

RCC in the Word
Week of January 14
1 John 3:3

“And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure.”

The opening verses of 1 John 3 bring us a very comforting message of hope. We have come out of chapter 2 having been warned about antichrists, and having been made aware that we have many spiritual enemies that actively seek to destroy us. In these days of our earthly sojourn, while we struggle with remaining sin and (hopefully) yield ourselves to the gentle and all-wise hands of the Potter, we need a good dose of hope. Spiritual hope, that is, the hope of the gospel is a very important thing for us to be meditating on for at least two reasons.

First, we're living in a spiritually desolate time and place without much outward reason to hope. Our loving heavenly Father puts His people through hard trials, hard seasons, and in hard places. I would guess that almost none of us could say that our lives are turning out exactly the way we had hoped that they would. We had big dreams for a bright future (or even just a “normal” life) only to find out that people disappoint us, or relationships fail, or our own sin limits our possibilities. Or if it's not any of these things, it could be that everything we desire (material possessions, opportunities, etc) costs too much and thus is not within our reach. Or our health begins to fail. Whatever our individual case, the longer we live in this fallen world, the more acutely aware we become that our ultimate hope is not to be found in any of the above-mentioned things of this life. In the book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon mentions that God has put eternity into the hearts of men (3:11). This is true of every human being, not just followers of Christ. This would explain the striving (however misguided) of every human being on the planet to find meaning and purpose (hope?) in life.

Second, the hope of the gospel affects how we should live. 1 John 3:1 gives us our identity as children of God. The fact that the world does not know us is proof of this identity. In verse 2, John reiterates this fact and sets up the already/not yet nature of it. We are God's children **now** (already), and what we will be has **not yet** appeared (not yet). He goes on to say that when Christ appears (returns), we will be like Him. Now being like Jesus means many things, not the least of which is *sinless*. Wait a minute. Me? Sinless?? What an amazing hope there is in this! If sinless perfection is what I am destined for in eternity future and if such a state is directly linked to my status as a child of God, then why should I indulge in sin now? This willful abstaining from sin (or avoiding it, fleeing from it, killing it, etc) has nothing to do with earning salvation, but has everything to do with living out the hope of the gospel. We should think about it as a part of being ready to meet our Savior. If we knew that He was coming to our house for a visit, we would clean house, cook a good meal, bathe ourselves and put on nice clothes. We wouldn't neglect these things and let Him arrive at our house to find us out back rolling around in the mud.

I would encourage all of you to revisit the parable of the wise and foolish virgins in Matthew 25:1-13. The five who were ready displayed a love for the Groom and a certain hope that He would come. The five who were not ready were obviously not living in this same hope. I'll close with a few lines from Fanny Crosby's hymn *Saved By Grace* written from this parable.

Some day: till then I'll watch and wait,
My lamp all trimmed and burning bright,
That when my Savior opens the gate,
My soul to Him may take its flight.

And I shall see Him face to face,
And tell the story--saved by grace;
And I shall see Him face to face,
And tell the story--saved by grace.

And this...

“ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen...”
~Hebrews 11:1 KJV

- Written by Eddie Lyrene