

Walking in the Light – Part 6

Confident and Unashamed – 1 John 2:28-3:10

Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – Oct. 13th, 2024

Intro:

- This morning, we are continuing our series in the letters of John as we grow in our understanding of what it means to be "walking in the light" and how we can stand confident and unashamed before Jesus at His return. From our passage for today, I John 2:28-3:10 (page 1054), we are going to see what those who have eternal life continue to do as the children of God.
- I want to continue to draw your attention back to the verse through which we are viewing these letters. The primary reason John wrote these letters is that we may know without a shadow of a doubt that we have eternal life, what that means, and what it looks like.

1 John 5:13 NIV

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

- In chapter two of 1 John, John continues to help us discern, understand, and recognize the difference between those who are in the faith and those who are outside the faith. John's emphasis at the end of chapter two is for those who are in the faith to continue to "remain" or "abide" in Christ.
- These last two verses in chapter two serve as a "hinge" that connects and expands the theme of "remaining in Him" with how we are to live out our identity as children of God.

Continue in Him

1 John 2:28 NIV

And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.

- John continues to use the phrase "dear children" to communicate that we are dear to him as an overseer of the church and, more importantly, that we are dear to God because we are His children.
- We, as children, are to "continue in Him." There is an emphasis on the continual connection with Christ as an identification with Him in an ongoing relationship of life flowing to us and bearing fruit through us. This is a continual belief in Him, following His word, and living from, in, and because of our relationship with Him.
- We must guard ourselves against drifting from Him by continually connecting with His word, doing what He says, and being in contact with Him through the give and take of prayer and our fellowship with one another as the family of faith. Your daily and weekly choices make a difference by either strengthening your connection with Him or weakening your connection with Him.
- There are many reasons why this is important, including His fruit appearing in our lives, how we can benefit others and build up the body of Christ, and how we become more like Him. The reason John highlights for continuing "in Him" is that when Christ appears—and notice this is not "if" but "when"—we may stand "confident and unashamed" before Him at His return.

- So, from this, we know that He will return, and we will stand before Him. The way we want to stand before Him is "confident and unashamed." In this context, being "confident and unashamed" means like a soldier standing in front of his or her commanding officer.
- We can only be this way if we "continue in Him" by fulfilling our assignment, continuing to serve by honoring our mission and honoring the one who sent us. Hopefully, while doing this with our whole hearts and best efforts, we will remain committed and diligent as good soldiers following the directives of our commanding officer because we love Him and are connected and committed to Him.
- This is how you want to stand before Christ. Give yourself wholeheartedly to Him. Continue to serve and follow Him out of love. And if you have fallen back, or fallen away, or have gotten off track, count this as your wake-up call to repent and change your heart, change your ways, and get on board and on task.
- His return will happen, and our standing in front of Him will happen. Let us be of those who stand in front of Him confident and unashamed.

Continue to do right

1 John 2:29 NIV

If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

- If you are connected to God, you will know that He is righteous. And because He is righteous and we are connected to Him, we will do what is right according to His character and His word because we have been born of Him. Because He is righteous, we, who are born of Him, we His children, will do what is right. So, our right living is the evidence that we are children of the righteous one. We know how this works in nature, "like father, like son; like mother, like daughter." It works the same way spiritually. If we are born of God we will be "like" Him.
- He is righteous, and those who have been born of Him will do what is right, again according to His character and His word. Those who do right are born of Him, and then the contrast is also true: those who do not do right are not born of Him. So, as children born (again) of God, we are to continue to do what is right because we are of our Father and reflect our Father by our lives. A person's righteousness or living rightly is the evidence of eternal life, not the cause of it. We live rightly because He is righteous, which is evidence that we are born of God.
- John continues to focus and expand on this in the next verses.

Continue to live from your identity

1 John 3:1-2 NIV

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

- Behold, see, understand, know the great love of the Father, the outside of this world kind of love, a love He that has lavished on us, given to us, and granted to us so that we are now called children of God! We are not children of God because of our choice but because of His. And this is what we are! Your first and most important identity is that you are a child of God. This is

what is most important about you, and this is who you are—a child of God. Everything else you are is far secondary to this identity. Understand that you are a child of God and that God has lavished His great boundless otherworldly love on you! And now live from this identity.

- You don't live to earn it (because you can't). You live from it because this is who you are! Knowing this truth can change everything for you. You don't live to be loved; you live because you are loved. You don't live to become someone; you live because you are someone.
- John goes on to say that the world does not recognize that we are the children of God because they don't know God. If they did know God, then they would recognize His children because they "look and act" like Him. We can recognize each other as brothers and sisters in the family of God because we "look and act" like our Heavenly Father regardless of what we physically look like or where we physically live.
- We don't fully know as of yet what this all means, but someday, we will know in full as we are fully known. What we do know now is that when Christ appears, when He comes back, we will be like Him (and we can learn about what our new bodies will be like from what we know about Him after His resurrection). For we will see Him, and we shall be like Him. He is eternal, and we will be eternal. Let this truth absolutely capture you and encourage you. Fix your eyes on this truth and let it transform and inspire you to live from this identity!
- John then continues to expand and draw from this point as he continues to write.

Continue to purify yourself

1 John 3:3 NIV

All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

- If you are a Christian, your hope of receiving eternal life is solely trusting in Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, the righteous and eternal one. We trust God's revelation of Himself to His creation by and through His word that Jesus is who He said he was, was without sin, died in our place, was resurrected in the body by the Holy Spirit, and will return again in His glory. We will see Him as He is, and we will be like Him. All who have this hope in Him will purify themselves while we are now alive, just as He is pure. Because Christ is pure, we purify ourselves.
- Now, the question is, how do we "purify ourselves?" What does this mean? In order to "purify ourselves," we have to acknowledge that we are "impure," that we are sinful, and that we have broken the good laws of God, encapsulated by the great commandment. We "purify ourselves" by acknowledging this truth and confessing our sins to God so that we can be forgiven. So our part in this purification is to confess our sins – and because He is faithful and just He will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).
- We must do our part so that we can be "purified" of the sin we have committed. We do this because Jesus is pure, and by connection and confession, we can be pure. He covers and cleanses our sins. We must continually do this because we continually sin.
- Not only must we continually confess our sin to be pure, we must continue to confront and flee from sinning. John continues with the following verses.

Continue to fight sin

1 John 3:4-6 NIV

Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. 5 But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. 6 No one who lives

in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

- Now, we are good with verses 4 and 5, but verse 6, at first glance, should freak you out a bit because this is not our lived reality. I have followed Christ for over 30 years, and I still sin, and you also still sin even though you follow Christ as well. John states this again in a similar way in verse nine: "No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God." So what does John mean by this? Are Christians to reach a state of sinless perfection, and if they don't, then they are not born of God?
- So here is why John is not teaching sinless perfection. The first and most obvious reason "is what he says in 1:8 and 10, 'If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us . . . if we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.' So John goes so far as to tell Christians that it is a sin to say you are sinless."
- The second reason "is that the Greek verb 'commit sin' or 'sin' in verse 9 implies continuous action. It would be well translated, 'No one born of God is content to keep sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot be content to keep on sinning because he is born of God.'"
- The truth is that we are sinful, and to say otherwise is a sin. Christians cannot be "okay" or content with sinning. They should be bothered by it, and they should fight it on a continual basis. Christians cannot say, "well, I am sinning, and I am good with it." This is not the state of a Christian because the Holy Spirit who lives in him will be continually convicting him of sin. So, we must continue to fight sin.
- We must continually "walk in the light" (1 John 1:7), which means we see our sins in God's light and respond to them by owning and confessing them and continually being purified from them and fighting against them.
- In the next verses, John summarizes the whole section with the encouragement to continue to demonstrate your faith.
- (The above quotes are from John Piper. <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-son-of-god-appeared-to-destroy-the-works-of-the-devil>)

Continue to demonstrate faith

1 John 3:7-10 NIV

Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. 8 The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. 9 No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God. 10 This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister.

- John was warning the church about those who taught that you can be a "Christian" and live any sinful way you want. This false teaching continues to this day. We have lowered the bar of Christianity to justify that any and all sin is acceptable to continue in, and that we can still be a "Christian." John is saying, don't be led astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as Christ is righteous. Because we are in Christ and born of God, we will live right. We will do what is right according to the word of God. You can't say you are a Christian and not have a

change in the way you are living. You must do what is right as evidence that you are born of God.

- If you keep on sinning like nothing has changed, then you have not changed, and you are not born of God. The one who does what is sinful is of the devil. He is not a "child of God" but a child of the devil because he is doing what his "father" is doing.
- Jesus came to destroy the work of the devil, to remove sin from our hearts and destroy sin on the earth. You are either destroying sin, or sin is destroying you. The devil is a destroyer of all that is good, and right, and holy. Sin is the result. But Jesus came to destroy the destroyer and will remove sin and the effects of sin for all eternity. He paid the penalty of sin, and He will break the power of sin. We demonstrate our faith by fighting against sin and doing right because we are God's children, born of Him.
- John then sums this up by saying, "this is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are. Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child," or to put it positively, everyone who does what is right is God's child. He also includes that we must love our fellow brothers and sisters in the faith. If we do these two things, we know that we are children of God. Next week, we will continue as John focuses on and unpacks the how, the why, and the importance of loving each other.

Conclusion

- I hope that your understanding of what a Christian is and does has been clarified by this message and the message of 1 John. I hope your conviction has been strengthened so that you will continue living for and in Christ. I hope you are encouraged to continue to do so because of His great love for us, and out of love for Him, and that you look to stand in front of Him at His return confident and unashamed. Continue in Him. Continue to do right. Continue to live from your identity. Continue to purify yourself. Continue to fight sin. Continue to demonstrate your faith.

Benediction

May you be confident and unashamed at His return, living as children of God, purified by His grace, and reflecting His righteousness in all you do. Go with hearts purified, hands ready to serve, and lives committed to doing what is right, knowing that you are deeply loved, eternally secure, and called to demonstrate your faith. Amen.

Questions for growth groups

- What is one thing from this sermon that stood out to you or challenged you personally?
- In what practical ways can we remain connected to Christ daily? How do you guard yourself against drifting away from Him?
- What do you think it will be like to stand before Jesus at His return? How does that influence how you live today?
- What does it mean to be a child of God? How does knowing that God has lavished His love on us shape the way we live?
- How can focusing on your identity in Christ help you overcome feelings of inadequacy or failure?
- John tells us that no one who lives in Christ keeps on sinning. How do we reconcile this statement with the reality that Christians still sin?
- How can we support each other in this ongoing fight against sin and temptation?
- How do you see Christ destroying the works of the devil in your life or in the world around you?
- How can we cultivate a lifestyle that demonstrates our faith, not only in doing what is right but also in loving our brothers and sisters in Christ?