

The Blessings of Abiding In Jesus

1 John 2:28-3:3

Introduction: 1) In recent days we have rediscovered one of my favorite gospel hymns. The words were written by a well known Presbyterian evangelist of the late 19th century named John Wilber Chapman (1859-1918). The song is entitled “One Day.” Casting Crowns has popularized it once again with the title “Glorious Day.” Telling the wonderful drama of redemption, verse 5 brings the story to its climatic conclusion with these words concerning King Jesus:

“One day the trumpet will sound for His coming,
 One day the skies with His glory will shine,
 Wonderful day, my Beloved One bringing!
 My Savior, Jesus is mine!”

Then the refrain:

“Living He loved me; Dying He saved me!
 Buried, He carried my sins far away;
 Rising He justified! Freely forever!
 One Day He’s coming!
 Oh glorious Day!”

2) That glorious day is indeed coming and the apostle John sees it as an awesome hope for the future and a powerful motivation for the present. Because I am going to be like Him in the future and for all eternity, such a promise has a wonderful transforming power in the present. My future impacts my life today!

3) In these verses God’s Word tells us we are destined to look like, think like, talk like, act like and be like Jesus (3:2). As God’s son or daughter through the new

birth (2:29-3:2), we have a future hope that, in one sense, cannot be put into words.

John is so honest when he writes, “what we will be has not yet appeared” (3:2).

However, what we do know, as we abide in Jesus, is more than enough!

4) John, as a loving spiritual father, has given his “little children” (2:1, 12, 18, 28)

a number of words of challenge and encouragement up until this point in his letter:

- Find full joy in fellowship with the Father and the Son. 1:1-4
- Walk in the light of God and stay close to Christ. 1:5-2:2
- Obey the Lord’s commandments and love others. 2:3-11
- Know your spiritual status and don’t be seduced by the world. 2:12-17
- Beware of the enemies of the faith who deny Jesus is the Christ. 2:18-27

Now he adds: abide in Christ and pursue a righteous life as you live in the hope of His coming (2:28-3:3).

In other words what I am going to be then will transform the way I live today! In fact, such a spiritual posture will result in 4 wonderful blessings, blessings that are promised to everyone who keeps on abiding in Christ.

I. You will be confident at His coming 2:28

- 1) John again addresses his readers with the tender term “little children.” And, he continues the theme of “abiding in him”, in Christ, which was a key concern in 2:18-27 and an essential protection against false teaching. The word “abide” is a present imperative. It is a word of command and calls for

consistent action. Remain in union and communion with Christ. Soak in the Savior and the gospel message which you heard at the beginning of your Christian experience (v. 24).

- 2) I believe both salvation and sanctification are on John's radar screen as he encourages us to just stay with Jesus. And, abiding brings with it a wonderful companion: assurance; confidence at the 2nd coming of the Lord Jesus. Here is John's point.
- 3) Christ is coming again. He will appear on this earth again officially and in full public display as King of kings and Lord over all lords. So "at His coming" (Gr. *parousia*), will you "have confidence", a word meaning all or free speech, or "will you shrink from Him in shame?" Will you run toward Him as a child runs to a loving father or will draw back and attempt to hide from His glorious, regal coming?
- 4) Is it possible to be saved and yet ashamed when you stand before Jesus? I think the answer has to be yes. Paul seems to address the possibility in 1 Cor. 3:15 when, at the Judgment Seat of Christ, he says some will have their works burned up because their foundation was "wood, hay and straw" (v. 12). Yes, "he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire."

- 5) But there is another question begging to be asked: could John be addressing those who “shrink from him in shame at his coming” because they are lost? This may be what John is really saying. After all, in Mark 8:38 Jesus said, “For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” And in Revelation 6:15-16 we read these terrifying words, “Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.””
- 6) Reflect on your reaction to seeing Jesus at His 2nd coming. It can be very revealing in terms of your spiritual status and health. This much I do know: He wants you to have the confidence of a child jumping into the arms of a loving daddy. He doesn't want you running to a closet or cave hiding in shame.

II. You will be certain you are His child

2:9-3:1

- 1) In Rev. 19:11-21 you have a full and majestic description of Christ's 2nd coming. In verse 11 it says, “in righteousness he judges and makes war.” The coming King is also a righteous King. We already saw this in 2:1. And

because He is righteous one thing is certain: “everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.” (v. 29).

2) John uses what I call a root/fruit argument in v. 29, noting what we see before addressing why we see it. Let me develop what he is teaching us with several stand alone but complementary statements.

- The new birth preceeds new behavior.
- Being born of God has definite and abiding results (“Has been born” is a perfect tense verb!).
- Children of God will grow to look like God their Father.
- Our practice is proof of our parentage.
- The righteous Savior produces righteous saints.

3) John carries this argument an additional step in 3:1 and what a step it is: The love of God the Father is the source of our privilege to be His children! “See”, behold, take note, look up and listen John says as he begins v. 1. Can you believe “the kind of love the Father has given to us.” What John says could be paraphrased like this: The love of the Father is out of this world and it is a love that will never be taken away. It is an amazing love that awes and astonishes and it has given for us to enjoy forever and ever and ever. Hebrews 13:5 is really true, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

- 4) This Father's love is a forever love and its results are 2-fold: we are now called the children of God and this is who we are!
- Called His children → I bear His name.
- Are His children → I have His nature.
- Once I was a slave to sin but now I am a child of God. What an incredible truth to grasp and meditate on. What a beautiful balance this brings to my self awareness. There is no place for either an inferiority or superiority complex. I am who I am by gracious adoption and regeneration. That fosters humility. I am who I am as God's child. That fosters security and certainty.
- 5) Let me give just one example of how this should impact a couple of important relationships. One is dating and the other is marriage. When I was dating Charlotte I was dating God's daughter. Whatever her earthly father thought of my treatment of her pales in comparison to what her heavenly Father thought! Today, I am married to God's daughter. He remains vitally interested in how I take care of his little girl!
- 6) In almost a passing comment John says this world doesn't understand this incredible relationship. That should not really surprise us. Afterall, "it did not know Him." Therefore it will not know, understand, appreciate those who know Him and are increasingly becoming like Him. Jesus told us to expect all of this when He said in John 15:18-19, "If the world hates you,

know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”

The world did not really understand Him 2000 years ago. Don't be surprised that the world does not really understand us today. It should be expected.

III. You will be conformed to Christ 3:2

- 1) Our salvation through the gospel of Jesus Christ is more than a rescue. It is a complete and total renovation, better transformation, that transcends what any human words can describe. This becomes evident in what we can know and what we cannot know in verse 2.
- 2) First, we can know we are loved (“Beloved”, “Dear Friends”, *NIV; HCSB*) and that we are God's sons and daughters right now, this very moment. I am in the fullest sense the one God created me to be and the one He redeemed me to be through the new birth (cf. 2:29; 3:9-10).
- 3) Second, what we will ultimately be is not completely known to us at the present time. There is a tension in our Christian experience that theologians often refer to as the “now/not yet” of Christian salvation. We are now, today, children of God. However, we do not yet realize or experience all that salvation results in. We are still in process, a work under construction, a “divine work” of art that is not yet complete. 1 Cor. 2:9-10 puts it like this,

“no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him.” 1 Cor. 13:12 adds, “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face.”

- 4) That leads to a 3rd observation, and one of the most incredible truths in all of the Bible. “We can know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we will see Him as He is!” PTL! John’s apostolic ignorance now gives way to theological amazement. We shall be like Him! As Jonathan Edwards said, “Grace is but glory begun, and glory is but grace perfected.” The perfection of God’s grace will be realized in our full, complete, total, and permanent glorification. Psalm 17:15 says it so beautifully, “As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with your likeness.” Romans 8:29 teaches us that we are being conformed to the image of Jesus and 1 John 3:2 tells us it will reach that intended goal when we see Him as He is, the resurrected and glorified King of glory. Missionary W. Alexander tells the story that when native converts came to this phrase as they were translating the Bible into their language, they laid down their pens and exclaimed “No! It is too much; let us write, ‘We shall kiss His feet.’” (Vaughn, *1, 2, 3 John*, p. 75).

5) We don't know all that being made like Jesus means. What we do know is it will be better than we could ever hope or imagine, and it will be the occasion for an eternal lifetime of praise, worship and adoration.

IV. You will be consistent in your consecration 3:3

- 1) 1 John 3:2 is the very definition of Christian hope. 1 John 3:3 is the natural response to that hope. All, everyone of us, who has this hope in us, the hope of someday being like Jesus, cannot help but respond in a very specific manner. In fact we are delighted to do so.
- 2) The hope, the confident certainty that God is going to conform me to the exact image of his Son, motivates me to continually pursue a life of purity and holiness just like Jesus is pure and holy. Eugene Peterson in *The Message* says it like this, "All of us who look forward to his coming stay ready, with the glistening purity of Jesus' life as a model for our own."
- 3) The word "pure" means free from contamination. The word was used of ceremonial cleansings (John 11:55), cleansing of the heart (James 4:8) and even cleansing of the soul (1 Peter 1:22). Here it is used of one's total life. My hope for the future enables me to pursue holiness in the present. Being heavenly minded actually makes me fit for earthly good. Paul said the same thing in Colossians 3:1-4 where he writes, "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at

the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”

- 4) Pastor Sam Storms puts it just right in theological categories: “Just as the vision of Christ in the future will sanctify us wholly, the vision of Christ in the present (in Scripture) sanctifies us progressively. It is our experience of Christ that sanctifies” (11-3-06). Isn’t it great to know, as Paul wrote in Phil 1:6, “he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”

Conclusion: I began our study with a song. Let me close with one too. It was written by Frances (Fanny) Jane Crosby (1820-1915). She was an American rescue mission worker and song writer who penned more than 8,000 hymns. And, she was blind. That is why one of her most popular songs is all the more remarkable. Its title: “Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine.” In the context of 1 John 2:28-3:3, stanzas 1 and 3 really stand out.

“Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine”

1) Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
 Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
 Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
 Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

3) Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Savior am happy and blest:
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

These are just some of the blessings of abiding in Christ. I guess it's pretty simple
isn't it:

Why would you want to abide anywhere else but in Jesus?!