

THURSDAY 20 October 2022 "Lavished" (1 John 2:28-3:1)

Hello, my "Walking with Jesus" friends,

What is it about little children that they are so adorable, and our hearts melt while our faces smile? They say grandchildren can wrap mature, strong, older grandparents around their little finger. If you are a grandparent, have you found that to be true? Come and join me again as we sit with the apostle John while he's writing his first little letter to Christians throughout the Roman empire in the latter part of the first century. Once again John uses the phrase '**children**', but he's writing to adults like you and me!

"And now, dear children, continue in Him so that when He appears we may be confident and unashamed before Him at His coming." (1 John 2:28) Who is the "**HE**" John is talking about, and what is the '**appearing**' John anticipates? *Of course, "**HE**" is the resurrected Jesus Christ!* John had been a very close friend of Jesus during the years Jesus was here on earth doing His great miracles and teaching God's truth. John was one of His first (John 1:35-39) and most faithful disciples.

In fact, John was the only disciple to stand near the cross as Jesus was crucified. (John 19:26) John and all Jesus followers in the first century were confident Jesus would soon return again to earth to gather them all up to be with Him in heaven forever. (Acts 1:11) Jesus had promised this several times but John may have especially remembered that special evening in the upper room when Jesus had said to them: **"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in Me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I'm going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me so that you also may be where I am."** (John 14:1-3)

In the midst of persecution in the first century John and all followers of Jesus were very courageous and one of the things which gave them that boldness, that perseverance, was the hope that even in their lifetime they may see Jesus return to them. That's why John is here urging his readers to **'continue in Jesus so that when He appears we may be confident and unashamed before Him...'** Have you thought much about what that day will be like for you when you stand face to face before Jesus? How will you feel? What will you say to Jesus? How will you behave in His Presence? John encouraged his readers to consider that IF their relationship with Jesus is authentic and vibrant, they should anticipate this face-to-face encounter with Jesus with confidence that Jesus will recognize them as one of His blood purchased followers.

*They could stand '**unashamed**' before Holy Jesus because they could be confident that as they had repented of their sin God the Father had forgiven their sins as God had accepted the atonement death of Jesus as payment in full for their sin debt. Those sins were washed away, removed from them as far as east is from west, according to Psalm 103:12!!*

My friends, if you've trusted Jesus to be your Savior you can celebrate these very same truths applied to YOU!! And are you looking forward to the day you will stand, face to face with Jesus?

John continued writing his little letter: **"If you know that He [Jesus] is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of Him."** (1 John 2:29) Do you see John is again giving us another evidence of a person who has authentically been 'born again' by God and is a genuine Christian? *When our behavior is a reflection of Jesus by our doing what is morally right, not because we are legally required to do so, but because it is a natural outflow of our being a new creation in Christ...that is evidence that we are a genuine Christian!*

If you've been with us on the "Walking with Jesus" journey for a while you'll remember we looked closely at that when we worked through the letter James wrote to the Jewish Christians. We studied that during the last two weeks of August and the first week of September. *May I remind you that ALL our past teachings are on our "Walking with Jesus" website (<http://qwwj.org>) under the "daily archives" tab.*

Now let's rejoin the apostle John as he's writing... **"How great the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!"** (1 John 3:1) John was once again reaffirming the important point that Jesus lived a holy, sinless, righteous life while He was here on earth, and of course because Jesus is God the Son, there has never been any sin in Him at all! *That is important for several reasons, but one is that it is this reality that qualifies Jesus to be the ONLY possible, viable Savior for the world.* We understand that God's penalty for sin is death, thus no human being can pay the death price for the sins of another person, for we each are guilty of sin, and thus must each pay our own sin debt by our death. *But because Jesus is righteous, holy, sinless, HE can die for MY sin! And because Jesus is limitless God, His death is sufficient for not only my sin but yours also, and all the sins of the entire human race!!*

Please notice John again reminds us that one of the most precious aspects of our salvation experience is our **adoption by Almighty God the Father into HIS family**, and we are then called **'children of God'**! John introduced that concept in John 1:10-13. The apostle Paul also wrote about this miracle of adoption in Romans 8:14-17. *This reality is that regardless of our chronological age when we trust Jesus Christ to be our Savior, God adopts us into His family as a son or daughter of God.* Not a cousin, not a niece or a nephew, nor a grandchild, but a direct connection Father-son, Father-daughter, with all the love and privileges of that holy relationship! And I love how John used the phrase: **"How great the Father has lavished on us..." LAVISHED!** What a remarkable word! What picture does it conjure up in your mind, my friends... **LAVISHED!**

The apostle Paul, in his writing of the letter to Christians in Ephesus, wrote: **"In Jesus we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace which He lavished on us."** (Eph. 1:7)

What a remarkable picture... Almighty, Holy God, lavishing His grace, His love, His forgiveness, His adoption on us! **LAVISH**... oh my what a wonderful concept and it should not be difficult for us to imagine how deeply grateful those persecuted Christians in the first century were to hear this from John! I wonder if applause broke out right here every time John's letter was read.

John continues with one last great thought: **"The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him [Jesus].** (1 John 3:1) Oh this was a harsh but helpful reality for these Christians who would receive John's letter. *The persecution they experienced, almost every day, was really a rejection of Jesus.* And John was encouraging his readers that just as he had witnessed the opposition against Jesus in Jerusalem especially, so he was now witnessing opposition against Jesus followers everywhere, in towns and cities large and small. John wanted them to understand an important truth: *the more Christians spoke and behaved like Jesus, the more they would be treated with opposition as Jesus was!*

Now let's pause and ponder that! If you are experiencing any persecution because people perceive you to be a Christian, could it be the simple reason is... those people don't want Jesus in their town? *Could there be any greater compliment than to be treated in a particular way because you remind people of Jesus?* Your words, your attitudes, your choices, your behavior... all showing people what it would be like if the resurrected Jesus Christ lived in your house, worked where you work, sat in the school classes you sit in, walked the same streets you walk every day! WOW! Guess what? *That's what being a Christian should be like... you and I representing Jesus every day, everywhere we are!*

Now here's a song to help us reflect on that amazing reality which I hope you and I are living!

Today's Scripture is 1 John 2:28-3:1.