

Reading: 1 John 2:28-3:10

Theme: What We Should Be. (v3)

We have considered amazing things from v1 & 2, glorious and exhilarating truths for believers. Throughout the years many believers have been moved, thrilled and encouraged by the great truths they contain. Sadly other believers have not been moved by these truths because they are or were weighed down by their problems, their plans for the future, or their hearts were hard and their love had become cold. Sadly a lot of people have had no interest in the truths we have looked at, because the truths did not apply to them, so they meant nothing to them and they had no interest whatsoever.

We have noted **what we are as believers (v1)** - children of God and all because of His love lavished on us. Then we saw **what we shall be (v2)** - we saw this briefly last time and noted John wanted us **1. To recognise we are the children of God - now.** With all our felt, real or imagined weaknesses, and all the pressures on us, we are now as much a child of God as those already in heaven. **2. To recognise we are destined for glory.** We do not yet appear what we shall be - caterpillars and butterflies, but far more glorious and God will bring it to completion. **3. To recognise something of this glory.** It will occur when Jesus appears at His 2nd coming and then we shall see Him as He is - in all His glory, majesty, holiness, power... Yet even more incredibly we shall be transformed by the sight and shall be like Him - perfect, glorious resurrection bodies, no sin, no weariness in worship and praising Him, no tears, no aches or

pains, but our mortal bodies or mortal remains will be transformed in the twinkling of an eye.

What amazing and glorious things we have looked at. They were so good I had to try to summarise and bring them afresh to our minds and hearts to glimpse again something of the glorious things which are true of believers and what we shall be one day. Now we move on to see **What We Should Be (v3)**. Some people may feel this is an anti-climax from v2 - where we were in the rarefied teaching and truths of heaven, the believers' state when Jesus returns, but here in v3 we are back to earth, to the mundane, the boring, the routine, the nitty-gritty of life and we may feel we are now going to look at things that would seem to hinder our delightful anticipation of the glorious situation and events of v2.

Yet this verse is not an anti-climax; it is not to be considered as mundane, boring etc. I hope we will all come to see this! To those it applies to, remember when we were approaching our wedding day - the day itself was great, wonderful, glorious, happiest day of our life. Now remember all the exciting preparations - the arrangements, finding a place to live, decorating and furnishing it; then the wedding arrangements and all the guests, the seating order. At times it was a hassle, a chore, mundane jobs even, but it was necessary in preparation for the wonderful day of our wedding and our new life together. John in v3 writes of the exciting, mundane and essential preparation we are to make ready for when the glorious time of v2 occurs.

I hope we remember that John is writing of the arena of sonship and how we are to be righteous. He has already mentioned Christ's return (2:28); that Jesus is righteous and we are God's children (2:29). Now in the light of all he has written, especially the exalted and glorious truths of v2, we come to v3, from which I want to note 3 things:

1. Connection.

There is not a *contrast* between v2 & 3, but a *connection*. It is obscured by NIV, but in other versions it is shown by a connecting word, which is there in the original, "*and*". The glorious matters of v2 are definitely bound together with the matters of v3 and vice versa. We are not to separate them. We are not to view them as different items and topics. If we are thrilled by v2, then v3 is to be viewed in the same light and in connection with all that thrills and moves us in v2. In fact v2 is just a preparation for v3. It is not that v3 is a tag on, but it is the climax of what John wanted to write. All he said in v1-2 is to lead us to say "*Hold on a minute, if that is true, then it is to affect the way I live now!*" In the light of v2 we can be like the three disciples on the mountain of Transfiguration - seeing Jesus' glory, seeing Moses and Elijah in glorious splendour and wanting to stay there. Yet the disciples needed, as do we, to go back to reality, to real-life in this world and when they got to the foot of the mountain reality rushed in with a bang - the demon possessed boy and all the misery and unhappiness of that.

Our hearts may wish to remain in the realm of almost Christian escapism - with a false expectation and desire for God's glory because we cannot cope with life. Yet the true

Christian hope is to enable us live in the here and now as well as longing for glory. We are not to miss the connection between v2 & v3. Moving on we see not only *Connection*, but also:

2. Inclusion.

Sadly I have met believers who were always the exception - *"I know God's word says ... but I feel it doesn't apply to me!"* (Or words like it!) They are loophole Christians, always finding a loophole to justify their actions, attitudes, way of life and behaving. Here John says what he is about to write included every believer, for it is relevant and applicable without exception to *"Everyone who has this hope in Him..."* This does not mean "everyone who has this hope within themselves" for the "in Him" grammatically refers to the Lord Jesus. The older versions for emphasis and clarity use a capital H, so NASB, NKJV has "Him". NASB says *" And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him..."* ESV helpfully translates it as *" And everyone who thus hopes in Him..."*

The hope is in, is centred on Christ and His return, on our seeing Him and being like Him. It includes every believer without exception. There are no let out clauses, no loopholes - John says *"**Everyone** who has this hope in Him..."* If we are a believer, whether a new or a mature believer, young in years or more mature, whether going on well or finding the going tough, we are to realise that what John says in this verse is applicable to us all. Our salvation, our relationship and position with God gives us the hope, the certain and reliable hope of the things we have seen in v2. It does not matter if we are affected or unaffected, thrilled or indifferent

to those truths; in our salvation we have this hope in Him, for more than just earth and all it holds.

We are not to imagine this verse does not apply to us as a believer. It is an all inclusive verse for all believers. If you are not a Christian then this verse is irrelevant to you; it does not include you at all. In fact it excludes you, as you have no hope in Him. For you there is nothing to look forward to, no hope of heaven, and no endless joy in glory waiting you at His appearing. What most certainly will be the believer's happiest and most glorious day, will be your most terrible and terrifying day! You may be moral, live nice, good, charitable and kind lives, but if you have never trusted the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, then you are without hope, without God in this world and because of that you are most certainly without hope and God for and in the next world! Yet the gospel tells us that this need not remain your situation – as the Saviour can be yours too and you have this same hope. See finally:

3. Procession.

Because of this hope, John proceeds to show that our lives are to be affected. John wrote v2 not for theological reason, but to lead on to an ethical process - everyone who has this hope in Him *purifies* himself. This is to be an ongoing process, a procession of holiness in our lives. John uses the word purifies in a present tense - to purify and keep on purifying. It is an ongoing process, a procession of growing, of ongoing purification of life. In 1 John 1:9, in NIV only, we have the word "purify", but in other versions it is "cleanse" and there a different word is used and its emphasis

is to cleanse, to clean, to get rid of dirt on the surface etc. Here in v3 the word used refers to something that goes on within us. Not only must we get rid of sin's dirty staining on us, but its effects and influence within us, so we seek to get rid of it, by God's help, on our minds, emotions, desires, passions and inner self. We try to avoid and try to be rid of sin in our whole inner nature.

John is not saying that we can become good enough and reach a level where we can stop. John shows us that this ongoing procession of purifying is to use the Lord Jesus as our target, our example, our aim and our standard. If we have the glorious hope of v2, then our aim in our life here on earth is to be as much like Him as it is possible for a redeemed sinner to be. It is a positive view of purity, of holiness. It is not some negative Victorian view of holiness and purity, but it is to be involved in life, be involved with people and the activities of life and yet not be contaminated by sin! We are to live like the Lord Jesus as far as we can. I know He was God incarnate, He had no fallen nature and all temptation came from outside of Him. Yet He was tested, tempted as we are and yet He did not sin. He took the full force of Satan's attacks in all their subtlety and ferocity. He knows them so well and is able to understand us, He is able to sympathise with us. He is not some hard ogre of a Saviour, but is tenderly and gently patient with us.

Never excuse our failures, our sin, our yielding to temptation. Do not stop in the progressive process of purification. If we do, it's as if we say "*That hope is not worth having, I will dump it to one side and live as I want!*"

Realise this hope is to stimulate, and motivate us to live godly lives and if need be, to live in a different way from those around us. It should cause us to want to please Him, not ourselves or the society or group we are in.

This purifying ourselves is not a one-off experience as some have taught, probably as some still do in our days - saying you can have an experience then you would be perfect, live a victorious life and never sin again. John does not say that here, for it is not something for God alone to do to or in us, but it is for us to continually be involved in. Yes we need the help of God the Holy Spirit and the NT is clear on this - here in this verse, also 2 Corinthians 7:1 *“Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.”* We are also to mortify (put to death) our sinful desires and nature (Colossians 3:5). We are not out to be moral. It is not John saying become moral and you will be OK. Christianity is not about doing good to earn salvation. It is because we are Christians, children of God that we are to evidence our faith by purifying ourselves with God's help and we become more and more like our Saviour as the family relationship characteristics are to show. We are to realise that God's plan, purpose and promise is that we are to be conformed to the likeness of His Son (Romans 8:29) and as fellow workers with God we purify ourselves.

If we really feel, know we are God's child and have the hope of glory, then we are to exercise Christian commonsense - which like all commonsense is not common! If God has

done so much for us, and we don't know when our lives will end in our death or when Christ will return, then isn't it wise to be preparing ourselves at all times for when we meet Him? It just doesn't make sense to live and behave in a way that is contrary to our calling and standing on God. When we had our house on the market it was a real pain, but also really pleasant - not the lack of buyers, but the fact that we had to keep it exceptionally tidy all the time just in case - even my study was very tidy!

John wrote of what is a logical outworking of who we are and what we shall be. It is as if he said "*Surely we should purify ourselves.*" He has already said we are to live so as not to be ashamed at His return (2:28). How are we living? Do we regret anything we have to do for God? Are those things a pain, a bore and a chore to live as pleases Him? If we choose to live contrary to pleasing Him, we are effectively saying the hope we have is as nothing, but our pleasures, desires, relationships, sin, wants, lusts, business deals, getting on, reputation and success are all more precious than the hope of His appearing, of seeing Him and being like Him. Surely we would not be as brazen and hard as to say that! Sadly we may not say it, dare not own we think it, but we can easily evidence it in our lives.

This verse is a tremendous challenge to us and yet it is also a glorious encouragement as it does not say "*Do this and you will have hope*", but says "*You have this hope by grace, love and mercy, this is your glorious position as children of God, now live it out and show it to a world that desperately needs to see it.*"