

THE PURIFYING HOPE

TEXT: 1 John 3:1-3:

¹ Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not.

² Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.

³ And every man that hath this hope in Him [the Resurrection] purifieth himself, even as He is pure.

Titus 2:13: Looking for that Blessed Hope, and the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

The inescapable truth of our faith in the Lord Jesus' Return is found in its effect upon our conduct.

There is true hope that runs out into holiness. This holiness outreach lies in sanctification. All of us who hold the hope of the Lord's Return should examine ourselves to see what it is doing to our lives. There is no merit in being specialists in prophecy or bible study, unless we are specialists in sanctity — for without holiness no man will even see the Lord when He comes to make up His jewels!

Let no man claim to cherish the Blessed Hope if he is not living the Blessed Life. It will repay us great dividends to weigh from this portion of the Word of God the very intimate association between hope and holiness.

Paul told of presenting the saints to Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:2b:

^{2b} for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

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³ ***But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.***

Colossians 1:27-29:

²⁷ ***To whom [the Saints] God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the Hope of Glory:***

²⁸ ***Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:***

²⁹ ***Whereunto I also labour, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily.***

Jude 1:24: Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His Glory with exceeding joy,

Colossians 1:21-22:

²¹ ***And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled.***

²² ***In the Body of His Flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight:***

2 Corinthians 4:14: Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.

We are to be free from defilement.

James 3:17: But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

1 Timothy 5:22: Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.

1 Timothy 4:12: Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

James 4:7-8:

⁷ ***Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.***

⁸ Draw nigh [near] to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

That is the meaning of the words in **1 John 3:3** — that we have the responsibility to purify ourselves:

1 John 3:3: And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.

Purification and cleansing obviously belong together. Those pure in heart who see God have, first of all, been cleansed by the Blood. Such cleansing is continual, as **1 John 1:7** sets forth, and hence produces a maintained state or condition of purity.

1 John 1:7: But if we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, we have fellowship one with another, and the Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.

THE MEANING OF PURIFICATION

1 John 3:3a: every man that hath this hope in Him . . .

The prospect of our Lord's Return is the great incentive to holiness. Again and again throughout the Scriptures, the approaching Coming of our Savior is held out as the stimulus to seek the way of purity. It cannot be a mere coincidence that in the generation like ours that has largely lost sight of the Day of Christ, the call to holiness of heart has also sounded more faintly than certainly. Nothing would do more to reinstate the message of Sanctification in the churches than a recovery of a vital belief in the ***reality and significance of the Lord's Return in power and judgment of righteousness.***

The link between holiness and hope is unmistakable in this verse. The hope of His soon Appearing is also the hope of our transformation.

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Colossians 3:4: When Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in Glory.

But we are not to postpone the pursuit of purity until that consummation is devoutly to be wished. Purification, according to God's Word, is to start now! Immediately following that verse just given, we find this plain injunction:

Colossians 3:5a: Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth;



We are to **put off the old man** (our carnal nature) and **put on the new man** NOW, in this present time. That comes almost as a cold dash of water after the ecstatic expectation of **verse 4**. Lest we should get too quickly ecstatic, it reminds us that it is by a hard way that we reach the stars. If we are to enjoy life in Christ, there has to be a death to our old reality.

There can be no escaping this death sentence upon the flesh. We must be crucified with Christ — that is, crucified to living our life in the flesh. This not only means being crucified to sensuality, but also includes dying to the erroneous belief that we can mount the steep ascent to Heaven without holiness.

This urge to holiness — centered in the Blessed Hope — springs from the very nature of God, for He said in His Word that we are to:

Hebrews 12:14: Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord;

Matthew 5:8: Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

It is a contradiction to such hope to indulge in sin and impurity. Therefore, as we are sanctified by faith, we must be sanctified by hope, so that we may be saved and purified by hope.

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It is the hope of hypocrites — not of the sons of God — that allows for gratification of impure desires and lusts.

We must lead lives consistent with our confidence in the certainty of His Coming. Not only shall we keep ourselves unspotted from the world, but we shall cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

THE MEASURE OF PURIFICATION

1 John 3:3b: . . . even as He [Jesus] is pure.

Christ alone in the standard. It is His purity we must covet — His Holiness that is to be our goal. We shall be like Him at His Appearing, and we must be like Him, even now.

Here in **Ephesians 1:4** we are told that God foreordained, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.

Ephesians 1:4: According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love:

Romans 8:29: For whom He [God] did foreknow [His foreknowledge], He also did predestinate to be conformed to the Image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren.

God's whole purpose for our complete status in grace is that the beauty of Jesus might be seen in us — pure, as He is pure.

Sanctification is conformity to the Image and Person of Christ. The more a believer is growing like Jesus, the more he is growing in holiness. The less resemblance there is to Christ — in actions, attitudes, temper, daily walk, and in every look — the less He is advancing in the great work of holiness.

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If we were to faithfully engage in the most neglected duty of self-examining our conscience, most of us would discover just how far below this great standard of holiness we are really living.

The New Testament relates the believer's present purity to his ultimate glorification at Christ's Return. The man in the street thinks that holiness is human fashion, and calls those "saintly" who are kind, sweet, or good. The Scripture will accept no such man-made standards. Christ is the sole pattern, and only those who are in union with Him will attain to this saintliness.

THE METHOD OF PURIFICATION

This is a surprising method: **"purifieth himself"**.

Purity, here, is something we must do for ourselves.

2 Timothy 2:21: If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet [qualified] for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

Most references in sanctification refer to what God does in us, but there are instances in scripture where God's people are urged to sanctify themselves.

We must separate ourselves from sin in order for God to do His part. The gift must be placed on the altar for God to sanctify it. We are to work out our own salvation, as God works it in us.

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Philippians 2:12-13: Paul writing to the Philippians

¹² Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own Salvation with fear and trembling.

¹³ For it is God Who worketh in you both *to will* and *to do* of His good pleasure.

Every one of us should have this hope in him. It is a must for the Christian life. Are we living up to the magnitude of our hope? That is the next question. Is the richness of the message of the Lord's Coming reflected in our daily walk? We are to heed Peter's admonition:

1 Peter 1:22: Seeing *ye have purified your souls* in obeying the Truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

Psalms 24:3-4:

³ Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in His Holy Place?

⁴ He that *hath clean hands, and a pure heart*; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

Leviticus 8:15: A blood sacrifice **And he slew it; and Moses took the**



blood, and put it upon the horns of the Altar round about with his finger, and purified the Altar, and poured the blood at the bottom of the Altar, and sanctified it, to make reconciliation upon it.

Numbers 19:12-13:

¹² He shall *purify himself* with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean: but *if he purify not himself* the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean.

¹³ Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and *purifieth not himself*, defileth the Tabernacle of the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is yet upon him.

Nehemiah 12:30: And the priests and the Levites purified themselves, and purified the people, and the gates, and the wall.

James 4:7-10:

⁷ *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

⁸ *Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.*

⁹ *Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.*

¹⁰ *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up.*

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