

1 John 2:28–3:10

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[0 : 00] Our Heavenly Father, we now come to looking at this text, and we pray that heaven would indeed come down, and that your Spirit would take your word and apply it to the hearts of your people, that we might live now as though in your presence.

For the health of your church, may your word go forth with strength, in Christ's name, amen. Amen. If you're visiting with us, you won't be aware that this year in Hyde Park, we've been giving ourselves to a theme, a theme that's been on my heart and continues to stay week by week.

Namely, resolved, 2017, getting a vision of Jesus.

Now, I know that the purpose statement of the church, that is the vision statement of Holy Trinity, says that our vision is to see the city of Chicago transformed by the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

But I would lay that aside for a week or a month or perhaps a year, because on my heart is a vision that we would see Jesus.

[1 : 52] The echo of the song that we sang during the authority exemplifies the logic of my heart.

We shall not want when we taste His goodness. In other words, when we see God for who He is, it alters the appetites of our soul and the behavior of our lives.

And at some point, we all have to recognize that the most vile things that dwell within us, the most vile things that are undone in and through us, are a consequence of a vision that's impaired.

The greater our vision of Jesus, the greater ability of the church to stand now in His presence.

The greater our heart affections to be drawn near to Him. Interestingly, the text that's before us today gives us two visions of Jesus.

[3 : 21] It might have been difficult to see in the reading because if you're like me, reading John is oftentimes difficult. But the organization of the text today gives you two distinct units and each with its own vision of Jesus.

Let me show them to you. Verses 28 in chapter 2 through verse 4 in chapter 3 are concerned with a vision of Jesus.

that's spoken of in terms of His second coming. His future appearance. Look at 28. And now little children abide in Him so that when He appears.

There's the vision. And that appearance of Christ, namely His second appearance, returns in chapter 3 verse 2.

But we know that when He appears. That is the organization of the material. And yet when you come to verse 5, the vision of Jesus changes.

[4 : 35] It's not a forward-looking, future-oriented vision of His second coming, but rather one that turns the reader around to look to the incarnation and His first coming.

Verse 5. You know that He appeared. Past tense. And that very word comes again in verse 8. The reason the Son of God appeared.

So here it is. With all the complexity of John. A simple, clear vision of Jesus.

Part 1. When He appears. Part 2. He did appear. Part 2. Part 2. And John bundles all of his desire for the church to live in light of those appearances.

He wants the church to have a vision of Jesus in the present day. That is motivated by His future return. And is grounded in His past work.

[5 : 45] And so today, if ever there was a day in the year to get a vision of Jesus. Jesus. It's here before us. And notice the heart of the author.

Sounds so much like a pastor to me. And now, little children, abide in Him. So that when He appears, we may have confidence.

And not shrink from Him in shame at His coming. This is the aim of the author put on display. What does He want from His congregation?

He sees them as though they have entered into the very presence of God at the second coming. His whole church bundled up. Now walking in.

Now standing before. And what is the look on their face? And what is the read of their eyes? And what is the nature of their heart? He sees a church that is confident.

[6 : 50] And without any reason to be ashamed. This is His aim. It's what got Him up in the morning. It's why He couldn't sleep at night.

He wanted the whole congregation to be able to enter into the presence of God at the second coming of Christ. In confidence. And without shame.

Wow! Can you imagine? That in truth. What a great moment that would be.

Imagine of approaching God. Just yourself. Let alone the whole congregation. Just imagine being able to enter into the presence of God.

And have a throne before you. The creator of the heavens and the earth. And Jesus His Son at the right hand. And to walk through the door with confidence. And without any shame.

[8 : 01] It almost seems impossible. Believe me. It's never fun to disappoint someone.

To say or to do something that lets another person down. From personal experience.

I can tell you. That my own failing actions. The negative feelings are often accompanied by a pricked conscience.

And a pit in my stomach. The negative feelings are only compounded when the one that I have hurt or injured.

Was actually in the right. And I was in the wrong. The disheartened person.

[9 : 01] Who I let down. The odorous. weighs upon my soul because I'm not able to enter into their presence with confidence and without regret.

And if you're like me, then you know what it is to have the eyes of your heart fall, drop to the floor. The shoulders of your body begin to slump.

The thought of being able to utter words in relationship are gone. All because my actions, my life has let down that relationship.

Shame sets in. And imagine the feelings well they're worse when the person that we have injured is someone that we know loves us deeply.

I mean it's one thing if they don't like us then good riddance. But if they love us the pit in the stomach is greater the deflated conscience is heavier I've had these feelings.

[10 : 32] I've had them as a child because every child at some point does something disheartening to their parents. I've had them as a spouse for every husband does something disheartening to their wives wives and wives to their husbands.

Now translate these feelings to the day when we stand in front of Jesus. The author wants us in that moment to have confidence and to be without shame.

because that is the vision of Jesus that John puts before us today. You will you will walk through the door of his house.

You will stand before his chair and you will feel in that heavenly moment the weight of all earthly action.

So how? How? How will we stand in the presence of God in confidence and without shame? Well he indicates there in verse 29 if you know that he's righteous you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born from him.

[12 : 08] In other words there is an aim of the author that we would stand before God in good stead and the actions that will require it are a practicing of righteousness or all the way down into 3 verse 3 and everyone that hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

This these twofold ways of speaking are the means by which we prepare to walk through the doorway into the heavenly kingdom. We practice righteousness here.

We purify ourselves now here. This is it. But I don't want to stay there for a moment. I want to come back to it. If those are the demands of us in light of his aim for us I want you to see that those demands are moderated by words meant to encourage us.

Look at 3.1 and 2 some of the greatest verses in the epistle. See what kind of love the Father has given to us that we should be called children of God and so we are.

The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 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.

[13 : 50] The demands to be practicing righteousness the demands to be purifying yourself so that you might stand in his presence without shame are moderated first by these great words of encouragement namely who you are.

Who we are. We are according to 3.1 and 2 the children of God. Now notice the logic. It doesn't move from I want you to live without shame so get your act together.

No it says I want you to stand before God without shame is going to require that you get your act together but to motivate that in the right way let me remind you who you are.

3.1 you have been the recipient of the kindness of God as a father. You are called children of God and notice notice after the after the semicolon as if he wants to really help you understand it and so we are.

Why does he say that? Because he knows your heart has trouble believing it given your knowledge of who you are. I'm a child of God God. We are children of God.

[15 : 14] We have God as our father if we have our faith in Christ and so we are which again is an indication of why when he repeats it he says that we are God's children now.

You're not going to be God's child when you arrive in his presence and things are finally all completely cleaned up. You're his child now. stunning.

The demands that are given of us are moderated by this word of encouragement to us. You must know that you are a child of God.

I say that to you who today find yourselves experientially in the worst of places. If you have faith in Christ you are a child of God.

You need to remember who your father is. You need to remember that he speaks to us as children. In the space of these 12 verses the word children is used six times.

[16 : 27] The phrase those who have been born of God twice. The fact that you are from God's seed once.

In other words, nine times in 12 verses he's continuing to call the church God's family. J.I. Packer has written quote, if you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he or she makes of the thought of being God's child and having God as his father.

If this is not the thought that prompts and controls your worship and prayers and your whole outlook on life, it means that you do not yet understand Christianity very well at all. For everything that Christ taught, everything that makes the New Testament new and better than the old, everything that's distinctively Christian as opposed to merely Jewish, is summed up in the knowledge of the fatherhood of God.

Father is the Christian name for God. Our understanding of Christianity cannot be better than our grasp of adoption.

[17 : 53] This word then comes to us. we are children of God. But that's not all. The word that moderates the demand isn't merely children of God, but not only who we are, but who he is.

The very character of God. Notice how often in our text today, he's referring to the character of God. Let me show them to you. Put your eyes on it. Verse 29, if you know that he is righteous, that's something about the character of God.

Or, take a look now at verse 2 of chapter 3, the very end, we shall be like him because we shall see him as he is. Something about the character of God.

Or, verse 3, everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. Or, verse 5, you know that when he appeared he took away sins and in him there is no sin.

All of these crescendoing characteristics of God himself. Or, verse 7, whoever practices righteous is righteous as he is righteous.

[19 : 07] Continually through the text, the writer wants you to know not only are you children of God, but he motivates you in accordance with the character of God.

God why would I purify myself now? Well, he's righteous. In him there is no sin. He is pure.

This is the logic of the gospel. Think about it in regard to childbirth. One of the very first questions everybody asks, and it's crazy, but we all do it.

A child is born, a picture is seen, and the question is asked, who does he look more like, a mother or the father?

The scriptures are clear. We are to prepare ourselves to walk into the presence of God, not merely because we are his children, but because he has a certain likeness, and as he is, so I must be.

[20 : 26] See, this is what happens when revival breaks out. We all sit here and we can sing the songs. Let me give you an example. we can sing as we did today, when Christ shall come with shouts of acclamation and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart, then, then I shall bow in humble adoration, and there proclaim my God, how great thou art.

But I will say this to you, if we had a vision of Jesus, then we would understand that the ones who at his appearing will bow in humble adoration, would today bow in contriteness, confession, and repentance.

Heaven would come down and glory would fill my heart. when the fullness of that vision swept over the congregation concerning their identity in Christ, that they are children of God, and that they bear his likeness, those are the ones who then give themselves gloriously to the practicing of righteousness and to the purification of our lives.

This is the logic of the gospel, the commands that are given to you in verse 3, of chapter 3. And everyone who thus hopes in him, that is in Jesus, if you hope in him, then you purify yourself.

that command, that call, the degree to which you understand that call is in accordance with your grasping of the logic that preceded it.

[23 : 09] The Bible never tells you to do anything without reminding you of who you are.

And so what would it be like then for you this morning to purify yourself? What a word, purify. I was thinking of it, you know, during this World Vision water thing.

How do you purify water? You've got to get the impurities out of it. What's the fastest way to do that? Well, there are whole systems all over the world to purify water, but the quickest way to do it is to boil it.

Put water on a fire, turn that thing up on high and boil that thing to all the impurities and sediment and the rest of it.

It's almost withdrawn from it. Think about blood. Think about blood. Think about your, how do you purify someone's blood? You've got to get all the bacteria out.

[24 : 30] You've got to get the fungus out. toxins out. Well, you've got to strengthen the liver.

You've got to get something in the blood that begins to remove all this stuff. This is, notice it's active here too. Purify himself. None of this let go and let God.

Put that aside. You want to stand into his presence with confidence and without shame? You've got stuff to do. First of all, begin practicing righteousness, which in the New Testament scriptures is very clear.

Have a concern for the poor. Begin articulating a life that's dependent on prayer in private. And begin practicing your almsgiving and your ways in which you are loving your brother.

So begin directing your life to the welfare of others. There should be a generosity of soul that my righteous acts are for the welfare of others.

[25 : 39] That's the very character of God. And while you're doing all those things, start ridding yourself of the toxins and the impurities and the things that we've put in ourselves that require transfusion.

And I'm not just telling you to do that. The Bible doesn't just say go home and do that. No, you do that in light of who you are and who he is.

Children, you ought to resemble his character. And then he moves on and there's one further word of encouragement. You do that not just because of who you are, who he is, but you do it because of what Christ has done.

In other words, you move from the future appearing to the past appearing. Verse 5, you know that he appeared in order to take away sins and in him there is no sin.

There are two things that Jesus did in his first coming. First, he took away sins, verse 5, and then verse 8, toward the end, the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

[27 : 08] Those are the two things he did. When you look back and say, what did Jesus accomplish? Well, he took away sins, and he destroyed the works of the devil. So why is there so little transforming power to live rightly?

Is it because we just don't have our behavior in order? No, it's because we don't have a vision of Jesus. Why do you and I walk out of here and walk right back into the world unchanged? Because we're forgetting that in the past he took away sins and he destroyed the works of the devil.

Paul in Romans 7 would appeal to your baptism as the means by which you should stop sinning. Fascinating argument. Do we now sin because we get a lot of grace in life?

He says, far be it that you should keep living in sin, you should stop sinning. Why, Paul? Because you've been baptized. Well, what is it to be baptized?

That is to be buried with Christ. When Christ died, we're getting ready for Good Friday. When he died, he took away sins. When he was buried and the stone was there, guess what?

[28 : 26] It wasn't just his body that was in a shroud. And we'll all for the next three months have to answer the stupid question of whether a legitimate article was the real shroud.

I'll tell you what the real shroud is. You want to know the markings of the shroud of Christ? Your sin, your sin, my sin, our sin is wrapped in his body.

It's been in the darkness, in the grave, done, over. That's it. The works of the devil are not there. And so that when the stone comes off, when we sing on Easter, when we embrace him in faith, we are children of God, living according to the character of God, because my mind is continually reminded of what he did.

You sin, I sin, we sin, because we don't have a vision of Christ. That's what he did.

That's what motivates a new life. life. That's what the power is. Why is there so little power?

[29 : 45] Because we don't have a vision of Christ. Why am I left unchanged? Because I've forgotten the one to whom I'm going to stand in front of.

Why do I go back to the old ways? Why do I God? Because I forgot all the things that he did. When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation, what joy shall fill my heart.

Now, I shall bow in humble adoration and proclaim my God how great thou art.

In my own life, the greatest seasons of spiritual sensitivity have always been accompanied by the clearest vision of God and his fact that he's my father, that I'm his child, and that he's righteous, and that he doesn't sin, and that Christ has taken my sins, and that he's destroyed the works of the devil, and that if I abide in that belief and in the power of the spirit, I too can make progress.

Don't need to be perfect. Remember, when we sin, we have an advocate, one who is a propitiation for our sin. I'm not telling you to be perfect, but the church ought to be on the road to progress.

[31 : 20] don't be deceived, he says. Whoever practices righteous is righteous, and whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning.

Just as he looks back in verses 5-10 concerning what Jesus has done in the past, he looks back to what the devil has been doing from the very beginning.

But then he says, but God's seed abides in you. So stop sinning. It's a contrast, really, of two families, two fathers, two sets of children.

What a vision the text gives us. vision of ourselves one day standing before his very presence.

It's a vision of ourselves looking back at his completed work. And then it bundles our whole life up between the appearing.

[32 : 44] The appearance.! May the Lord give us a vision of Jesus God's will help us make more progress than that.

I pray today that you and I will be done with the world because we see him.

our heavenly father were we to fully comprehend the truth that Jesus will appear again and that we will enter into his presence.

We would be in awe that you have counted us to be your children and us to eternally bear your likeness.

How can this be? Well your son has taken away our sin and destroyed the works of the devil.

[34 : 50] So Lord in the strength of that vision change our lives. Change our homes.
Change our church. Dare we ask change our city.
in Jesus name amen.