

# 1 John 2:28 - 3:10

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Date: 23 October 2016

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[ 0 : 00 ] But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything and is true, and is no lie, just as it has taught you, abide in him.

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. If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.

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, 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.

And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness.

[ 1 : 11 ] Sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning. No one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.

Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning.

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.

By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil. Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

Father, in this challenging and encouraging text, will you guide me to make your word clear to your people?

[ 2 : 30 ] And may we all humbly and joyfully receive it. Father, if anyone here today does not yet know you, is not yet a child of the living God, I pray that this text and this sermon would confront them with the Jesus who appeared in order to take away sins, and that they would run to you.

We pray these things in the beautiful name of Christ our King. Amen. Today's sermon and our passage is about obedience to the Lord.

It might not be very exciting, especially if you're not a Christian. First, if you're not a Christian, welcome, excited that you're here. But if you're not a Christian, then the broader culture has probably told you that God is some sort of tyrant in the sky, promising fire and brimstone to everyone who doesn't follow his arbitrary and unfun rules.

And sadly, if you are a Christian, your view of obedience to God might not be far from that. It probably isn't your favorite subject.

You might agree with the Bible on how you should live, but you can't honestly say that you're very excited about it. Maybe deep down you feel that Christian obedience is nice in theory, but it's hard in practice.

[ 4 : 10 ] And you might feel that when you obey God, you're missing out. And so you feel like you're lost in the middle, not living joyfully as a Christian, maybe missing the fun that the world around you is having, and maybe guilty, feeling guilty for the fun that you do dabble in.

And it makes us ask a question, Christians and non-Christians alike. Have you ever wondered why God cares how we live? Why is that?

I mean, it's not like he needs anything from us. The scriptures tell us the God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands as though he needed anything.

Since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. The Lord is complete, forever perfected in triune fellowship of Father, Son, and Spirit.

There is nothing that we can add to him in our efforts. One historic Christian creed puts it like this, God has all life, glory, goodness, blessedness in and of himself, and is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which he has made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them.

[ 5 : 51 ] He alone is the fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things. God is absolutely complete.

He needs nothing from us. So why on earth would he care about whether we're patient with one another, or whether we place ourselves into the bondage of an addiction, or what we do in the bedroom, or whether our hearts are full of anger, bitterness, or anxieties?

There are a few reasons that God cares about our obedience. First, simply, we owe him obedience as our creator.

Our obedience, it also honors God. It's also fitting that the world that God created operates according to his principles and is ordered as such.

Those are all reasons why God cares what we do, but I think that chief among them, and John's concern today, is this.

[ 7 : 07 ] God cares how we live because he loves us as his children. The God whose glories we just proclaimed, who needs nothing, whose majesty is unfathomable, who's utterly complete in and of himself, that God loves us.

Today's passage says that Christians are born of God, that we are his children, unlike any good father. He cares about his children and their lives, their whole lives, and so our sorrows, our joys, and our obedience are part of his care for our life.

He loves his children. What a joy. What a privilege. And so last week, the Apostle John warned us against being deceived by false teachers who would tear us away from the Lord.

But like a good father, he taught us and taught us how to stand firm. Chapter 2, verse 24, said, Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you.

If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. But what you heard from the beginning, that idea there, is the apostolic teaching, which is recorded for us in Scripture.

[ 8 : 31 ] And then in verse 27, but the anointing that you received from him abides in you. And that anointing John is talking about is God the Holy Spirit, the Lord himself, coming to dwell in and with his people.

And so he takes up residence in our hearts. And so day by day, he strengthens us. Day by day, he works on our hearts. Day by day, he makes us alive to the Scriptures where he speaks to us.

And day by day, he enlivens our prayers. And gives us a heart and an attitude of a child towards a father.

And so he concludes that passage last week in verse 27. But the anointing that you received from him abides in you. He holds on to that idea, that abiding idea.

The anointing you received from him abides in you. Verse 28, 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.

[ 9 : 42 ] If the Lord abides in us and we are commanded to abide in him, we want to ask ourselves, what is that? What does it look like? What does it mean? What does a life that abides in Christ look like?

And he explains a big part of that in verse 29. If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him. Abiding in God in large measure means daily walking with the Lord.

That's what John is going to show for us in chapter 3, verses 1 through 10. But before he does that, he gives us a hint, a taste, a whisper of the glory in store for God's children.

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. Today, Jesus is hidden from our view.

Though he is spiritually present with his people, with his disciples. But one day soon, and last week John said it is the last hour, he will be revealed from heaven.

[10:57] And on that day, we will have confidence, boldness, and joy. And so, since we walk with him today, when we cannot see him, when he comes in glory, we won't suffer a loss of those who walk away from him today.

And that thought should give us confidence, boldness, and joy. Those same things today. Not just on the final day, but we have those blessings today.

We are God's children. Let's live like it. And that is what we are about to see in chapter 3, verses 1 through 10. So let me just give you a quick framework or road map as we enter into these verses. It breaks down into three parts. Quite simply, verses 1 through 3, John talks about the children of God. In verses 4 through 9, he talks about the children of the enemy.

And then in verse 10, he gives us a summary. Verse 1. See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God, and so we are.

[12:08] The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, if we are God's children, we know, 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, and everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

John begins, notice, with worship. He extols God's grace and his love. See what kind of love the Father has given us.

The Christian life is worship from beginning to end. The obedience that John asks of us, then, is sitting in that soil.

This passage is rooted in worship, and it has worship for its end. And so our obedience, our Christian lives, should be lived in that light.

If your obedience is not connected to your praise, it will never be powerful. We see in verse 1, not only that we are called children of God, but that indeed we are.

[13:24] John didn't need to tack that on at the end, did he? But he wants to. He wants to remind us that children of God, it's not just words on a page.

It's not just an honorary title. It's not just a pleasant fiction. It's not just something we say. It's not a phrase we toss around. It is a truth.

It is who we are in Christ. It is a reality. The living God has made those who, verse 3, hope in him, his own, his family.

There is ongoing, living fellowship between God and his people. So the Christian life is vibrant and alive because he is life itself.

A king could manifest no higher love, said one commentator, for a wandering, ragged, vicious orphan boy found in the streets than by adopting him into his own family and admitting him to the same privileges and honors as his own sons.

[14:35] and yet this would be a trifle compared with the honor which God has bestowed on us. He is a far greater king and our adoption is far more complete.

But the world doesn't know us, does it? And many of you feel that reality day by day. For loving Christ you are called names, you are called considered weird.

That's not what the world thinks of us, that we have high honor. Serving a higher authority isn't the world's idea of joy. Serving oneself is the highest end.

Being true to yourself or following your heart, pursuing your best life now. But the Bible is quite clear. Where the Lord is not king, everyone does what is right in their own eyes.

And that's not a recipe for harmony. It's a recipe for discord. Not a recipe for life. It is a recipe for strife.

[15:53] I didn't mean to make that rhyme. I'm sorry. In the first chapter of his gospel, John penned these words about Jesus. The true light which gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

He was in the world and the world was made through him. Yet the world did not know him. He came to his own and his own people did not receive him.

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

The world did not know him. So it does not know those who are born of him. So long as a person rejects God, we don't expect them to embrace those who have been born of God.

Christians are ambassadors and the church is an embassy from a different world. So if you love Jesus and follow hard after him, don't be distressed when the world mocks you, resists you, wants you to shut up, or simply ignores you because of your faith.

[ 17 : 11 ] Remember, this is an expression of their own spiritual darkness. It's not a rejection of you so much as it is a rejection of Christ.

Compassion for their lostness, not anger for their hostility, is the Christian response. That was Christ's heart for us when we were lost in darkness.

God's children and then John directs our attention away from earthly things back to the Lord. 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. Even though we have such great blessings as God's children, even though we have access to God, even though we have an inheritance guaranteed for us, even though we have an older brother, Jesus, who will never leave or forsake us, even though we have fellowship with the family of God here on earth, even though we are growing in faith, wisdom, joy, day by day in the power of the Holy Spirit, even though all of those things are true, even though it is beautiful, we haven't seen the half of it. there is coming a day when Jesus will return for us. Remember, it is the last hour and will finally perfect us.

[ 18 : 45 ] We will have renewed bodies, we will have completely renovated hearts, sin will no longer tempt us, we will have eyes that can behold God's glory, and every tear will be wiped from our eyes by God himself.

The classic hymn says, and Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight, the clouds be rolled back as a scroll, the trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend, even so it is well with my soul. And how will that come about? How will that complete renovation, not just of this creation, but of ourselves come about? John says, 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.

How? Because we shall see him as he is. The Lord will give us our final renewal on the last day, and he will do it by the power of his radiant glory, his beauty shining on us, our eyes able to see him clearly, in that we will be transformed.

that is the way he will manifest his power and transform his people to renew them, perfect and comfort them, by beholding Jesus. And that is something, as children of God, that we have a taste of today.

[ 20 : 20 ] In 2 Corinthians chapter 3, the Apostle Paul, talking about the Christian's life in this world, said, and we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image, that is, the image of Christ, from one degree of glory to another, for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

So, do you want some of heaven today? Do you want to grow in the renewal that is inherent to the age to come?

Gaze on Jesus. Seek him out in his word and on your knees. Meditate on his law day and night. They reveal his heart.

Put Jesus in front of your eyes every moment you can, because on the final day, that is how he is going to transform his people. Set your eyes on Christ.

And that's why he points us in verse three to our hope. Our hope is in Jesus, and that is where our purification comes into play. Now, this is critical.

[ 21 : 32 ] It's the heart of the Christian message. It is the very gospel. Our hope is in Christ. One of the clearest passages on the gospel, Paul tells us in Ephesians chapter 2 verse 8, that Christians are saved by grace through faith.

faith. That is, saved from God's wrath at our rebellion, and to God for everlasting life. We are saved by grace.

That is, God gives us a gift we do not deserve, and we are saved by that grace through faith. What does that mean? When I say faith, what do you think of?

The elders worked on our statement of faith. that is actually one of the most challenging things to do, is to define faith. Faith, in our day and age, can mean so many things.

Many families and communities have a faith tradition that has nothing to do with people's hearts. It can mean a system of beliefs, the Christian faith, the Muslim faith, the Hindu faith.

[ 22 : 43 ] Faith can mean taking a blind leap. What do we mean? John teaches us what saving faith is here when he says, everyone who thus hopes in him.

Our faith is in a person, not a doctrine. Our faith is in the Savior. It is not a tradition. And so when I come to Jesus, I trust him, that he is who he says he is.

I trust him, that he went to the cross bearing my sins. I trust him, that he rose from the grave for my life. I trust him, that he is not ashamed to be united to me so that I can die with him and rise with him.

And when we hope in him, John says we will purify ourselves because we know he is pure. We need to be very careful here because it is very easy to read this exactly backwards.

John is not saying everyone who purifies himself becomes a child of God. That is not what he is saying. Instead, he first starts with God.

[ 23 : 59 ] See what kind of love the Father has given to us. Second, he looks at the blessing that we receive from God. We are called children of God, and so we are. Third, John gives us hope.

We are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared. Something better is on the horizon. So God acts in love, he makes us family, he gives us an undying hope, and then only fourth.

As you talk about what we do, everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. This afternoon, if a shiny black sedan pulls up to your door, and a sharply dressed representative walks up to you and says, there was a mistake made at your birth.

You are in fact a member of the British royal family. They're on their way, coming to get you. What would you do?

Would you stay in your sweat pants? Would you hold on to that bag of chips? Would you keep that trashy TV show on in the background?

[ 25 : 10 ] Or, will you dry clean your best outfit? Will you change the way you speak? Will you change the words you use? Maybe change the things you speak about entirely?

How about the way you act? How will you walk down the street? With hunched shoulders and a gazed ground? Or with a head held high and a smile on your face?

Will you use people for your own advantage? Or will you realize that you've kind of arrived? There's nowhere higher to climb than royalty. So you'll treat people differently.

Knowing that you're about to be drawn into one of the wealthiest families in the world, how will you treat your possessions? You can afford to be generous now.

How will you speak? What will you talk about? What will you give your attention to? And just as importantly, what won't you give your attention to?

[ 26 : 15 ] Now, do the pressed clothes make you royalty? Did turning off the TV, did changing your behavior, did any of that make you royalty?

royalty? No. You had nothing to do with what made you royalty. The life changes are simply a result of the birthright, not the other way around.

And that is what we want to see here. The changed life is a natural outcome of who we are. And that's why John says that everyone who thus hopes in him, who has the hope of being a child, who has a hope of heaven coming to earth, has a hope for a life with God.

That person naturally, out of the hope that is in their heart, that person purifies himself as he is pure. If the queen was coming to pick you up this afternoon, you'd probably be googling her furiously, right?

Figuring out, how do I talk to this person? What is her story? Well, we find those things about our father in the scriptures. And let's pay close attention here.

[ 27 : 31 ] John says everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. The pure life comes from a new birth, so everyone who has a new birth purifies himself.

The life of obedience, discipleship, and righteousness is not for super-Christians. It is not just for those who aspire to Christian leadership. It is for every single Christian.

Because God loves all of his children and cares about all of his children. So if you are a child of God, he cares about your life, every facet of it, including how you act and how you speak.

John is going to revisit obedience once more in this letter, in chapter five. He's going to tell us that God's commands are not heavy. Purity isn't a burden, it's a joy.

If purity is a burden for you, if it is a heavy thing, it's a signal that your heart is feeling and your mind is thinking wrongly about purity.

[ 28 : 43 ] Return to John's instructions from last week. Further dependence on God, the Holy Spirit, and more reflection on the Bible, testimony that his readers had heard from the beginning, that is where we will shape our minds and shape our hearts' affections for purity so that it is not a burden.

It is time, friends, to lay aside every weight from the sin which so easily ensnares us and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross despising the shame and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

It is time, friends, to put it all away. Look to Christ and throw out the porn. Look to Christ and stop every form of disordered speech, gossip, lying, unkindness, complaining and grumbling.

Look to Christ and leave behind selfishness. Look to Christ and cast off the heavy heart of envy and jealousy and discontentment.

Look to Christ and put off every sin because as children of God, we know that sin comes from a different father.

[ 30 : 17 ] sin. And that's where he goes in verses 4 through 9. Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness.

Sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared in order to take away sins and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning.

No one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous as he that is Christ is righteous.

Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil. For the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

No one born of God makes a practice of sinning for God's seed abides in him. And he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. sinning.

[ 31 : 15 ] This can be a terrifying passage for one of two reasons. Either it shows you that you are not in Christ or if you are in Christ it can tempt you to doubt that you are in Christ.

And he says no one who keeps on sinning knows the Lord. See every Christian I've ever met sins daily.

And every Christian that John had ever met did the same. If you remember back the second sermon that we preached on this book Jordan preached it in the second half of 1 John chapter 1 John said this verse 8 if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Verse 10 if we say we have not sinned we make him a liar and his word is not in us. So what do we do here? On the one hand everyone sins but if everyone who sins has neither seen him or known him what hope is there for anyone to be saved and that seems to run very contrary to John's purpose in writing the whole book we've come to a time and time again at the end of the book he concludes in chapter 5 verse 13 and says I write these things to you who believe in the name of the son of God that you may know that you have eternal life it feels to many Christians who are stuck in certain sins that this passage today whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil it does not help them feel the confidence the assurance that John wants for them I think the key to this dilemma can be found back in verse 2 beloved we are God's children now and what we will be has not yet appeared but we know that when he appears we should be like him because we shall see him as he is no Christian that you see is complete today the Christian life is an ongoing process by which the Father transforms us through our ongoing striving alongside the powerful working of the Holy Spirit we are becoming more and more the likeness of the Son we are works in progress progress and two things are at work in a Christian that aren't at work in a lawless person first is the Holy Spirit one pastor put it this way if the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in us he is not powerless the Lord gives us the heart of a child we love our Father we seek him out and we are learning maybe we don't fully yet but we are learning to hate the things that grieve his heart so that's the first thing for those who are caught in persistent sin if that marks you you are the person who is pursuing righteousness and the second thing is what do we do with our sin especially our persistent sins I just read to you first John 1:8 and 1:10 but I skipped the middle verse on purpose I skipped verse 9 if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness verse 4 talks about the person who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness that person isn't humbly confessing sin that person isn't pleading with the Lord to help cast off the old man the old heart the old ways the old desires the lawless person is the person unconcerned with his own sin he doesn't care that it's an insult to God he doesn't care about what it does to his own heart that's the difference so here's an example how a Christian handles persistent sin and we do we must do

not let this comfort you in your sin and allow you to say oh i'm okay in it because i'm in christ no cast it off but here's how a christian handles persistent sin and we see that it is something like peeling layers of an onion

because it goes deeper and deeper still we read in scripture let no corrupting talk come out of your bounds that only such is as good for building up as fits the occasion that it may grace the may give grace to those who hear you know what it's relatively easy to cut off corrupting talk certainly it takes effort but it's mostly just discipline and focus putting a lid on it right and so most christians upon coming to faith often conquer the sins of swearing gossiping lying outbursts of anger pretty quickly but then scripture confronts us with something a little bit more penetrating jesus had more to say about our words he said out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks and suddenly you realized sure i've put a lid on it but my heart hasn't really changed has it i've changed my behavior but the hard work is actually ahead of me the real work is loving my neighbor from my heart that is a lifelong process of putting off the old selfish sinful bitter self-serving heart and moving towards the likeness of christ where our hearts actually love our neighbors and seek their good and that's the life of the christian an ongoing walk where god progressively gives us victory over sin and then reveals more and deeper and harder to work at sin and leads us into deeper obedience the scriptures tell us to be sexually pure so you put up web blockers to cut off your access to porn then jesus tells you you've heard it said you shall not commit adultery but i say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart there's a lot more work to do you put a lid on your angry words and then the lord leads you to see the deeper issue of anger in your heart you stop abusing your co-workers whatever that looks like in your case but then god brings you to a passage that commands you to love your neighbor as yourself it's one thing to cut off abusive speech or actions it is another thing entirely to love someone as yourself these aren't the attitudes of the world even if you know a non-christian whose behavior externally looks better than yours this isn't what's going on in their hearts they've the world can only stop at putting a lid on it there is no deeper heart change and so when you see a deeper and more abiding sin and it causes you to doubt your salvation don't be discouraged that is the holy spirit prompting you forward in a march of faith of all people christians are the most sensitive to sin the fact that you see your own heart clearly is evidence that the lord is indeed at work opening your eyes and turning your affections away from sin it is the very opposite of the lawless man beloved we are god's children now and what we will be has not yet appeared but everyone who was born of god is a child of god and seeks the father now if you

[ 40 : 07 ] have turned away from that pursuit if it is not the theme of your life seeking after the father now is the time to fight the good fight to finish the race to keep the faith there is laid up for you the crown of righteousness which the lord the righteous judge will award to you on that day and not only you but all who have loved his appearing but maybe you aren't concerned about sin if that is the case john has strong words for you verse 8 that man is a son of the devil you are not a child of god you have a different family but that does not need to be the end of your story verse 5 you know that he appeared in order to take away sins verse 8 the reason the son of god appeared was to destroy the works of the devil and actually he did that by taking away sins jesus christ went to the cross for the sins of many for their punishment so that all who run to him might not die but have eternal life in him and so now even now run to christ who took the sins of the world and nailed them to the cross run to christ who forgives those sins because he paid the penalty run to christ who rose from the grave to new life so that embraced by him you too may run to christ put all your faith all of your hope all of your love in him cry out save me lord he will make you a child of god john wraps these things up in verse 10 it is a simple summary statement by this it is evident who are the children of god and who are the children of the devil whoever does not practice righteousness is not of god nor is the one who does not love his brother and next week he's going to think very clearly very penetratingly about loving our brothers and sisters in christ so as we conclude today and think about chasing after purity because we are his children let us also think about those others who are his children as well let's pray father what amazing love you gave to us we do not deserve to be called your children but because of christ so we are lord i pray that you would center us again each and every day in a hope in him lord let our lives look pure because our savior is pure we pray this in the mighty name of jesus amen and

Thank you.