

Subject: *Straight Talk about Christian Hope, Part 2*

Scripture: *1 John 2:28-3:3*

Jesus is coming again. The issue is not if He will appear, but when He will appear. We must be ready for His return. The next big event on God's calendar is Christ's return. It is not just a wish, but a guaranteed reality. This is the Christian hope we are living for.

- Our hope is not limited to this life (1 Cor. 15:19)
- Our hope is a living hope (1 Pet. 1:3)
- Our hope is an anchor of the soul (Heb. 6:19)
- Our hope is a blessed hope (Tit. 2:13)
- Our hope is a purifying hope (1 Jn. 3:3)

We have a salvation in which the greatest part of it has not yet been revealed. We already have a redeemed soul. We will have a redeemed body. Our sin has already been forgiven, but then our sin will be eliminated. We won't ever struggle with sin or temptation again. In our Answers Bible study classes for children, youth, and adults, today's lesson focused on the Seven C's of History: creation, corruption, catastrophe, confusion, Christ, cross, and consummation. Christ's return will begin the consummation of all things. But even now His return has a powerful impact of our lives. John reveals at least five ways that Christ's return has an effect on the way we live right now.

1. Our hope is assured by abiding in Christ (2:28)

To abide in Him is to remain in Him. This is a theme all through this letter (2:5, 6, 24, 28; 3:6, 24; 4:13, 15, 16; 5:20). When John speaks of abiding he is talking about persevering or continuing in saving faith, which is always evidence of a true believer. See John 15:1-6. Abiding is a continuing, permanent, ongoing faith. This abiding is not passive, but active. God does His part, but we must do our part. On the Lord's side He holds us and on our side we keep on believing and obeying. Genuine believers keep on believing and waiting for Jesus to come. Paul speaks of believers as those who "love His appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8). When He returns real believers will be ready. What a difference between believers and unbelievers when He comes again. It is the difference between confidence and being ashamed. Confidence is the same word used in *Hebrews 4:16* *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* As we come to Him boldly (freely, confidently) in prayer now, we will come to Him boldly, freely, confidently in person then. To be ashamed means to have shame or disgrace when He comes because you are unprepared. Jesus told parables to make this point. Remember the five foolish virgins who had no oil in the lamps when the call came to meet the bridegroom? Remember the man who was removed from the wedding feast because he was not wearing the proper wedding garment? These are pictures of the shame and disgrace unbelievers will have when Jesus returns. In John 15 the evidence of abiding in Christ is producing spiritual fruit.

2. Our hope is rooted in righteous living (2:29)

See 3:7. "Born" is the same word used in John 3:7, "you must be born again (born from above). We must have a spiritual birth as well as a physical birth. When we are born again (from above) we have His nature. We are "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4). That doesn't mean that Christians are little gods. It means we are new creatures. We are not improved; we are new. We are not made better; we are made new.

Christ is righteous and everyone that does righteousness is born of Him. This is a life of righteousness, a practice of doing what is right. *Micah 6:8* *He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly (what is right), and to*

love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Real believers are known by not so much by what they say, but what they do.

- **Romans 6:17-18**¹⁷ *But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.* ¹⁸ *Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.*

3. Our hope is established in God's special love (3:1)

Like all believers, John was amazed by the fact that we have become God's children. We now enjoy the privilege of being God's own children. This is all because of His great love. The expression "what manner of" used to describe God's love is found only seven times in the New Testament and includes a sense of amazement. It is the word used when Jesus rebuked the wind and the waves and there was a sudden calm. **Matthew 8:27** *But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!*

God knows us and loves us as His children. The world doesn't know us. Jesus was heavenly in origin and so are we. We are born from above. The real aliens in this world are not from outer space, but Christians who are born into God's family. The Bible describes us as strangers and pilgrims. As the sons of God we have a heavenly birth, a heavenly home, and a heavenly mindset. We set our affections on things above.

Much has been said about Prince George of England when he celebrated his first birthday earlier this summer. He was born into the royal family and all the privilege that goes with it, but he doesn't yet realize who he is and what he has. That is just like Christians who don't seem to realize their identity and blessings.

4. Our hope will be fulfilled by being like Christ (3:2)

Every true believer is a child of God the moment He first believes in Christ, but when He returns we will be glorified like Him. There is a tension between two things. We are now God's children, but only then will we be like Him. When Jesus comes two great things will happen: He will be seen as He is in all of His glory and we will be revealed in our glory.

- **NOW – John 1:11-12**¹¹ *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.* ¹² *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*
- **THEN – Romans 8:18-19**¹⁸ *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* ¹⁹ *For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.*
- **Colossians 3:4** *When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*
- **Philippians 3:20-21**²⁰ *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:* ²¹ *Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

5. Our hope is revealed by personal purity (3:3)

The word "purify" means to be spiritually holy, clean. This verse is not given in the form of a wish or a command. It is a statement of fact. The blessed hope of Christ's return causes believers to stay pure. Since we are going to be like Him one day, we have a desire to be like Him now.

Living a pure life, a holy life is the process of sanctification. The idea of purifying ourselves doesn't mean that we can do it on our own. It means that the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit does not happen apart from our obedience and cooperation. In this purifying process God does something and we must do something. God's part is the Holy Spirit working in us through His Word.

- **Philippians 2:12-13** ¹² *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.* ¹³ *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*
- **John 17:17** *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

Our part is cooperating with the Spirit and the Word to make us pure. We can't do it without Him and He won't do it without us.

- **1 Thessalonians 5:21-23** ²¹ *Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.* ²² *Abstain from all appearance of evil.* ²³ *And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Our part is proving (testing) all things and holding to what is good and keeping from every form of evil. His part is sanctifying us completely, our spirit, soul, and body.
- **2 Corinthians 7:1** *Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* Our part is to cleanse ourselves and growing in complete holiness. His part is providing us with the promises that promote holiness.

If we are really serious about Christ's return, if we really do expect Him to come soon, then we will keep our life pure, just as He is pure. If we are abiding in Christ, practicing righteousness, appreciating God's special love, longing for the day we will be like Christ, and striving for a life of purity, then we have confidence that will not disappoint us when Jesus comes again. In the words of the great hymn we are firmly planted on The Solid Rock:

*When He shall come with trumpet sound,
O may I then in Him be found;
Dressed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne.*