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God's Remarkable Love

1 John 2:28-3:3

Introduction:

Our text for today's exposition was written by the apostle John, one of the original twelve disciples of Jesus, who also wrote the Gospel of John, Second and Third John, and of course, the Book of Revelation. He was the disciple whom Jesus loved (John 21:20, 24), the one to whom Jesus committed His mother Mary, just prior to His death on the cross. He was one of the two sons of Zebedee: the brother of James. He wrote this epistle in his old age and eventually became known as the "Apostle of Love," since the theme of love is so prominent in his writings.

First John was written to believers in Ephesus, who were facing an invasion of a false theological system known as **GNOSTICISM**. The Gnostics were spiritual counterfeiters who claimed to know God through the pursuit of spiritual knowledge. Believing the "spirit" was good and untouched by the physical, *which was evil*, they believed they could sin, unashamedly without remorse or consequence. In other words, to the Gnostic, knowledge was superior to virtue. They claimed to be Christians, to know God, but they hated Christians and lived sinful lives.

The apostle John writes to encourage and strengthen believers and churches in their Christian life. His focus in our text is on God's remarkable love! God commands us to inspect and know factually the extraordinary love that He has given to us. Here is what is mind boggling --- God loves us even though we are unlovely:

- Romans 5:8 - "But God demonstrated his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
- Ephesians 2:4-5, "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).
- 1 John 4:9-10 - "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Here in our text, we are encouraged to behold **three results of God's remarkable love**: (1) we are called children of God; (2) we will one day be like Christ; and (3) we are motivated to live pure lives.

I. We are Called Children of God: 1 John 2:28-3:1

1 John 2:28-29 introduces the concerns of chapter three. It is conveyed that: **believers are to maintain fellowship with God to avoid experiencing shame at the time of Christ's return**. We do not normally think of believers being ashamed when Christ returns. But we must remember that at the **Judgment Seat of Christ**, our works are evaluated, and eternal rewards are distributed. At that time, God will “*bring to light what is hidden in darkness and expose the motives of our hearts*” (1 Cor. 4:5). Experiencing shame at living a disobedient life is what John is referring to in these verses. It is God's love for us that motivates us to be obedient and remain in fellowship with Him.

Chapter three begins with a command – **Behold!** (KJV, NKJV), meaning “*to know factually*,” “*to see with the eyes*,” or “*to inspect thoroughly*.” The phrase “what manner of” translates a word that means “*from what country*” or “*what sort of*.” In other words, God's Love is, **OUT OF THIS WORLD!** But why is God's love so remarkably significant? Two truths are highlighted here: (1) we are blessed to be called children of God, and (2) we are unrecognizable to the world.

A. We are blessed to be called “*children of God*” (v.1a)

The word “*son*” means **offspring** or **children**. We find the same word in John 1:12. “*But as many as received him, to them gave he the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*”

Being God's child emphasizes the offspring aspect of the relationship. God has Fathered us in a supernatural way. Though our old sinful nature is still present, every true Christian has the nature of God in his inner being. Think of how astounding it is to be called a child of the Supreme Majesty of the Universe. There is no greater privilege than God's love bestowing on us the privilege of adoption through faith in Jesus Christ. Because of God's remarkable love, we have become **CHILDREN OF GOD. HALLELUJAH!!!!**

B. We are unrecognizable to the world (v.1b, “*Therefore, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him*”)

Note the word “*therefore*” (*for this reason*), points us back to what John just said that Christians are offspring of God. Because of that fact, the world does not *know* or *accept* or *understand* Christians. The same truth appears in John 1:10-11, “*He was in the world, and the world did not recognize Him.*” The failure of the world to recognize Jesus Christ was because they did not accept Him. Being children of God, we have the nature of our Father and should behave like our Father. If the world rejects God, it is no surprise that it would reject us.

II. We Will One Day Be Like Christ: 1 John 3:2

Even though we are children of God, we do not grasp the full significance of what it means to be God’s children. We now have a very dim perception of who we are and what we will be. Notice the two truths revealed about the promises guaranteed us because of God’s remarkable love.

A. AT THIS MOMENT, we are children of God (v.2a, “*Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be*”).

“*NOW we are the sons of God.*” That is a wonderful truth. Right now, currently, in the present, we are children of God. We ARE, not may be, not could be, not shall be, we ARE God’s children. We have been born of God. We are part of God’s eternal family. As RIGHT NOW children of God we are saved, safe, spiritually gifted, and secured in Christ (John 10:28-30).

The phrase, “*it has not yet been revealed what we shall be*,” signifies the mystery surrounding the Christian’s future transformation. The phrase suggests a promise of a future state that will be revealed when Christ appears, indicating that we will be transformed to be like Him, experiencing a profound change that is currently beyond human understanding.

B. AT THAT MOMENT, we will be like Christ (v.2b, “but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is”).

Our future and eternal immortality have not yet appeared or been made visible. We really do not know much about our future bodies. But right now, today, we know factually that when Christ is revealed, manifested, appears at the Rapture, we will be like Him. The very moment we see our Lord Jesus Christ our understanding will expand, and we will see it all. As 2 Corinthians 3:18 puts it, “***We are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory.***” This process of transformation, which appears slow here on earth, will be rapid and complete the very moment we see Jesus Christ.

This does not imply that we will become “a god.” That is impossible. It does mean that God will change our mortal body into an immortal body like that of Christ. It does mean that all that *now* hinders us from sharing the likeness of our Savior will be removed and we will more fully share His likeness. There are things about our future immortality that are still hidden from our eyes right now. **HOWEVER:**

- We know that one day we will put on incorruption. (1 Cor. 15:52)
- We know that physical death is no longer an enemy. (1 Cor. 15:54)
- We know that our present experiences cannot compare to our future (2 Cor. 4:17)
- We know that all our mortal heartaches will be gone. (Rev. 21:4)

All this takes place the moment that we see Him as He is. (1 Cor. 15:51-53) “***Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall all be changed. For this corruption must put on incorruption, and this mortality must put on immortality.***”

III. We Are Motivated to Live Pure Lives: 1 John 3:3

A. We should celebrate the hope of verse 2 (v.3a, “*And everyone who has this hope in/on Him*”).

Remember, **hope** in the Bible is not a wish or desire. It is a steadfast confidence based on the promises of God. The hope of one day seeing Christ and being like Christ is for every true Christian, but often we get so cluttered with the cares and pleasures of this life that we take our eyes off this hope. We become inundated with problems, concerns, setbacks, difficulties, failures, and successes, that distract us from concentrating on the hope of one day seeing the One who loved us enough to die for our sins and be raised the third day as verification of that fact.

No wonder the apostle Paul encouraged Pastor Titus in Crete to “*look for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ*” (Titus 2:13). This hope is described as “*blessed*” and “*glorious*” reflecting the significance Christ’s return for us. We should focus on Christ’s soon return and not the temporal affairs on earth (Heb. 12:2, “*looking unto Jesus*”).

B. We should be motivated by the hope of verse 2 (v.3b, “*purifies himself, even as He (Christ) is pure*”).

Christ is pure in every sense of the word. He is pure in character, in morality, in deed, in thought, in motive and in word (1 Peter 2:2, “*Who (Christ) committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth*”).

All who have their hope in Christ and His return, will be committed to keeping themselves from sin. They will put away every defilement and aim to be like Him in purity and righteousness. The goal of living a pure life is to be like Christ. He is pure, and we must seek to live like Him (BUT HOW?).

This truth lays the groundwork for comments John will make in verses 4-10, depicting sin as incompatible with fellowship in Christ. If we are walking in the light and fellowshipping with Christ (see: 1:5-2:2), we will be living pure lives (3:4-10 – teaching on the incompatibility of sin and righteousness):

(1) Sinning is deliberate rebellion against God (v.4).

(2) Sinning opposes Christ coming to take sin away and to destroy the works of Satan, *the one who started sin* (vv.5, 8, “*sinned from the beginning*”).

(3) The ones “*purifying themselves*” practice righteousness (v.7), cannot persist in a lifestyle of sinfulness (vv.6, 8-9), and live a life of love (v.10)

Conclusion:

Let us carefully reflect on God’s remarkable love and the results it brings in our life.

- It enables us to be called a child of God.
- It promises us that we will one day be like Christ.
- It motivates us to live pure lives as we prepare to meet Christ.

Following hard after Jesus Christ is a call to committed living and means steadily moving forward in holiness and **NOT RETREATING** to our former sinful lifestyles: comfort zones, sinful vices/habits, sinful associations, and sinful attitudes.

We should strive for a life led by the Holy Spirit, grounded in faith, and committed to holiness through **God’s Remarkable Love**.

Preaching Outline for 1 John 2:28-3:3

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- A. We are blessed to be called “*children of God*” (vv.2:28-3:1a)
- B. We are unrecognizable to the world (v.1b)

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