

We shall be like Jesus, when He returns. 1 John 3: 2 - 10

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure. (1 John 3:2-3)

Introduction:

Resistance to change is a human characteristic. We feel comfortable with what is known to us, and fear the unknown. But there also are those times when all of us would desire a change for the better. If we are truly honest, we must admit that none of us have arrived where we really want to be. We certainly experience life as a journey, of which the destiny is not so clear to any of us. Most of us will also admit, if we are Christians, that we have made some progress. We are not what we were before we received Christ. This should give us great hope. We are being transformed more and more each day as we love and follow Jesus. This is the power of the Christian life. This is the power of the Spirit of Jesus Christ working within our lives. Christianity is after all about transformation. Christianity is primarily about being changed.

This is the hope for the Christian: We look toward that great day of Christ's return. We look toward that event in history, which will bring history to a close and will inaugurate a new era, an era of God's Kingdom. God's Kingdom will come in its fullness and our lives will be forever transformed into perfection. Our text tells us about this hope. It reveals the truth that there is a great day in which God's purposes for our lives will be completely fulfilled. It will be a day of great transformation for us.

We were changed when we received Christ.

Before we talk about the change that will take place when Jesus returns, let us remember that our life change has already begun. Our text says, *"Dear friends, now we are children of God."* Whatever change we may look forward to, we must remember that there has already been a make over of our lives and outlook on how to live. We are children of God now and hope on Christ's mighty power and believe in the impact His Spirit has on our lives.

This is significant, because we were not always children of God. The Bible does not teach that every human being is a child of God. It teaches the opposite. It reveals that we come into the world as God's enemies. We have a natural inclination to sin, because naturally we are born with original sin, which means that we naturally prefer evil to holiness and godliness. This is Christ's view. Jesus, speaking to certain religious leaders of His day, told them that God was not their father. He said in John 8:44, *"You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire."* The Bible teaches that it is a mistake to assume that we are in the family of God, just because we are human. The Bible teaches that our natural inclination is to be children of darkness.

We have to understand the truth about sin. Sin is evil and the result of the Devil's work. Sin is not good for you and is not fulfilling. Sin carries an earthly and an eternal penalty. Sin has terrible consequences. The last part of verse 6 reads: *No one who continues to sin has either seen him (Christ) or known him.*

Verse 8 reads: He who does what is sinful is of the devil.

And we read in verse 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 a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.*

These Scriptures teach us that a chosen sinful lifestyle, is a characteristic indicator that a person does not know Christ as Saviour and Lord. The teaching of these Scriptures is not that any single act of sin indicates that one is not a believer, but a chosen outlook on life and lifestyle not considering the will of God or the Lordship of Christ in our lives, is an indication of not being saved and not being God's child.

Earlier in this letter John has already stated that *"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."* (1 John 1:8) No, he is not talking about our weakness to still fall into sin, but about a worldview that integrates sin into our lifestyle and find excuses for our sin. He is talking about values that allow a person to continue sinning without any remorse or desire to change. He says that this indicates that such a person is really not a Christian at all.

This is the deception that Satan has pulled off in our culture. Our society integrates sin and even promotes it. It acts as if sin will have no real consequences. But if there is a God, and if He is the God revealed in the Bible, then we will all stand before Him one day. On that day the consequences will be very real. We will clearly see that sin destroys and condemns.

A great transformation has already taken place in our lives. Receiving Christ through the graceful work of the Holy Spirit, has altered the very core of our existence. It made us God's children. Great emphasis is placed on the word now in our text. It says that *"now we are children of God."* We are forgiven **now**. We are born-again **now**. We received the very life of Jesus Christ **now**. Certainly a great change has taken place in our lives as a result of our thirst and hunger for the Truth, the Way and the Life. By receiving faith in Christ as our Lord and Saviour, we have been changed radically, already.

It also is a work taking daily steps forward. God has not completed the work. It begins in regeneration (being graciously given faith in Christ), continues in sanctification, and results in glorification one day in heaven. It is a process. When we are born-again, we are born from above and starts the process of sanctification. We are being changed on a daily basis by the power of the Spirit of Christ working in us. This process never ends in this life. We are becoming more and more Christ-like, as we continue our walk with Him.

When Christ returns, we will be glorified. Our bodies will be changed in the twinkling of an eye and we will enter into the fullness of what God has in store for us for all eternity. But here and now the focus of our lives should be on the progression of our sanctification. Sanctification means that we are being changed more into the image of Jesus Christ. It is stated in Romans 8:29: *"For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son."* This is the work the Spirit is performing in our lives every day. We have been changed and we are continually being changed. This is the significance of our walk with our Lord.

We will be changed when Christ returns.

The process of salvation will only be completed at Christ's return when we will receive a new heavenly body and live in the presence of our Lord forever.

There certainly are things we can count on:

We can count on the certain truth that Jesus will come again. There is no doubt that Jesus is going to appear and that every eye will see his glory. He promised his disciples that He will. He said that He was going to prepare a mansion for us and that He will come again and receive us to Himself.

We can count on the truth that when Jesus comes He is going to complete His total transformation of our lives and "we shall be like Him". This will happen *"for we shall see Him*

as He is.” It suggests that when we see our Lord in all of His glory, this process of change and transformation into the image of Christ, will be completed.

We can count on the truth that one day we will see the Lord in all of His glory. And those of us who have been changed to be like Him through sanctification, will enter into a deep enduring fellowship with Him for all eternity. We shall be forever united with Him. This is our hope; this is what the Word promises us.

Appeal:

If this is your hope, then how should you live?

Verse 3 of our text gives a clear and concise answer: Everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. If we trust in Jesus and that we will receive the eternal glory, we will surrender all of our lives to Him today. We will live our lives in preparation for the great and glorious day to come. We will live in keen expectation that Jesus will return and then we want to be found faithful. How about you? Are you living a life of surrender to the Lord? If He would return today, would you be ready?

*This is the Word of God. In the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.*

Any comments regarding this sermon outline, may be emailed to Andries Combrink at andries@centurionwest.co.za