

Purifying Hope

1 John 3:3

1

3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

2

Are you happy? Are you content? The Christian should be, knowing that we have been forgiven, that Christ is for us, that we are a child of God. Note the verses preceding this text in...

1 John 3:1-2

3

1 See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2 Beloved, now we are children of God,

What brings joy into one's life? Is it the relationship you have with your spouse or boyfriend or girlfriend? Or maybe your children? But what about the relationship we have with God? The relationship with God through Christ is the greatest expression of love possible. That relationship is the true source of all joy in the life of man. It is only through that relationship that the joy of man can be eternal.

Deut 33:29

4

29 "Blessed are you, O Israel; Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord, NASV

Deut 33:29

29 Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, KJV

Moses described the people of Israel as being...

5

"Happy"

The reason Moses describes them as such is because they were...

6

"A people saved by the Lord"

I like the comment Moses makes to them...

7

"Who is like you"

This statement is crucial to understanding his point. If the Israelites had just looked at the world around them, they would have seen that no other people on Earth could claim to be God's people. No other people on Earth could lay claim to having been saved by the creator. The Israelites could, and Moses says that should have made them happy.

There is a very sad but interesting dynamic that occurs with so many people. It is probably seen most by teachers and law enforcement that illustrates this point. Why is it that so many people,

not just the young, but all ages, choose to live a life of misery, anger, unhappiness? What is it they are missing in their lives? There is a scene from the movie Tombstone with Kurt Russell as Wyatt Earp and Val Kilmer as Do Holiday. Holiday is lying in a bed because of an attack of his tuberculosis and Wyatt is getting ready to go out and face Johnny Ringo. Ringo is a violent criminal that is leading up a gang of outlaws that Earp is trying to break up. Earp looks at Holiday lying there and asks, what makes a man like Johnny Ringo? Holiday says that Ringo has a hole in his heart, a hole that he is desperately trying to fill with evil, violence, or hatred. Look around the world today and see the horrible things that are happening. I believe it is that hole in people's hearts that they are seeking to fill. The world has gotten so far away from any semblance of morality or decency that it no longer has an anchor, however shallow it might be, in God. It hasn't been all that long ago that, at least peripherally, the world claimed a belief in God. Our currency still bears the slogan...

8

In God We Trust

Really, is the foundation of this country based, even loosely on God's word anymore? Now I understand and know that not even the founding fathers were faithful Christians. But they claimed a faith in God and made something of an effort to base the laws and constitution on their perception of what God wanted. As you look throughout the world 50 or 100 years ago this is what is seen, for the most part. Yes, there have always been exceptions to this, communism, fascism, dictators that have ruled from their own conceit, but I am talking more about the direction that the world is now pointing. Satan is succeeding, maybe has already succeeded, in redirecting the focus of how men think. God is no longer a focus, He hasn't been pushed into the back seat, He has been told to get out of the car completely. Well, I have digressed and jumped up on a soapbox, sorry. Back to the topic at hand, our discussion is concerning this idea of being happy. Moses told the Israelites that they should be happy because God had saved them. That's what the world has lost, the understanding that God can save them. There is no happiness in not knowing God. Oh, man might deceive himself into thinking he is happy in this life, content with the things he has accumulated, wealth he has achieved, or power that he perceives is his, but that isn't the happiness under discussion in this lesson. We are talking about true and eternal happiness that can only come from God. That is the hope of the believer.

1 Peter 1:20-21

9

20 For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you **21** who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

This brings us to our first point...

10

1) The Believer's Hope

Peter here says much the same thing as our text in 1 John says, there is a hope that can only be found in God. That's what John is talking about when he says...

11

“Hope fixed on Him”

Peter says...

12

“Your faith and hope are in God”

These are the same ideas, hope is found only in God. Peter tells us that the hope in God is realized through...

13

“Him who was foreknown before the foundation of the world”

1 Peter 1:3

14

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Jesus Christ is the hope that is God. When we give ourselves in faith to Jesus Christ through obedience to Him we become partakers of the hope that is in God.

Notice the rest of verse 2 now...

1 John 3:2

15

2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

There is the hope of the believer, that when Christ returns we will be like Him. That hope is exclusive to those who believe in, follow, and obey God through Jesus Christ.

Acts 4:5-7

16

6 and Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent. **7** When they had placed them in the center, they began to inquire, "By what power, or in what name, have you done this?"

Peter, was questioned by those of “High priestly descent,” they wanted to know by what power or name they presumed to be teaching in, like they were. While their motives were skewed, the question they wanted answered is the question we should all have whenever we hear something being taught. There is nothing wrong with questioning where the authority is for what is being taught, and this is true regardless of the subject under discussion. When your math teacher tells you that 2 + 2 is 4, there should also come a time when you are told why it is. Now that answer may be nothing more than that is what the accepted norm is, but that’s ok, whatever standard is being used is what defines the answer. Ultimately that is the problem with this idea of happiness. By what standard is the idea being measured? If it is the standard of the world, then whoever has the most toys wins, but if it is the standard of God, then he who would be greatest, must become least. That is achieved in only one way, and Peter tells us in his answer to the priests...

Acts 4:12

17

12 And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

This brings us to our next point...

18 2) What should this Hope do for our soul

1 John 3:3 **19**

3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

John illustrates that having the Hope of God within operates on us. But how? What does it do? How does it work?

Rom 5:3-5 **20**

3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; **4** and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; **5** and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Hope doesn't disappoint, because it is from God given to man through the Spirit.

Rom 8:24-25 **21**

24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? **25** But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

Hope reveals the salvation offered by God.

2 Cor 3:11-12 **22**

11 For if that which fades away was with glory, much more that which remains is in glory. **12** Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in our speech,

Hope promises glory and gives confidence to take a stand.

2 Thess 2:16 **23**

16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace,

Hope is a gift from God by His grace.

Heb 6:19-20 **24**

19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, **20** where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Hope is the anchor which holds our souls to God through Christ. It reveals His plan to us for our salvation, it holds the promise of that salvation being realized, helping us to have the confidence to stand for Christ, and it never disappoints, because it is from God, hope is God, and hope is revealed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

So how do we know if this hope is ours? Our last point is a discussion of this thought. How do we know? What do we need to do to realize it? What is the test? John speaks to it and therein is our point...

25 3) The Test of Hope

1 John 3:3 **26**

3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Do you see what John is saying? Do you want to know if the hope within you is true, the question that needs to be answered by each of us is...

27 *Are we purifying ourselves?*

That is the litmus test for determining the depth and sincerity of our hope. What is the commitment we have made to setting ourselves apart from the world and learning what God would have us to do. The more we strive to separate ourselves from the world, the closer we come to the purification of God through the blood of Christ.

Col 2:20-21 **28**

20 If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, **21** "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!"

Living in the world does not mean we have to be a part of it. That's what James says...

James 4:3-5 **29**

4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. **5** Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose:

Happiness, true happiness, both now and eternally, is found in the hope that is found in God, is God. The hope of salvation is achieved only in the name of Christ and His shed blood. It is that hope that can strengthen, comfort, encourage, and sustain us until Christ collects us to take us home to our father in heaven.

30