

A Bold Child of God

I John 2:28-3:1

When we last left off from our series on the Book of I John we found in I John 2:18-27 that John was warning us of the dangers of antichrist's who would come and lead people away from the work of Jesus Christ and our Father God. We saw that these antichrist's came out of the church and were aware of biblical truth yet somewhere in their walk decided to embrace false teaching. Some of it may be due to a self-centered need for recognition or merely because they did not know what the Scriptures tell us.

John told us that we should not be surprised that these antichrist's had come because we are in the last days. I think it is a known fact that whenever God moves upon his people there is always some type of counter attack of the enemy to destroy or steal from the work of God. It may be a root of bitterness, a sense of arrogance, or even misunderstanding or miscommunication. Like a computer virus, it works its way into the system of the church in a very discrete way, but later on ends up causing the computer to crash or to loose information.

But John didn't simply give us a warning of these antichrist's without a solution to avoid their trap. John tells us that we must first know what is written in scripture. That means that we must spend time in the Bible. We must spend time memorizing it, understanding it, and meditating upon it. As a student would study for an exam, so we must study for the test of life.

But it is obvious to me that we need more than just mere human effort involved in this process of being on guard. John continues on and tells us that we need the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is able to remind us of what we have learned in the past, or what God has said to us individually, or he is able to bring discernment whenever we are confronted with a new idea or teaching. God wants to enhance our study and bring power to understanding and discernment.

Today, I want to continue to look at **I John 2:28-3:1**.

Lets begin in verse **28**:

And now, dear children, continue to live in fellowship with Christ so that when he returns, you will be full of courage and not shrink back from him in shame.

1. A Sense of Responsibility

Notice that John addresses his reader as his children. For some reason John felt the responsibility as a spiritual parent to the church. My prayer is that we would all develop this sense of responsibility when we look at the people around us. A parent should always be looking out for the best for their child. A parent should be protecting them and

teaching them how to handle challenges, and how to make good decisions. This entire epistle of John is just that. A letter from a spiritual parent.

2. Commitment to God Produces Courage

John continues and tells his reader to live in fellowship with God. This term fellowship comes from the Greek word "Meno" which means to stay, to dwell, to endure, or to remain. It almost has the idea of keeping ourselves in unswaying, unfluctuating commitment to God. Obviously we know that our Christian walk is an eternal thing. It is not simply for just a period of time, and then to be placed on a shelf, only to be picked up later on.

But, John gives us a reason to remain faithful to Christ. His reason is so that we would be full of courage and not shame. The term courage here is from the Greek word "Parresian" which means to be publicly outspoken in frankness and bluntness. This type of boldness is the kind that takes preparation of the soul. It takes a deep conviction and belief in God. It takes years of development. This boldness takes what we believe and lays our reputation on the line for the sake of speaking the truth of what we believe.

Peter believed so strongly in his heart that Jesus was not to die that he took the Lord aside and rebuked him. Peter's belief caused him to speak with conviction.

In John 7:13 we find that people wouldn't say anything publicly about Jesus for fear of the Jews. They didn't have enough courage to speak what was on their heart.

In Acts we find that the disciples spoke with boldness. Finally, their belief and convictions were strong enough to evoke action on their part. In fact, in Acts 4:29 they prayed for even greater boldness than they had already displayed. They said:

O Lord, hear their threats, and give your servant great boldness in their preaching.

In **II Corinthians 3:12** it tells us:

Since this new covenant (Jesus Christ) gives us such confidence (or hope), we can be very bold.

There is something that should happen when Jesus comes and lives in our lives. When we commit ourselves to Jesus and allow him to bring more and more understanding of His word, and when we allow him to do things in our lives, and to prove his faithfulness, the end result should be boldness. A boldness that is willing to be frank and to the point about who God is, what He has done and what He will do in the future. A boldness that takes our convictions and puts actions behind it even if it means being public about it.

When Jesus comes back to get us, He doesn't want excuses, He doesn't want uncertain and wandering believers, He doesn't want to have to look for the church, He wants the church

to be obvious. He wants to be able to see the believes in such a way that He knows that they value His work and that they believe that He is real. He wants honest believers who will allow truth to rule and reign in their lives. John tells us later in **I John 3:21**:

Dear friends, if our conscience is clear, we can come to God with bold confidence.

3. Some Will Be Ashamed at Their Commitment

God doesn't want us to come before him in shame, in disfigured disgrace. There will come a day when our lives will be laid open and honest before God and the world. God wants us to look forward to that day with anticipation and excitement, yet some will greet that day with fear, with disappointment, with embarrassment and most importantly of all – shame. They will think – “if only I would have lived differently, if only I would have said more, if only..., if only..., if only.”

Everyday we have another opportunity to avoid this shame. In **Colossians 3:4** we read:

And when Christ, who is your real life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.

Is Christ your real life? And will you share in his glory?

4. Some Will Be Ashamed of God.

We live in a world where it is believed that the God of the Bible is not worthy or able to be good enough for one's life. Therefore, these individuals choose contrary to what God wants for their life. In **Mark 8:38** Jesus said:

“If a person is ashamed of me and my message in these adulterous and sinful days, I, the Son of Man, will be ashamed of that person when I return in the glory of my Father with the holy angels.”

There are even professing Christians who are ashamed of God and allow it to show in how they live their life. They continue to live how they want because they do not believe that God's best is good enough for them. Jesus had words for these people as well in **Matthew 7:21-23**:

“Not all people who sound religious are really godly. They may refer to me as ‘Lord,’ but they still won't enter the Kingdom of Heaven. The decisive issue is whether they obey my Father in Heaven. On Judgement day many will tell me, ‘Lord, Lord, we prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.’ But I will reply, ‘I never knew you. Go away; the things you did were unauthorized.’”

Let us not be ashamed of what we believe and embrace it with wholehearted conviction and action that displays boldness and courage.

In **I John 2:29** John continues and says:

Since we know that God is always right, we also know that all who do what is right are his children.

John now begins to show us who a child of God is and what they are characterized by.

5. Who is a Child of God?

a. A Child is Like God.

After our salvation experience we began a journey of allowing God's character to become our character. Just as God is righteous, so we are to be righteous. In **Romans 8:28-29** the apostle Paul wrote:

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that His Son would be the firstborn, with many brothers and sisters.

Our purpose in life is summed up in this passage of Scripture, that we would become like Christ. His character is to become our character.

b. A Child is Loved By God.

In verse **I John 3:1a** John continues and says:

See how very much our heavenly Father loves us, for he allows us to be called his children, and we really are!

*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. **KJV***

The term "what manner of" is also translated from the Greek to say "From what country, or by what possible way" as if in amazement. The reality is true however, that the love of God for us is truly mind-boggling. Even the most extreme of circumstances such as you and I taking a poor, homeless, orphan and giving them all we own, cannot compare to what God has done for us. Why is God's love so amazing and unbelievable? Because it makes us his children. **Galatians 4:7** says:

Now you are no longer a slave but God's own child. And since you are his child, everything he has belongs to you.

So you should not be like cowering, fearful slaves. You should behave instead like God's very own children, adopted into his family -- calling him "Father, dear Father." For his Holy Spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts and tells us that we are God's children. And since we are his children, we will share his treasures -- for everything God gives to his Son, Christ, is ours, too. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering. Romans 8:15-17

If you want to revolutionize your life and your self worth look through the Scriptures and find out for yourself how much God does love you. Feelings and emotions at times become the determining factor of whether or not we are loved or not. But our feelings and emotions can get the best of us at times and neglect the truth. See how much God loves you, His value of you will grant you value for yourself.

John continues on in **I John 3:1b** and says:

But the people who belong to this world don't know God, so they don't understand that we are his children.

e. A Child of God Will Be Misunderstood By the World

The world will not always be excited for us. It may not ever see the value in what we do, or understand the motive by which we reach out to the world. They don't understand us because they don't understand God. As much good as the church may do, salvation will never be embraced by all people. Not every person will become a follower of God, in fact they don't understand why we place so much importance on it. In **I Corinthians 1:18** it says:

I know very well how foolish the message of the cross sounds to those who are on the road to destruction. But we who are being saved recognized this message as the very power of God.

Jesus said in **John 15:21**:

The people of the world will hate you because you belong to me, for they don't know God who sent me.

Jesus then continues in **John 16:2-3**:

For you will be expelled from the synagogues, and the time is coming when those who kill you will think they are doing God a service. This is because they have never known the Father or me.

The world does not know God or understand who He is. They don't understand what Jesus did for them. They don't understand why we limit ourselves in living, which in their mind, would be defined as a full life. If the world is so lost and unable to

understand God, how can they find Him? They can find God only if they are looking for him. The Apostle Paul when talking to the Council of Philosophers in Athens said in Acts 17:24-27:

He is the God who made the world and everything in it. Since he is the Lord of heaven and earth, he doesn't live in man-made temples, and human hands can't serve his needs – for he has no needs. He himself gives life and breath to everything, and he satisfies every need there is. From one man he created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand which should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries. His purpose is in all of this was that the nations should seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him – though he is not far from any one of us.

If a person is searching they will be open to what God has for them. If not, then all of the words that we can speak, all of the actions we can do will mean nothing.

Seeing a harvest is not about saying the right thing, or being eloquent in our discussion or presentation. It is about whether or not an individual is looking for God. We can see miracles and hear great wisdom, but without looking for the source we are still lost.

Conclusion

John sensed the responsibility to the church to warn us and to encourage us to press on in our walk with God. John tells us that our commitment to God and his word will produce courage and boldness to respond. A dynamic boldness that will not be held in secret but one that publicly proclaims honesty and truth and demonstrates it.

God doesn't want us to regret the second coming of His Son, as a time of embarrassment or shame, or in disappointment wishing that we did more. He wants us to live in such a way that we can't wait to see the one who we have served for so long.

We also need to understand how much God loves us and how as children of God we are to become like our Father in character. We are to be constantly molded into the character image of Jesus Christ, modeling righteous and holy behavior. God's love for us should outweigh any desire or human want, and stir us on to love him return.

Yet, we must also understand that we are going to catch some slack from those who do not believe because they don't understand what we are doing. They don't know God and therefore they don't know what God is doing in us. This does cause some tension in our relationships with other family members and friends. Unfortunately, this tension will always be there until they seek God and find him.

Seek and you will find. A searching heart will result in loving God, and understanding a loving God should produce a bold commitment, and a bold commitment should produce a strong relationship giving us the ability to call God our Father.