ties the previous thoughts (vs. 24-27) of ‘*remaining in Christ*’ with his current train of thought here – but applies this command to “remain” with the anticipation of Jesus’ return.

Illus. Have you ever been concerned about what someone would think when they returned? Class reunions?

I can remember when I was growing up, and my parents were gone - and I was doing something they would disapprove of, I would do my best to make sure that when they returned, I was acting in a way that would please them.

I usually knew the time my mom or dad would get home, so this was not an impossible task. When this occurred, I was certainly not acting in obedience – and if they ever came home before I could get the house back to ‘*normal*’, I would truly disappoint them and bring upon myself ‘negative experiences’.

As believers in Christ – we are also children of God. These are actually synonymous terms – but they imply different things to us. As a child of God, I realize that I need to obey my Heavenly Father – that I need to live in a way that pleases Him. I do this not to earn His paternity – but to earn His approval of my actions – and to have a life of fulfillment and freedom that He promises those who obey Him.

At this present time, our Savior is not here – He has gone away – but He is coming back...He will return. But, unlike my earthly parents when I knew when they would return, I don’t know when Christ will return. Scripture tells us His return will be “...like a thief in the night” (Matt. 24:44), “...in the twinkling of an eye” (1 Cor. 15:51). Because of the immanence and the unknown time of His appearing, I need to be faithful,

obedient to Him each day so when He does appear, I will be found faithful.

John is clearly speaking to Christians here, as he not only calls them his “dear children”, but also that they should “continue in Him”. We can also surmise that the command here to “continue in Him” means that it is possible not to continue in Him – to act in a way that is contrary to the Christian life.

I see this “appearing” (vs. 28) as the Rapture – which also means that the confidence or shame is what will be experienced by believers at the Bema Seat judgment in:

1 Cor. 3:10-15

“But each one should be careful how he builds. ¹¹ For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, ¹³ his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. ¹⁴ If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. ¹⁵ If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.”

For those who are faithful and have “walked in the light” (as John would state it), then they will be confident at the appearance of Christ and they will receive great rewards for their faithfulness and obedience. However, those who are not faithful when Christ returns and would be found “walking in the darkness”, their life’s work will be revealed to be wasted efforts – and they will be burned away (1 Cor. 3:15). They will enter Heaven under the burden of shame and great loss. Most of what they had in this life will be lost – and they will regret their lack of obedience and righteousness. Remember – what I’m describing is not the eternal state – but as Randy

Alcorn labels it, “the Intermediate Heaven” (Heaven, by Randy Alcorn).

Remember what John is dealing with as he writes these instructions to these struggling churches. Why were they struggling? Because they had been misled by false teachers – those who John calls Anti-Christ – and they taught and practiced a lifestyle of pursuing every fleshly desire. In other words, they taught that there was no such thing as sin – and the person who professed Christ could live any way they pleased. They didn’t believe that one’s behavior had any bearing or connection with one’s faith – so there were many believers who had followed this teaching – and as a result they were very confused about life and very uncertain about their faith.

After John speaks of the imminent appearance of Jesus, he then goes on to speak of the righteousness of Jesus. We see here the calling of every believer – to become more like Christ...this is the goal of the Christian life – to be more Christ-like – which means, to be more righteous.

John is not saying that a person who has not faith – but is morally upright is a child of God. The righteousness John is referring to is the same kind of righteousness Jesus talked about (Matt. 5-7). It’s a righteousness that is more than outward actions – it’s more than simply conforming to an external standard or a list of do’s and don’ts. At it’s root – it’s an attitude of the heart. As Jesus taught, the hatred in our heart is no different than the act of murder – both are worthy of condemnation.

The righteousness here speaks not of cause but effect. What I mean is that the righteousness in our life is because we have been born of Christ – it doesn’t allow us to be born again – it’s not how we prove ourselves worthy of salvation. No

matter how righteous you are, your righteousness will never be free from sin – which means your best righteousness will never meet the standard God requires – which brings us back to the wonder and amazement of how God has given us His grace and love – to make us His children!

Read 3:1-3

3:1 - 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.

2 - 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.

3 - Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

The amazing love and family of God. *vs. 1*

3:1 - 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.

John breaks out in a paragraph of praise. The idea that we are the unworthy of God's love – yet He so abundantly or “lavishly”. Lit., it has the idea of “what manner of love” KJV, “what kind of love is this?” – or “from what country is this love from?” – meaning, this love is found nowhere in the known world...what country is it from? It's so unbelievable and completely foreign to everything humanity knows! The love of God is not abstract – it's not limited to a feeling or to words – but it changes our entire existence – and brings us into the family of God!

“...that we should be called children of God!”

He then repeats it with emphasis – just in case his readers were in doubt that this applied to them...

“And that is what we are!”

One who is unfamiliar with the teaching of Christ might think that if we are children of God, that the world would be

very interested in this – that they would be eager to find out more – but the opposite is true. Jesus taught:
"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.

"If I had not done among them what no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen these miracles, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: 'They hated me without reason.' John 15:18-19, 24-25

In the prologue to John's gospel, he wrote of the world's relationship with Jesus:

"He (*Jesus*) was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him." John 1:10

The wonder of our future completion vs. 2

2 - 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.

What an interesting detail that John knows that we as believers – as children of God will be perfected or completed in holiness – but what that will look like or feel like he doesn't know! The Bible is such a transparent book! I see this kind of statement as another proof that this was not written by a mere human author, but John wrote as he was led by the Holy Spirit – so what he wrote was not an invention of his own mind, philosophy or imagination – but he wrote down the words of God.

John writes here of the mystery of our resurrected and glorified bodies. Our bodies will be transformed – it seems at the very sight of Christ! His appearance seems to be what then caused our transformation – and our ability to see Him as He is! As the Apostle Paul writes:

“...we will all be changed--in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.”

1 Cor. 15:51-53

“...the Lord Jesus Christ...will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.”

Philippians 3:20-21

Our transformed and glorified bodies will make it possible to be in the presence of Christ, to worship Him, to know Him fully, and to fellowship with our siblings in perfect unity.

So John balances out the teaching here regarding the appearance of Christ. In verse 28-29, he focused on the high calling to obedience – to righteousness – and that we need to be found faithful / remaining in Him so we will be confident and unashamed upon His return.

Here, in vs. 2, John is focusing our thoughts on the glorification of every believer that will occur upon His return.

The hope of Christ leads to holiness. vs. 3

3 - Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

“Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope; because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. I say to myself, “The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for Him.” (Lamentations 3:21-24)

Application

Pursue righteousness and look forward to Christ’s appearing.

Be amazed at God’s love and our future transformation.

Gettysburg Address – President Abraham Lincoln

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate -- we can not consecrate -- we can not hallow -- this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us -- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion -- that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain -- that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom -- and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.