

## To Be Like Jesus

### I John 3:2-3

Last week we looked at John's words of encouragement to the church to be bold children of God. John sensed a responsibility to the church to stir them on in their walk with God, which I believe is a responsibility that we need in our own lives, finding ourselves accountable to those within our Body of Christ.

John urged us to live a bold and courageous life so that we wouldn't be ashamed or disappointed of our lives, when we see Jesus face to face. May we not have any regrets about things we didn't do, or even things that we knew was wrong but did anyway.

But we also saw that there will also be those who will be ashamed of God. This shame even happens within the church when one may claim to believe in God yet be embarrassed or even consider God as being unworthy of not good enough for them. Maybe some of us in here choose to live a conditional Christian walk because we aren't convinced that, what God wants from us, is something we want to do.

But what joy there is when we know that we are a child of God. As a child we are to become more and more like Jesus, allowing His character to become more and more a part of our own.

We must understand that we are loved by God. John even made the reference to God's love with amazement by saying, "From what country, or by what possible way," does God love us. The way God loves us should change the way we view ourselves. It should grant us more and more value of ourselves and should stir us on to respond with great gratitude and love.

Finally, John pointed out to us that we as Christians are misunderstood by the world. The world doesn't understand what we do or why we do it. They simply stand back and mock things that they do not understand. Why? Because they do not know God or understand him. Don't be surprised if people look at us and shake their heads. Jesus faced the same rejection or misunderstanding.

This morning I want to continue to look at I John 3:2-3.

*Yes, dear friends, we are already God's children, and we can't even imagine what we will be like when Christ returns. But we do know that when he comes we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is. And all who believe this will keep themselves pure, just as Christ is pure.*

#### **1. How can you know if you are a child of God or not? (we are already God's Children)**

John begins this portion of Scripture by making a statement of emphasis. In the Greek composition of this sentence the most dominant or point of focus is stated in the

beginning of the sentence. John uses the word "NOW" thus His point is that "We are God's children NOW." Not when we get to heaven, but NOW. **Romans 8:16** tells us:

*For God's Holy Spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts and tells us that we are God's children.*

*And now you also have heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. **Ephesians 1:13***

What is the Holy Spirit saying to you today? What is that still small voice telling you as you are sitting here this morning? Is he confirming that you are God's child, or is there still an uncertainty within your soul? Being a child of God happens NOW, not only when Jesus comes back to get us. We can have the assurance today. If you are unsure today, listen to your heart. Ask God to affirm his relationship with you.

John continues however and states that we don't know what we will be like when Jesus returns. This could be both a question about what Jesus will do to us at his second coming or a statement of uncertainty in how we will develop in our Christian walk over the coming period of time before Jesus returns. But we do know...

**2. We Will be Different When Christ Returns.** (*We can't even imagine what we will be like*)

*i. A progression of life events and Christian development.*

We all know that life hands us many opportunities and challenges - each varying in intensity and effort. But life doesn't simply happen to us, it happens with reason and purpose. Although not all things that we face may be what God wants for us, we do know that he can take those circumstances and use them for our good. He can teach vital lessons. In **I Peter 1:6-7** tells us:

*So be truly glad! There is wonderful joy ahead, even though it is necessary for you to endure many trials for a while. These trials are only to test your faith, to show that it is strong and pure. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold - and your faith is far more precious to God than mere gold. So if your faith remains strong after being tried by fiery trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.*

*Fire tests the purity of silver and gold, but the Lord tests the heart. **Proverbs 17:3***

*For when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be strong in character and ready for anything. **James 1:3-4***

Life happens so that we can develop in our faith, our motives, our love, our trust, and in our relationship with God.

I have seen people who have allowed circumstances of life to come and steal their faith away. They think because human beings have made wrong choices, or because one dies, or because bad circumstances have come upon someone, that God is to be held responsible. Not everything that happens in yours and my life comes from God. Sometimes they are because of a fault of our own, or a fault of someone else.

But life happens and God uses our experiences to develop us. When Christ returns my prayer is that we are different from who we are today. No matter what life may hand us embrace it as an opportunity to grow even more. Then on the day of Christ's return we can look back over our life and see what God has done. But not only will we be different in growth and faith but we will be different because of...

ii. **The miraculous and work of Christ.** We will see a miraculous work ...

a. *In Understanding.* In I Corinthians 13:9-10, 12 we read:

*Now we know only a little, and even the gift of prophecy reveals little! But when the end comes, these special gifts will all disappear.*

*Now we see things imperfectly as in a poor mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God knows me now.*

There will come a day when God will reveal everything to us and will grant us understanding. The things that we experience today will be defined when we see Jesus face to face. How comforting it is to know that we will understand why things happened to us, or played out the way they did. We will one day know that the events of our life were not in vain.

But God will not only bring miraculous understanding on that day, but he will also perform a miraculous transformation of our...

b. *Earthly bodies.*

In **Philippians 3:20-21** the Apostle Paul tells us:

*But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior. He will take these weak mortal bodies of ours and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same mighty power that he will use to conquer everything, everywhere.*

We know that our bodies will become new resurrected bodies, just as Jesus was resurrected from the dead. We know that this body will not be effected by death, sickness, disease, sin and various other aspects that limited our abilities. John tell us that we can't even imagine what it is going to be like. It is a statement of amazement.

Think about it, "can you imagine what it is going to be like not having to eat, drink, get sick, being able to understand things we couldn't before?" In our limited human intellect we can't even begin to understand what it is going to be like. So we can't imagine what we will be like or what it will be like when Christ returns.

But John continues and tells us that when we shall see Jesus we will be like him.

### **3. We Will Be Like Christ. (*When he comes we will be like him*)**

The key word here in this scripture is "like" which means to be similar or close in association. It does not imply that we will become exactly like Jesus at the time of His Second Coming. Jesus used the same Greek word "like" when he was making comparisons between something that was earthly in order to explain what heaven was like in Matthew Chapter 13. But we know that we have already begun the development of becoming like Jesus. In **Romans 8:29** we read:

*For God knew his people in advance and he chose them to become like his Son.*

*Hold to truth in love, becoming more and more in every way like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. **Ephesians 4:15***

What have we been doing to become more like Jesus? Do we even know what it means? Every step in life that we take should be done in such a way that Christ can be seen in us. Unfortunately, we live in a reactionary mode that responds before any consideration can be made as to "What would Jesus do."

But I do know that when Jesus comes back again we will see him and will be able to look at ourselves and see how we compare in character. We will see similarities but we will also see areas where we missed the mark.

Some believe that when we see Jesus at His Second Coming, that we will instantly be made exactly like Jesus. That all of the sudden a transformation of our character will bring instant changes. We have already began the Christ-like transformation. Don't wait until Jesus comes back for there to be Christ-like character in your life. Scripture doesn't say anything about Jesus changing our character. It only talks about bringing understanding and physical change, but never character. **I John 3:2** says:

*But we do know that when he comes we will be like him, FOR we will see him as he really is.*

The word "for" can also be translated as "so that". "We shall be like him so that we might see him, or understand him, as he is." How do we know what to look for if we don't have some sense of understanding about who, or what Jesus should be like? You know, as we become more and more like Jesus the more we will be able to see things the same, feel the same way about individuals, and love others with unconditional love.

And example for us would be how we relate to a dog. Your dog cannot enter into your sorrows or your joys. You come home brokenhearted and sit down. The dog sensed something is wrong. He whines and sits looking up at you with his brown eyes expressing concern, but he cannot understand, he is puzzled, he does not know what is wrong, he cannot enter in, he cannot comfort you. He does not and cannot understand what you are going through. When you become happy, he knows you are happy. He wags his tail, but he does not know what it is all about. He cannot know because he is a dog and you are a human being, therefore he cannot enter into what you are going through.

John tells us that we cannot understand God unless we become like him. We will never be able to understand this mighty, wonderful Being, His love, grace, or truth. We can never know him until we become like him. That is what God wants to do in us NOW.

If you can grasp this, then you will understand why John then continues and writes verse 3.

*And all who believe this will keep themselves pure, just as Christ is pure.*

How can we know God today? We can understand him and his character if we become pure ourselves. We then have something in common.

#### **4. Purity Produces Understanding**

**II Peter 1:3-4** tells us:

*As we know Jesus better, his divine power gives us everything we need for living a godly life. He has called us to receive his own glory and goodness. And by that same mighty power, he has given us all of his rich and wonderful promises. He has promised that you will escape the decadence (corruption) all around you caused by evil desires and that you will share in his divine nature.*

Purity in our lives allows us to share in God's divine nature, being able to do good things in spite of our human nature, and all of the evil that surrounds us. The more we become pure the more we will understand about God. **II Corinthians 7:1** tells us:

*Because we have these promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit. And let us work toward complete purity because we fear the Lord.*

It is only when we develop an understanding of who God is that we are able to fear God. To the general public God is an impersonal being who is inactive with His creation and who doesn't interfere with life. He is a force that simply exists. Why would anyone fear him unless they understand His character? The more pure we become, the more we understand about God, the more we will model Christ's character, the more Christ-like our actions will be. **James 1:27** tells us:

*Pure and lasting religion in the sight of God our Father means that we must care for orphans and widows in their troubles, and refuse to let the world corrupt us.*

The more we seek purity the more we will respond to the world as Christ would respond. It casts aside our human and sinful nature for the nature of God's.

### **Conclusion**

John's word of encouragement to us is to seek purity, just as Jesus remained pure in His earthly existence. As we remain pure the more we will find our nature taking on the nature of God's. Then when Jesus comes back to get us, we will be able to see and understand who He is. We will no longer be puzzled by what we see, but we will have something in which we can relate or have in common.

We will also see how different we are from Jesus as well. We will be able to see how far we have missed the mark and how much we need the miraculous forgiveness and restoration of God.

But we are to live pure. And in the end the initial reward will be a granting of understanding and a resurrected body. Live a pure life and the rewards will far outweigh what we can even begin to imagine. We are even tasting a little of the blessings we are going to receive, today. Today we have unimaginable grace of being called children of God. This does not simply imply a title, but an interactive relationship with God, with the promise of an inheritance.

John tells us:

1. You are a child of God NOW.
2. Look forward to our hope of transformation at the Coming of Jesus.
3. Seek purity and live as Christ lived.
4. The more we live like Christ the more we will understand Him. The more we will be able to relate to His character.