

Confident in Our Hope

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[0:00] We last looked at our 1 John study seven weeks ago, so we're going to start out with a little! bit of review tonight just to bring everybody up to speed with where we left off. And when we started! the book of 1 John, we talked about John's purposes for writing it. And the primary purpose is in 1 John 5.13, at the end of the book actually. And it says, these things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God. And then another purpose is in 1 John 1.4, so he gives purposes in both the beginning and the end. And that purpose says, in these verses we write to you that your joy may be full. So John wants us to know that we have eternal life, and he wants us to have full joy. In the early sections of 1 John follow a similar pattern. John gives challenges or warnings, and then he then follows those up with reassurance. So he began the book with a series of tests to show whether his readers are true believers. And then he followed those tests with reassuring words. So look at 1 John 2.12 real quick. If you don't want to turn there, I'll just go ahead and read it to you.

1 John 2.12 says, I write to you little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his namesake. So the first and most fundamental word of encouragement that John can give to all members of the church is that in the past they were forgiven of their sins, and that this forgiveness continues on into the present day and it remains effective in their lives today. So they've come to know God as their heavenly father, and as a result, they're part of God's family. After that, he gave two warnings again, and we looked at those two warnings during our last two studies of 1 John. The first warning was a warning about dangerous love, love. And that dangerous love is something that we should avoid. 1 John 2.15-17 said this, said, Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it, is that he who does the will of God abides forever. When John talks about world, he's referring to the spiritual system of evil dominated by Satan and all that is in opposition to God, his word, and his people. It's important for us to remember that. So another way to look at that is world in this context is the morally evil system opposed to all God is and all that God holds dear. So world is the satanic system opposing Christ's kingdom on the earth. What John is telling us in 1 John 2.15-17 is that we are to love the people of the world, but we don't love the sinful attitudes and values that they may embrace. But John did more than just tell us what to avoid. He told us why we should avoid those things. And we saw that in verse 17 where he said, And the world is passing away, and the lust of it, but he who does the will of God abides forever. When you look at it just in our current context, the things of the world seem to be of great value, but they're worthless when we compare them to the eternal blessings that come from doing the will of God. Remember that Jesus in his death and resurrection has defeated the world that's opposed to God, and he's secured eternal life for all of us who believe. And then John's second warning was a warning about dangerous people.

And we saw that in 1 John 2.18-27. So we'll just do some review of those verses too to set up tonight. In 1 John 2.18-19, John said, Little children, it is the last hour. And as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.

They went out from us, but they were not of us. For if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

So John says we know it's the last hour because many antichrists with a lowercase a have already come. And we also know it's the last hour because the antichrist with a capital a is coming.

[4:37] So the mini antichrists with the lowercase a are the false teachers that John opposed in this letter. And they're reminiscent of the false Christ that Jesus told the disciples about. They're also forerunners of the future antichrist with an uppercase A, who's also known as the beast in the book of Revelation. That antichrist will exalt himself above God. And so as we're waiting for the return of Jesus Christ, there will be a growing prevalence of counterfeits. So with the number of false teachers continuing to rise, John knew that his original readers and we ourselves would need to know how to recognize them. And in 1 John 2:19, he highlighted one of the characteristics of the antichrist, and that is that they depart from the faith. So that's where he said they went out from us, but they were not of us. For if they had been of us, they would have continued with us.

But they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us. So when he says that the false teachers were not of us, he means that they did not agree with the teaching of the apostles. So these antichrists had departed from the apostles' teaching and the church, and their attitudes and actions weren't consistent with what the apostles taught.

If they had been in harmony with the apostles, they would have remained in fellowship with them. So the second characteristic then of the false teachers is that they deny that Jesus is the Messiah. 1 John 2:22 and 23 are where we saw that. John said, Who is a liar, but who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.

Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either. He who acknowledges the Son has the Father also. When we looked at those verses in detail, we talked about how the New King James Version, which I use there, misses something in the translation. Because the New King James starts verse 22 with, Who is a liar? It really should be translated, Who is the liar? Those of you using the English Standard Version, the New American Standard Version, or even the New International Version, see that. They actually have the liar there. The difference may sound trivial at first, but it really is significant because John likely is identifying specific people here. Even though he didn't put their names in the letter, his original readers would have known who he was talking about.

So for John, the height of heresy then is to deny that Jesus is the Messiah. And to reduce Jesus to the stature of a mere man, or to allow no more than a temporary indwelling of some divine power in him, is to strike at the root of Christianity. When you think about it, we see that today because modern thinkers may have more refined ways of stating similar denials about Christ, but they're no more immune to John's perception that they take the heart out of Christianity when they do that.

[7:29] Then a third characteristic of the false teachers was in verse 26. And he said, These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you.

So the false teachers sought to undermine the reader's conviction that Jesus is the Christ and that they had eternal life through him. John's insistence that his readers genuinely know God and know his truth was part of his strategy then for fortifying the believers against the Antichrist. Then following each characteristic of the false teachers, John gave a characteristic of true believers. So if you look at verses 2, 20, and 21, we see that instead of departing from the faith, true believers show discernment instead.

He says, But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Then in verses 24 and 25, John reminded us that true believers show devotion. He said, Therefore, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning.

If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that he has promised us eternal life. Verse 27 then had the final contrast, and that's where we left off last time.

[8:53] John told us there that true believers rely on sound doctrine. He said, But the anointing which you have received from him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you.

But as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it is taught you, you will abide in him. So the ministry of the Spirit then worked through the apostles to bring the message of salvation that is found in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

So here was the reliable truth that they were taught. An additional revelation was unnecessary. In fact, John wanted to remind them that additional revelation could be deadly because it wouldn't have come from God.

As we look at new material tonight, we're going to look at 1 John 2:28-3. And John builds on the anointing mentioned in verse 27.

He shows us why believers can be confident in our hope. So he's just reaffirmed his readers' commitment to the true Son of God and not the Antichrist.

[9 : 59] Now he's going to urge them to strive for the ethical integrity and sense of urgency that is appropriate for believers. So this section deals with the purifying hope of every Christian, and that's the return of Christ.

John uses this hope to reiterate and elaborate on the moral tests that we saw earlier, and those of course are the tests of love and the tests of obedience that a true Christian will demonstrate.

So the hope of Christ's return then should have a sanctifying effect on moral behavior, because in anticipation of Christ's return and reward, a genuine Christian will walk in holiness of life.

So let's read 2.28-3.3, and then we'll get into the verses in more detail. And as we read the verses, keep in mind that all the masculine pronouns in 1 John 2.28 and 2.29 refer to Christ.

So John says there, And now, So we'll look at these verses in three sections tonight.

[11 : 43] And in verses 28 and 29, John gives us an exhortation to have confidence. So if you're filling out your handout, an exhortation to have confidence is the first section there.

So listen to 28 and 29 again. John says, Once again there we see one of John's favorite words, and that's the Greek verb that's translated abide.

He's already used that ten times in verses 6 through 27 of this chapter. And whenever John refers to abiding, he's referring to persevering in the faith of salvation, which is evidence of being a true believer.

So continual active abiding must be pursued by every genuine believer. Salvation is eternal because of the Lord's side. We know that he holds us.

And it's also eternal because of our side, because we persevere in our faith and obedience. So it's like salvation in which God sovereignly saves, but it's not apart from the personal faith of the person that he saves.

[13 : 03] So in the case of sanctification then, God conforms us to his son, but not apart from obedience on our part. So you see both the believer's action and God's action in that.

Why does John want believers to abide in Christ? What does he say there? He says we should abide in him so that we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

So we're to remain in fellowship with Christ and abide in Christ so that we as Christians will not be ashamed of his coming. And we rarely think about that whenever we think about the coming of Jesus.

However, we must remember that at the judgment seat of Christ, a Christian's works are evaluated and eternal rewards are going to be handed out based upon that. Paul wrote about the judgment seat of Christ in 2 Corinthians 5, 9, and 10.

So just listen to 2 Corinthians 5, 9, and 10. He said, And that shame should have been experienced will be relatively short-lived.

[14 : 57] Because Revelation 21, 4 promises that God will wipe away every tear as the things of this world pass away forever. So even though the shame is not a perpetual thing, it's still something that we should strive to avoid.

So let's go back to our text in 1 John and look at 2, 29 again. And that verse says, If you know him, you know that he is righteous. You know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of him. So the hope of Christ's return not only sustains faith, but makes righteousness a habit. The term for born there is the same verb used in John 3, 7, where Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again.

So those truly born again as God's children have their Heavenly Father's righteous nature. And as a result, they will display characteristics of God's righteousness. So John looks from effect, which is the righteous behavior, to the cause, which is being truly born again, to affirm that righteous living is the proof of being born again.

Now put this quote in your handout. As we start chapter 3 now, John moves from the exhortation to have confidence to the explanation for that confidence.

[16 : 31] So now we'll look at the explanation for that confidence. And that's the second major thing we want to note tonight. Look at verses 3, 1, and 2 again.

John says, We're going to spend quite a bit of time just looking at the first sentence of verse 1.

And that's where John says, Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God. When John says, Behold, that imperative calls for direct attention

and reflection upon the amazing love that God has given to his children.

And the adjective translated, what manner there, occurs only seven times in the New Testament. And it always implies astonishment. And admiration is usually conveyed there as well.

So when John talks about what manner, keep in mind that he's truly astonished. Astonished, and he admires the love that God has for us as his children.

[18:00] Being a child of God stirs within John a sense of wonder, awe, and amazement. And the expression carries both a qualitative and a quantitative force. In other words, you can look at it as what glorious, measureless love.

And originally, the adjective meant, Of what country? John Stott captured this sense when he wrote, The Father's love is so unearthly, so foreign to this world, That John wonders from what country it may come.

God's love is foreign to humankind, In that we cannot understand the magnitude of such love. It astonishes, amazes, and creates wonder within those who properly reflect on it.

So just think about that for a minute. It astonishes, amazes, and creates wonder within those who properly reflect on it. So this love originating with God always seeks the true welfare of those being loved.

It's amazing indeed when we remember the personal destitution of those he loved, including us.

God's love is a love that works visible, transforming results in the life of his recipients.

[19:11] When we think about this, we always need to remember this too. God loves the sinner, not because he's drawn to him by the sinner's loveliness, But because in spite of the man's unloveliness, God sets his mind and will on seeking the man's highest good.

That's what's amazing about God's love. It's a divine initiated love that is active, Because it seeks to bring sinners into the family of God. And look at the verb again in that first sentence of verse 3.

The New King James translates it as, Has bestowed. You may also see it translated as, Has lavished. And the perfect tense verb is significant here, And it further accentuates the permanent results of this divine love.

Because this love is a gift from God the Father that can't be earned or bought. It's given freely, and it can't be withdrawn. God has not just shown his love to humans, But he's given it to them in such a way that it becomes part of them.

So he lavishes or imparts permanent and abiding love to his children. I put that quote in your handout because I wanted to make sure everybody had a chance to take that quote with them tonight.

[20:21] We hear those words, and we say we believe them, But do we really understand their significance? Listen again to the explanation of the verb, And let it really sink in.

It says, English translations actually miss something that the original Greek highlights.

When John wrote the original words, They could be translated like this. It would be, See what manner of love he has given to us, The Father. He sets the Father out of the end, To put more emphasis on it.

Because John's positioning of the Father, At the end of the clause, Draws attention to the divine initiative, Of this act. So the fact that the Father would love us, Astonishes the Apostle.

And John's use of the Father, Instead of God there, Highlights the family relationship, That's established, By the Father's love. So God's role as the Heavenly Father, Illustrates, And begins to explain, Why he loves the unworthy.

[21:53] God's love provides the way for us, To be called children of God. God's love transforms those, Who exercise saving faith, Into God's children. They are now called, Or bear the name, Children of God.

Furthermore, Those who believe, Take on more than a mere title, They actually do become, God's children. And the words express a fact, Or a reality of a relationship. We are members, Of a family. We're not just members of a family, We're members of God's family. So we'll move to the second sentence, Of verse one now. And after establishing, That we are children of God, John says, Therefore the world does not know us, Because it did not know him.

And to know, In this context, Has the sense of accept. So you can almost read that, As the world does not accept us, Because the world did not accept him.

So there's built in friction, Between those who know and serve Christ, And those who do not. So should that friction, Between believers and unbelievers, Discourage us?

[23:03] It really shouldn't discourage us, Because John tells us, That friction is going to be there, And we know that we're children of God already. So the fact that we see that friction, Is even more evidence, Than what John says, Is correct.

Because the real aliens in this world, Are Christians. Having been born again, And given a new nature of heavenly origin, Christians display a nature and lifestyle, Like their savior, And heavenly father.

And that's a nature that's totally foreign, Or other worldly, To the unsaved. So the Lord Jesus was unearthly in origin, And so were those who were born again.

In light of the world's natural depravity, And opposition to God, The child of God should anticipate, Rejection and hatred. That doesn't mean we should go around, Trying to create the friction, We just shouldn't be surprised, When that friction is there.

Because such rejection by the world, Attests to the reality, That the rejected, Are indeed children of God. And if you'll remember, Jesus warned his disciples, And of course John was one of those, Of the natural animosity, That the worldly would have, To Jesus' followers.

[24:12] Listen to Jesus' words, In John 15, 18 through 21. Again, this is John 15, 18 through 21, And Jesus is speaking here. He said, If the world hates you, You know that it hated me, Before it hated you.

If you were of the world, The world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, But I chose you out of the world, Therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, A servant is not greater than his master.

If they persecuted me, They will also persecute you. If they kept my word, They will keep yours also. But all these things, They will do to you, For my namesake, Because they do not know him, Who sent me.

And when Jesus continued his warning, Into John chapter 16, Just listen to John 16, 1 through 4a, Jesus said, These things I have spoken to you, That you should not be made to stumble.

They will put you out of the synagogue. Yes, the time is coming, That whoever kills you, Will think that he offers God a service. And these things, They will do to you, Because they have not known the Father, Nor me.

[25:24] But these things I have told you, That when the time comes, You may remember, That I told you of them. Do you think John remembered, What Jesus told him? Based on tonight's text, It's pretty clear, That John remembered what Jesus said.

In tonight's text, John communicates the same word of warning, And also the same encouragement, To his audience. Because to be one of Christ, Is to be treated as Christ was treated, But to be treated in such a manner, Is to have assurance, That we are his children.

So look at 1 John 3, 2 now. John continues to explain, Why we should have confidence, In our hope. He says, Beloved, Now we are children of God, And it has not yet been revealed, What we shall be, But we know that when he is revealed, We shall be like him, For we shall see him, As he is.

The beloved there, Emphasizes, The bonding love, The father has, For his children. And by using the first person, We, John identifies himself, With his readers, As one of the beloved of God.

So John has an intense love, For his readers, Because of their shared love, From the father. And John puts into practice, His own ethical demands, Of love within the brotherhood. John wants to accentuate, The fact that we are children of God, Here and now.

[26:48] And at the same time, The full extent of what we will be, And yet to be revealed. So although our present status, As God's children, Is really wonderful, Our future state will be, Even more extraordinary, Because God has only begun, A work in us.

When John admits, Ignorance of what we shall be, When Jesus appears, His statement, Should cause us to be humble, And cautious, About detailed pronouncements, Of future events, And the nature of our heavenly existence.

Because for whatever reason, God has chosen not to tell us, Many of these things, Either because we were not, To understand, Or because it might distract us, From our responsibilities, As believers.

But John does know something, About what we will be like though, What does he say, We'll be like? He says, We shall be like him, Meaning, Like Christ. So we can make, Some assumptions from that, Without stepping too far afield.

We can assume from that then, That Christians will be morally, Without sin, In eternity. We'll be intellectually, Without falsehood, Or error. We'll physically be, Without weakness, Or imperfections, And we'll be filled, Continually with the Holy Spirit.

[27 : 59] We should always keep in mind though, That life doesn't mean, Identical to, Because believers, Will never be omniscient, Or omnipotent, As Christ is, Because Christ, Is the one that's both man, And God.

So we can never be, Equal to Christ, But we can, And will be similar to him, In holiness, And in our resurrection bodies. So our face to face, Encounter, With the risen Lord, Will complete our, Glorification process, As we're transformed, To be like him.

And on that day, The believers yearning, For inner Christ likeness, Will be fully realized. So that is definitely, Something to look forward to, And something to have, Hope in. So we've seen, The exhortation to have confidence, We've seen the explanation, For that confidence, And the last thing, We'll see tonight, Is the expectation, From that confidence.

So look at, First John 3, 3, For the expectation, From that confidence. In first John 3, 3, John says, And everyone who has this hope, In him, Purifies himself, Just as he is pure.

So living in the reality, Of Christ's return, Makes a difference, In a Christian's behavior, Because Christians, Will be someday like him, The desire should grow, Within us, To become more like him, Now, And become more like him, Every day, That we live on this earth.

[29 : 27] John's not the only, New Testament writer, Who expressed this thought, Listen to how Paul, Put the same thing, In 2 Corinthians 7, 1. 2 Corinthians 7, 1 says, Therefore, Having these promises, Beloved, Let us cleanse ourselves, From all filthiness, Of the flesh and spirit, Perfecting holiness, In the fear of God.

And then James, Said these words, In James 4, 8, He said, Draw near to God, And he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, You sinners, And purify your hearts, You double-minded.

And then Peter, Just assumed, That believers, Will want to purify themselves. Listen to how much, 1 Peter 4, 22, Sounds like something, That John would write.

Peter said this, In 1 Peter 4, 22, He said, Since you have purified your soul, In obeying the truth, Through the spirit, In sincere love of the brethren, Love one another fervently, With a pure heart. We've seen John mention, Love for the brethren, A few times in 1 John, Haven't we? You can tell, They learned from the same teacher, When you look at that, And you can tell, They were inspired, By the same spirit, When they wrote.

[30 : 38] You know, When one biblical author, Tells us to do something, We know that the command, Is important. But when multiple, Biblical authors, Say the same thing, We definitely, Need to take notice of that.

So once again, Everyone who has this hope, In him, Purify themselves, Just as he, Is pure. So let's think, A little bit about, How we should respond, To the passage, That we just studied.

And the passage, Has at least four, Application points for us, And John gave us, The first and foremost point, Last, When he said, Purify ourselves, Just as Christ, Is pure.

And one commentator, Said this about, Why Christians fail, To wholeheartedly, Pursue holiness. He said, Our weak commitment, To absolute holiness, Stems in large measure, From our dim perception, Of who Jesus is, And who we have become, In him.

Slated for perfect holiness, United in spirit, With the creator God, Of the universe, We will no longer, Want to fiddle around, With the mud pies, Of this world. We will prefer, The spotless beauty, Of a banquet table.

[31 : 42] One of our resources, Then, For living a more, Holy lifestyle, Is pondering, And meditating, Upon who Jesus is, Who we have become, In him, And what our life, Is likely to be, When we see him.

And the second thing, We need to, Think about tonight, Is that we should realize, Who Christ is, And what we now are, Because of that. So realize, Who Christ is, And what we now are.

And the first line, Of the quote, We just read, Said, Our weak commitment, To absolute holiness, Stems in large measure, From our dim perception, Of who Jesus is, And who we have become, In him.

We always need to remember, That our hope, Is founded upon Christ. There is nothing, Within the believer, That creates hope, And security for the future. The foundation for hope, Now and forever, Is always Christ alone.

That should help, Keep us humble, As well, When we think about that. Because as you read, These passages, It would be real easy, To think, Wow, Look at what I am, Because I am a child of God, But we always should remember, That we are a child of God, Because of who Christ is, Rather than who we are.

[32 : 58] And tonight's passage, Emphasizes the fact, That believers are children of God, And we know that Jesus, Made our status as God's children, Possible through his incarnation, His perfect life, And his willingness, To pay for our sins.

If you think back, To the opening of John's gospel, Think about what John said, In John chapter 1, Verses 10 through 14, He said, He was in the world, And the world was made through him, And the world did not know him.

He came to his own, And his own did not receive him, But as many as received him, To them he gave the right, To become children of God, To those who believe in his name, Who were born, Not of blood, Nor of the will of flesh, Nor of the will of man, But of God.

And the word became flesh, And dwelt among us, And we beheld his glory, The glory as of the only begotten of the Father, Full of grace and truth. The third thing we need to think about, As we reflect on tonight's passage then, Is that Jesus is coming again.

So we need to remember, That Jesus is coming again. John started this passage by reminding us, That Jesus is coming again. If you look at verse 28, Does John say, If Jesus appeared, In that verse, He actually says, And now little children, Abide in him, That when he appears, We may have confidence, And not be ashamed before him, At his coming.

[34 : 28] So it's a certainty, That Jesus is coming again, And that's why we should remember, That Jesus is coming again. And the last thing, That we need to think about, Is we should spend some time, Meditating on the love, That God has for us as believers.

So meditate, On the love, That God has for us, As believers. And that's why John could say, Behold what manner of love, The Father has bestowed on us, That we should be called, Children of God. Thank you.