

1John 2:28 – 3:3

Hope is not an add-on to the Christian faith

It is not a high priced option you have to pay extra for

It is not only part of the salvation package

It is essential to successfully living the Christian life

Hope is not only foundational to Christian doctrine

And the believer's confidence

It also has immense ethical implications

Genuine hope will purify the lives of those who possess it

And therefore give them assurance that they are Christians

John has already presented his three tests

The moral test – which is the test of increasing righteousness

The social test – which is the test of love

And the doctrinal test – which is the test of the knowledge of Jesus

Who do you say Jesus is

In our passage today John elaborates on the moral test

For a personal pursuit of purity and holiness is evidence that you are a child of God

We are still talking about hope and our text breaks down this way

Hope is secured by abiding

It is manifested by righteousness

It is established by love

It will be fulfilled by Christ-likeness

And it is characterized by purity

Hope is secured by abiding (READ VERSE 28)

John begins this section with one of his favorite terms - Now, little children

This is a term of endearment

It is the same as Paul calling Timothy – my beloved son

It shows John's fatherly care and concern to those to whom he is writing

Now John used the word “abide” more than any other writer

It appears almost a dozen times in John 15

Abide means to “stay” or “remain”

Jesus first used it – He said that we should remain or stay in Him

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

If you want to bear eternal fruit

You must “remain” or “stay” in Christ

Earlier in chapter 2 John focused on the importance of abiding

The one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked

How can John possibly tell you to walk just like Jesus walked

The reason he can write that is because

If you abide in Christ you will begin to take on the character of Jesus

And you will never display the character of Jesus if you don't abide

As you let Jesus live through you and control your life

It will change how you think and behave and what you say

That is the Christian life – less of us – more of Jesus

Abiding means - that you regularly get into the Word of God

You submit to the direction of the Holy Spirit

And stay in touch with the author through prayer

God didn't save us and leave us without resources

We aren't aimlessly wandering on this planet until we pass away or the Lord returns

There is a wonderful old song that goes

I am a pilgrim, but not a wanderer; there's a pathway meant for me

Abiding in Christ is the pathway to living the Christian life

Take any other path and you are on the wrong road

Then abiding in Christ is the way to achieve the power to overcome sin

Too often we abide in the internet or the TV or romance novels

And we do it to the harm of our walk with God

We need to abide in Christ to stay fixed and stay safe

The world is calling us and no one who professes to believe the Gospel

And then abandons the faith can be sure of their salvation

Earlier John wrote – They went out from us, but they were not of us

They professed faith but they didn't have it

True faith draws us to love Jesus and live for Him

The Bible teaches twin truths - True Christians will continue in the faith

And God will keep them eternally secure

Jesus said – My sheep hear My voice, and I know them and they follow Me.

True faith abides in Christ

And that is the pathway to successfully living the Christian life

Every blessing of God is either achieved or enhanced by abiding in Christ

God always supplies the power for Christian living

Since He has all of it and we have so very little – it only makes sense

But normally God works with us not in spite of us

God sovereignly saves sinners, but not apart from their faith

God transforms His children's lives, but not apart from their obedience

Paul to the Corinthians – no temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man, and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able to bear, but with the temptation will provide a way of escape

Remember you live your life Coram Deo – Before the face of God

Coram Deo means God is intimately aware of your needs

Intimately involved in the details of your life

So walk uprightly before God

He sees you - He hears you – He knows

Bottom line -Your faith and obedience combined with God's love and power is an unbeatable combination

A friend of mine used to say – it's a beautiful thing

Finally as we saw last week

Our hope will be rewarded when Jesus returns

And abiding in Jesus will give us confidence at His return

You don't have to raise your hands but I wonder

How many are absolutely certain

That if the rapture occurred today – you'd be gone

Or do you have a nagging doubt

I hadn't been a Christian very long when we saw the movie – A Thief In The Night - which is about the rapture and the tribulation

Not too many days later I came home from work

There was food on the stove – dishes on the table – and not a person in the house

I called out – no answer – had the rapture occurred and I missed it

Being left behind would mean that I was going to go through the tribulation

I was overtaken by this sinking feeling that they were taken and I was left

If the rapture occurred today – are you sure you would be taken

Now how many are anxious to appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ
That's where you'll be judged for your works done after you were saved
That is an inevitability – it is going to happen
You will stand before Jesus and give an account of your Christian life
And He will not be interested in your GPA or many friends you have
He won't care how many promotions you got – or how big your house is
He will only be interested in how well you abided in Him
For when you abide in Jesus you will be doing the works
That God prepared beforehand for you to do
And you shall receive your full reward at His coming
So abiding in Jesus gives assurance of your salvation
It brings about sanctification makes your hope sure and certain
Gives you a longing for His return
And keeps you from being ashamed to stand before Him

Your hope is secured by abiding and
Hope is manifested by righteousness (READ VERSE 29)
Manifested means to be made known
Your hope in Christ is made known by your righteous life
For true faith always results in a changed life
I knew a guy who received Christ as Lord and continued to go to bars
He said he could witness to his friends in the bar by drinking with them
I was real interested in how this would progress
One day I saw him and he told me he didn't go to the bar anymore
He said it wasn't as much fun and he didn't have the same priorities as his old friends
That is the changed life I am talking about
When you are saved you are no longer of this world
You still live in this world
But you have been transferred out of it
You are being transformed from it
And that will begin to evidence itself in your life
The transformed life is evidence of God at work in you
The Holy Spirit quietly but efficiently begins to free you from the power of sin
And all you have to do - is let Him

Paul to the Romans – Present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind

You offer yourself to God – He changes you by the renewing of your mind

Hope is secured by abiding, it is manifested by righteousness

And hope is established by love (READ VS1)

Hope isn't established by our love for God but by God's love for us

It is almost inconceivable that sinners could become children of God

But we have and we are

The words John uses are really hard to translate - See how great

Express astonishment wonder and admiration all at the same time

God loves you with a love that is hard to express in human language

God loves you so much that it is beyond human experience or even understanding

God's love comes from His own free will

We're really not that lovable - just look around – but God loves us anyway

The important part is this

It wasn't anything you did

It isn't anything you will do - that caused God to love you

God has chosen to love you because God has chosen to love you

God has always chosen the unlikely to be His people

Deut 7 – The Lord has chosen you to be a people for His own possession, out of all the peoples on the face of the earth. The Lord did not set His love on you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, but because the Lord loved you

The Lord loves you because the Lord loves you

Speaking of the church Paul writes – not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble

You are an unlikely choice but He loves you and

God's love for you came at great personal cost

He gave freely and abundantly for your benefit

Now listen carefully – not one of us here deserved God's love

We are just like the nation Israel whom God chose

Why did He choose them

He chose them out of His love – He chose you because He loves you

Conference speaker Bob Benson said

I know that I am an unlikely choice, But you cannot understand the choices of God by looking at the choosee. You can only understand the choices of God by looking into the heart of the Chooser

God's love of us stands as one of the unshakable foundations of our hope
You can live in hope because you have experienced God's love
The kind of love God has for you cannot be shaken – it will never change
And it is not experienced anywhere else in the world
The world does not know the nature of the relationship between God and His children
Doesn't have a clue
So the world cannot fathom the true essence of who believers are
And what God is doing in them – they don't get you
The world didn't understand Jesus – it won't understand you
It's not even possible - It's that simple
Our hope will be fulfilled by Christlikeness (READ VS 2)
Heaven is attractive because you will not only be with Jesus
You will be like Jesus
Paul writing to the Corinthians – Just as we have borne the image of the earthly, we will also bear the image of the heavenly
Just as we were born and bear the image of Adam
We will also bear the image of Christ
One day Jesus will transform the body of our humble state
Into conformity with His body of glory – isn't that great
God has promised to bring about this transformation
Rom 8 – Whom He foreknew He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son
What don't you like about yourself
Is it your physical appearance – your personality – your intelligence
Do you wish you were in the in-group in school
I know it doesn't seem like it – yet
But you are already part of the most elite group of people in the world
And it's only gettin' better
Your future's so bright you ought to wear shades
I'm not kidding - just wait – your body will be perfect – no flaws
Your IQ will dwarf Albert Einstein and David Hawkings combined
Your glory will surpass the glory of the angels
If those who reject you today could see you as you are going to be
They would be tempted to fall down and worship you
God told Moses that no one could see His face and live

But you will be able to look upon the face of God for you will share Jesus glory

What heaven will be like and what you will become is unimaginable

We sing a song which modernizes 1Cor 3

No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has ever conceived, the glorious things that God has prepared for everyone who has believed.

Now listen carefully – How you will be – what you will become

Is how God sees you - now

Hope is secured by abiding - it is manifested by righteousness

It is established by love - it will be fulfilled by Christ-likeness

Finally hope is characterized by purity (READ VS 3)

We discussed this last week so I am not going to spend a great deal of time on the subject, but suffice it to say

The hope of Jesus' return should make a difference

In how we live our lives

As we think about life on a fallen planet with its disease and injury and pain

The heartbreaks we suffer and give and the power of sinful habits on our life

As we compare that to the love of God and the sacrifice of His Son

And dwell on what we will become

Our hope should produce a growing desire

To become like Jesus now

Now the idea of purifying ourselves

Does not mean that you can produce your own sanctification

You cannot make yourself better

What it means is

The sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit does not take place

Apart from your obedience

Knowing God's desire and plans for you should produce obedience

You cannot decide to live just like the world

And expect that you will be made holy in this life

In fact John would tell you that kind of thinking is a sign of being unsaved

As you think about heaven you shouldn't be overly occupied

With golden streets and emerald palaces – they will be there

But the most significant thing about heaven is you -

With Jesus and like Jesus

And as we fix our hope on that reality

It should cause us to desire now what awaits us then

The Gospel delivers a message of hope

The apostle Peter – Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to attain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you

When you received Jesus Christ as Lord and savior

That hope became yours

It became part of who you are

And it should impact how you think and how you live

Paul summed up his spiritual desires with one thing

One thing I do, forgetting what lies behind, and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus

Paul's all consuming goal was to pursue in this life

The prize that awaited him when this life is over

Those who are abiding in Christ manifesting righteousness

Gratefully recognizing God's love toward them

Becoming increasingly conformed to Christ's image

And pursuing lives of purity

Can be certain they have a hope that will never disappoint them

When you live like that

Nothing that happens to you in this life can even slightly diminish

Your eternal confidence in the promises of God

In fact when your hope is fully on God

The worse this life does to you

The stronger and brighter your hope will become

Let's close by turning to Romans 5:1

(READ ROMANS 5:1-5)