

A Work in Progress

I John 3: 1-3

As I began to look at this passage, I was reminded of a song that the children used to sing: *He's still working on me, to make me what I ought to be; It took Him just a week to make the moon and the stars, the sun and the earth, and Jupiter and Mars. How loving and patient He must be; He's still working on me.* That is a very simple song, but it reveals great truth that is dealt with in these verses.

Philip.1:6 – Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: This speaks of a continual process. God has begun a good work that He will to continue to perform until the Lord calls us home. The word **perform** means “to bring to an end, accomplish, perfect, or complete.” When we were saved the process began, but it won't be complete until we meet the Lord in the air. I rejoice that the Lord is patient and loving, continuing to transform us into the image of His Son.

As we look at this passage today, I want to consider the **details** of what God is doing in the lives of His children as we think on: **A Work in Progress**. This work in progress actually consists of three separate phases. 1) Our Justification, salvation being delivered from the penalty of sin. 2) Our Sanctification, becoming more like Jesus, being delivered from the power of sin. 3) Our Glorification, being taken to heaven, delivered from the presence of sin.

I. Our Justification of the Past (1) – It is here that John draws attention to the love of God that has brought about our justification. Had the Lord not loved us, we would never have been offered His forgiveness and restoration. It was love that compelled God to send His Son to die for our sin. Let's take a moment to consider the vastness of God's love that is prominent in our justification.

A. The Essence of God's Love – John speaks of the **manner of love** that God has bestowed upon us. That is an interesting phrase. It speaks of the “*sort or quality*” of that love. It has the idea of “*something we are not accustomed to or beyond the ordinary.*”

- God's love is beyond our ability to fully comprehend. His love is not limited like the love of mortals. Our love is often dependent upon circumstances and affected by emotions. It is often hindered by manmade boundaries. God's love exceeds all boundaries and expectations. His love is pure; it is perfect. This is once again the word *agape*, speaking of the genuine love of God!

B. The Expression of God's Love – It is wonderful to know that God possesses that type of love, but if He never shared or expressed it, we would not fully know God's love. I am glad that I have personally experienced the abundant love of God. It isn't something I've only read or heard about, but I have received that love, straight from the heart of God.

- He has **bestowed** such love on those who belong to Him. This refers to “*that which has been given, poured out in an extravagant and lavish manner.*” It is given of “*one’s own accord.*” When you think about that, is that not simply amazing. We know that God has lavished His great love upon us, but I stand amazed that He would offer such love and even desire to pour such extravagant love upon us!
- His great love was expressed for all to see as Christ, His only begotten Son, bore our sin upon the cross. God the Father loved us enough to send His Son and Christ loved us enough to give His life a ransom for our sin! **Eph.2:4 – But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,** Rom.5:6 – **For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. [8] – But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Jn.3:16.**

C. The Evidence of God’s Love – **that we should be called the sons of God.** We will deal with this further in a moment, but God’s love provides for our acceptance into His family. It is because of this great love, wherewith He loved us, that we can be called the sons of God. That means exactly what it says. Those who have trusted Christ in salvation have become the sons of God. We are heirs of the promise! God’s love is so great that we have been made partakers in the inheritance! The redeemed are now the children of the almighty God and Lord.

D. The Estimation of God’s Love (1b) – As John rehearses the love of God to those who will listen, he is also reminded that such love is not accepted of all. The world around us does not know the love of God because they do not know Him. They do not know or understand the believer because they have not met the Lord whom we serve.

- As I pondered these words of John I was reminded of the tragedy they reveal. God loves all men. He desires that all might be saved. God so loved the world, but sadly all will not receive His love. His love offers grace and mercy resulting in pardon and forgiveness. But, when His love is rejected, judgment is all that remains.

I. Our Justification of the Past (1)

II. Our Glorification in the Future (2) – In one verse with a few words John reveals one of the richest glimpses of our future state with the Lord. He turns his attention from our past justification to the future glorification that all the redeemed will experience. This single verse offers much that we can rejoice about. First of all consider:

A. Our Adoption – Beloved, now are we the sons of God. What profound truth regarding our future. John is speaking to those who have been born again, those who have put their faith and trust in Christ as their Savior. He reminds them that at that very moment they are the children of God.

- All the redeemed ought to rejoice when reading these words. We are right now the sons of God. We are presently counted as family with the Lord. We have been accepted in the beloved. We have not yet made the transformation to heaven, but we are slated for a trip to glory when this life is through! [Jn.1:12 – But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:](#)

- I want to point out before we move ahead that although John is dealing with our future glorification, this statement is dealing with present tense. Right now are we the sons of God! This is not something that we are waiting upon; it isn't something that we hope will transpire in the future. We are now the sons of God. If you are saved, you are as good as there! [1 Pet.1:5 – Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.](#)

B. Our Transformation (2b) – John had put his faith and trust in the Lord. He fully expected to be caught up into heaven to meet the Lord in the air, but he was not certain of all that would transpire at that exact moment. He wasn't sure just what our bodies would be, but he knew that we would be like our Lord when we see Him!

- We may seek to do our best to live for Christ in this life, but even at our best we fail. Our mortal bodies are prone to sin and influenced by the flesh. We face heartaches and pain. We face sickness and disease. As we age our bodies deteriorate and decay. Thank God, one day after while, we will lay aside these mortal, sinful bodies for a new, glorified body that is free of sin and the effects of it. [Rom.8:18 – For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.](#) [1 Cor.15:51 – Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,](#) [Philip.3:21 – Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.](#)

C. Our Expectation – [we shall see Him as He is.](#) What a glorious reminder of the promises of our Lord. He is coming again to receive us unto Himself and we shall see Him on that day. He went away, but He is coming again to catch away all that have believed on Him in salvation.

- Our faith is not a dream or fairy tale. In fact, it is more real than anything we know or experience today. We ought to live our lives in full expectation and anticipation of our Lord's return. He is coming again and it could be this very day! One glorious daybreak our Lord and Redeemer will step out on a cloud and sound the call for His bride! We will be ushered into His presence to behold Him as He is.

I. Our Justification of the Past (1)

II. Our Glorification in the Future (2)

III. Our Sanctification in the Present (3) – John has dealt with the wonders of our past justification and our future glorification and now he deals with the need for our present sanctification. Consider:

A. Our Relationship – [every man that hath this hope](#). We have already dealt with the fact that we are now the sons of God. Through His marvelous salvation we have been adopted into His family. Once again John reminds them, and us, of the relationship that believers have with God.

- The hope that we possess was not earned or achieved in and of ourselves. We have inherited this eternal hope through the sacrifice of our Lord and the grace of God. [1 Cor.15:19 – If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.](#) [Titus 2:13 – Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;](#) [Heb.6:19 – Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;](#) [1 Pet.1:3 – Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,](#)

B. Our Responsibility – [every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure](#). If we have received the hope of eternal life in Christ, we have a responsibility to purify ourselves before Him. This is not an option; it is an obligation. We are to follow the example that Christ left us, seeking to live a life that honors Him and reflects His holiness.

- I know that living in a body of flesh we are prone to sin. There is a constant battle between the spirit and the flesh. We will never achieve perfection in this life, but we must seek to live as holy and upright as we can. We will be delivered from the presence of sin when we meet the Lord, but we cannot wait until then to live lives that honor Him!

- I fear that few fully grasp the need to live sanctified lives in our day. We are no longer our own. We don't have the right to live as we please. We have an obligation to become more like Christ and reflect His holiness.

- When we consider all that Christ has done for us and what awaits us in heaven, should that not make us desire to be more like Him? [2 Cor.7:1 – Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.](#) [2 Pet.3:11 – Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,](#)

I have certainly been challenged and encouraged by these verses of Scripture. I rejoice for the day that I was justified in Christ, set free and forgiven of my sin. I am looking forward to the day that I lay aside this ole body of sin and receive my new glorified body. But until then I have a responsibility to live more like my Lord.

Christian is your life all that it should be? If the Lord were to come today, is all well with your soul? Is there anything that you would like to take care of should this be the day of His coming?

If you are here today lost and apart from God, you have never experienced what I have preached about. You have never been cleansed of your sin and made a child of God. Your name is not written in the Lamb's Book of Life and if the Lord were to come right now you would be left behind. Why not come to the Lord today and receive the salvation that only He can give so that you can rest assured of being among those who received a new glorified body?

