

Proof of Life: Living Like Children of God

1 John 2:28-3:10

Introduction

- There is continuation with the previous charge for the “children” (believers) to abide in the gospel with perseverance
 - With emphasis on the anointing, Christ-exalting, gospel-centered work of the Holy Spirit, the believer is empowered to live a persevering life
 - “And now...”
- In this section, we see a description of what a child of God truly looks like and how he / she should live.
- Really, all of this is about Abiding in Christ. That’s what children of God do, they abide in Him. For the sake of our study this morning I’ve divided this passage into 3 Main Sections: Abide in View of Christ’s Return / Abide by Knowing Who You Are in View of the Father / Abide by Living Distinctly as One Born of God

Abide in View of Christ’s Return (vv.28-29)

- **Passion to be found Pleasing**
 - Confidence that has lasted (running correlation – careful)
 - This is the purpose of this particular exhortation and, in a sense, our lives
 - This is a driving support of our Passion Statement as a church
 - Protection for life and doctrine
 - The work of an elder / pastor
 - **1 Tim.4:16**, “Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.”
- **Pleasing by Pursuing Righteousness**
 - Christ – knowing based on revealed absolute truth
 - Christ in you...Christ out of you – knowing based on experiential reality

- Knowing God and practicing righteousness produces assurance
 - His character becomes our practice
- Therefore, taking pleasure in pursuing pleasure in God will produce certainty of salvation – battle your lack of joy (caused by doubts) with joy in God through Christ!

Abide by Knowing Who You Are in View of the Father (vv.1-3)

- **Know Who You Are (v.1)**
 - Children loved by the Father (kind of love – sacrificial, adopting love) – **John 1:12-13** (connecting with **v.29**)
 - It is love that has driven His sovereign choice of us as His children
 - **Eph.1:3-6**, “*3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.*”
- **Know Whose You Are (v.1b)**
 - God’s possession
 - Alienated from the World
 - This divide will only increase
 - How does the world know you?
 - How does the world NOT know you?
- **Know What You Will Be (v.2)**
 - Children NOW
 - Uncertain THEN...
 - What we know...
 - We will be like Him
 - Not God, but...
 - Without Sin, sickness or falsehood of any kind
 - Because we’ll see Him like HE IS

- Connects with the present reflection of His character in our current practice (v.29) – We know that in the future we will be perfected in that righteous likeness forever!

- **Know What You Are (v.3)**

- Hope-filled

- Being reminded of our future state is perhaps the greatest hope we can remind each other of on a regular basis – for there is no true hopelessness in light of eternity
 - **1 Thess. 4:13**, *“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.”*

- Purified

- To be actually or figuratively ritually clean
 - A view of sanctification
 - **Heb.10:14**, *“For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.”*

<p>Abide by Living Distinctly as One Born of God (vv.4-10)</p>

- **Children of God Do Not Practice Sinning (vv.4-6)**

- Those made righteous in Christ do not practice lawlessness (v.4)

- Lawlessness is the complete absence of godly / morally-upright behavior (that’s the reality of all sin – a lifestyle of this proves one is without Christ)
 - Really does not relate to the Law per se, because the Law is just not dealt with in these letters

- Understanding Redemption (v.5)

- Substitutionary Atonement
 - **1 John 1:9**
 - Condition

- **Romans 5:8**, *“but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

- Again, the reflection of His character

- Abiding nature of following Christ (v.6)

- Sense of ongoing engagement with Christ
 - Those who claim otherwise, yet hold to their confession, have never even seen the real Jesus
 - Practicing Sinfulness
 - What is this practice?
 - **Vv.6-9** present a tension with **2:1**
 - Sinless perfectionism?
 - Generally we speak of habitual, ongoing sinfulness as opposed to occasional sins of a believer. While there is some practical understanding to this, it falls apart because of present tense verbs used by John
 - Others have interpreted this to be confessional perfectionism vs. the claims of the lost to be without sin altogether (i.e. – 1 John 5-10). Again, some merit for the believer is positionally perfect (**Heb.10:14**), but practically imperfect.
 - In light of the secessionists we know they claimed a sinlessness NOT based on Christ and practiced immoral behavior. The believers were to be weighed by their abiding (ongoing dependence and interaction) with Christ, reflecting His character.
 - What we know is that there is no sinless perfectionism for the believer in this world, but there must be the overall marks of Christ in the Christian. As well, **2:1** makes clear that there will be occasional sin in the believer, and we are to know

that all of our sin has been perfectly removed in Christ.

- What that leaves us is what we've looked at today, culminating in **v.10** in a few moments. The one who abides in Christ, hating and battling sin, is the one assured of salvation in this world.
- **Verses 4 and 6** hinge on **verse 5**. In the sins that we commit as believers, they have been satisfactorily removed because of Christ's atoning work. But for the believer, he/she also feels the sting and conviction of their sin because the blood of Christ covers them. The cost of God's wrath due sin on Christ's head is not lost on the believer.

- Abiding in Christ
 - Essentially, this work of abiding is the work of increasingly reflecting the righteous nature of Jesus Christ (in word, deed and thought)

- **Children of God Battle Deception (vv.7-9)**

- Engage in Truth (**v.7**)
 - Righteous practice is evidence of being declared righteous
 - This is the ethical, practical expression of true inner regeneration
- Understand the Opposition (**v.8**)
 - Those who practice sin are without Christ and are of the devil
 - Understanding the lost condition
 - As surely as Christians reflect the nature of their father, the lost will reflect the deceptive nature of their father
 - Understanding the nature of Satan (created, and a liar, sinner, all the time – without fail)
- Understand the Real Warrior in the Battle (**v.8b**)
 - This is not in your own strength, Jesus Christ came to destroy the works of Satan

- Understand the Radical Nature of New Birth (**v.9**)
 - The 2nd of 10 references to being born of God, yet John nowhere mentions how to be born again in this letter, rather emphasizing the emphasis to the fact – ongoing discipleship is what will affirm a believer in his / her salvation, not going back to see if the right words were said or prayers were prayed.
 - The reason for the ceasing of sinful behavior is God's seed (new birth with the Holy Spirit) is in him!
 - Children of the devil are now children of God!
 - Those who were enemies are now friends
 - Those who were dead are now alive and will be for eternity
 - How could someone remain the same if the destroyer of Satan, Jesus Christ, reigns and rules?!

- **Children of God Can Rest Assured (v.10)**

- Look at the evidence
 - Is there distinction between your life as a professed "Child of God" and the life of those without God (of the devil) in the world?
 - Careful... This is not a relativistic salvation. There is no merit before God if you "appear" better than those in the world, there is only evidence that having once been "of the devil" yourself that you are now a bona fide Child of God!
 - **Spurgeon**, *"It were well if we always remembered that practical godliness is the soul of godliness; that it is not talking religion, but walking religion which proves a man to be sincere; it is not having a religious tongue, but a religious heart; it is not a religious mouth, but a religious foot."*
- Look at your love
- Practice righteousness and love one another seeking to see Him pleased at His return!