*Series: The Composition of Confidence – 1 John*

**Confidence at His Coming – Abiding in Him**

*1 John 2:28-3:23*

**Introduction**

1. The need for confidence in fellowship with God through Christ and knowing God through Christ are essential to being confident when He comes again as He has promised.
2. His first advent was with the intent to reveal God to us through His life so that we could have fellowship with Him **(1:1-4).**
   1. This presents a change in identity.
   2. When we come into fellowship with God, we become a child of God (**cf. John 1:12-13)**.
   3. John begins using this language at this juncture – **3:1**
3. When Christ comes again, we want to be confident that we are identified with Him – that we are a part of His family, that we are God’s children in Christ, sons of God by virtue of the death, resurrection, and revelation of the Son of God.
4. **How can I have confidence that I am indeed a child of God, and that when Christ appears again, He will not be ashamed of me, but receive me as His own?**
5. Our Identity at His Coming **(2:28-3:3)**
6. The Condition for Confidence at His Coming **(2:28-29**)
   1. The importance of their possession of confidence is elevated by the fact that He is going to appear again in the future **(v. 28).**
   2. There are two major reactions to being in the presence of Deity – confidence or shame **(v. 28b).**
      1. ***“not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.” (NASB)***
      2. **Cf. Isaiah 6:1-5** – Isaiah shrank away from Him in shame.
         1. **(vv. 6-8)** – when his sin was purged, he confidently volunteered.
      3. Mount Sinai vs Mount Zion – **Hebrews 12:18-24** – fear **(v. 21),** confidence in better blood **(v. 24)**
      4. The question of confidence is one concerning the presence of sin – when He comes, we need to be found blameless – **cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 2 Peter 3:14; Jude 24-25**
   3. Solution – ***“abide in Him”*** – **2:6** – walk as He walked
      1. **1:5, 7** – in the light.
      2. **2:10** – in love.
      3. **2:27** – in the truth.
   4. **(v. 29)** – the test for confidence that we’re in close relation to Him – identified with Him – ***“born of Him”***
      1. Since He is righteous, practice righteousness.
      2. **NOTE: He does not say, “since you are born of Him practice righteousness,” but “if you practice righteousness you are born of Him.”**
         1. Their challenge is not one of knowing right and wrong, or duty – **2:20-21** – He didn’t write because they didn’t know.
         2. Their challenge is the deception from others which assaults their confidence in fellowship with God – **2:26**
         3. Therefore, if what you’re presently doing is practicing righteousness you can be confident you are ***“born of Him.”*** (**cf. John 3:3, 8** – you can see the effects of one born of Him)
7. The Function of Hope **(3:1-3)**
   1. Sin is the destroyer of confidence in our identity with God, but His love is the solution **(v. 1a).**
      1. **2:29** – showed that as they lived righteously in Christ, they were born of Him.
      2. This confidence is made possible by the gift of God’s love (***“love the Father has bestowed on us”***) in Christ – **Romans 5:5-11** – confident expectation (hope) does not disappoint because of the love God gave us through the revelation of the Spirit concerning the atoning sacrifice of Christ.
      3. **Consequence** – **(v. 1b)** – since we belong to Him the world does not know us (developed later – **3:12-13**). (Part of what threatens their confidence, but should reassure them)
   2. The visual of our identity is concealed until He is revealed **(v. 2).**
      1. Faith, not sight, including His glory and ours – **2 Corinthians 5:7, 16-17**
      2. ***“we know…we shall be like Him”*** – Confidence – because we abide in Him, are born of Him (**2:28-29**).
   3. The function of our hope (**v. 3)** – as we anticipate the revealing of our true identity with Him, we must seek to maintain and strengthen our identity with Him now (**2:29**) – purify self (**1:6** – cannot walk in darkness and be confident).
8. Confidence in Our Identity with Him **(3:4-15)**
9. Sin and Those Born of God **(3:4-10)**
   1. The Nature of Sin **(v. 4)**
      1. **Sin in context:**
         1. The last time ***“sin”*** was mentioned – **2:12**
         2. In this section – **(vv. 4-10)** – 10x – present active:
            1. **(v. 4)** – ***“commits sin”*** – present, active
            2. **(v. 6)** – ***“sin”*** – verb, present, active
            3. **(v. 7)** – ***“practices righteousness”*** – present, active
            4. **(v. 8)** – ***“sins”*** – verb, present, active
            5. **(v. 9)** – ***“does not sin”*** – present, active; ***“cannot sin”*** – present, active.
            6. **Contrast** – the ongoing, consistent, habitual activity of life – i.e. not contradicting **1:9, 2:1**, but showing that sinful activity is incompatible with those who are children of God.

***“Everyone who makes a practice of sinning” (v. 4, ESV)***

***“No one who abides in him keeps on sinning” (v. 6, ESV)***

* + 1. **Lawlessness** – *anomia* – “as what is contrary to law” (ALGNT)
       1. This technical definition sheds light on what constitutes the distinction between those who have fellowship with God and those who are children of Satan.
       2. Claim of opponents – **1:8** – may have violated law but have no sin, as if there is a distinction.
       3. Correction by John – **2:3-4** – keeping the commandments is essential to knowing Him, for not keeping the commandments is sin (**3:4**).
       4. **Application** – any lawlessness is sin and severs fellowship with Christ. We don’t get to be the arbiters of what is intolerable (EX: levels of sin, or certain doctrinal error – **cf. James 2:10-12; 2 John 9**).
  1. The Relation of Christ’s Incarnation to Sin **(vv. 5-6, 8b**)
     1. **(vv. 5, 8b)** – He came to take away our sins – by His death, but also what the death effected in us – **cf. Romans 6:4** – a newness of life separate from sin.
        1. He didn’t die that we might continue to sin.
        2. His death itself shows He has always been entirely opposed to sin – **(v. 8b)** – came to destroy it.
     2. **(vv. 5b-6)** – in fact, there is no sin in Him (else His death does not take sin away), and those who claim fellowship with Him are likewise, by definition, separate from sin.
        1. To sin – present, active – i.e. to live a life of sin is to show you are not associated with Him in the least.
        2. **1:5; 2:29** – if you know Him you know that He is light, and righteousness.
  2. A Contrast of Paternity (**vv. 7-10**) (looking back to language of **2:29)**
     1. **(vv. 7-8)** – it is black and white – or actions directly speak to who we belong to.
        1. **Righteousness** – fellowship with ***“He [who] is righteous”***
        2. **Sins** – of the devil – who has continued in sin from the beginning of history.
           1. **Cf. John 8:39, 44** – we belong to the one whom our works reflect.
        3. **(v. 8b)** – emphasizes further the severity of the deception – not only is one who continues in sin of the devil BUT STANDS DIRECTLY OPPOSED TO GOD’S GRACE – He came to destroy the devil’s works, but you perpetuate them.
     2. **(v. 9)** – shows furthermore the incompatibility between a life of continued sin and belonging to God.
        1. Does not ***“make a practice of sinning,”*** and ***“cannot keep on sinning” (ESV)***.
        2. Seed – **cf. 1 Peter 1:23** – the word of God.
           1. The seed/truth/word of God in us means we are keeping His commands – **2:4-5**
     3. **Conclusion** – **(v. 10)** – the test is not complicated.
     4. **(v. 10b)** – reintroduces (from **2:7-11**) a specific part of a life of practicing righteousness which confirms identity with Christ.

1. Love and Those Born of God **(3:11-15)**
   1. A Contrast of Messages **(vv. 11-13)**
      1. **(vv. 10b-11)** – the earliest, most fundamental message to discipleship in Christ is the call to love as He loved – **2:7-8** – Old (as it pertains to its constant association with God and presence in Christ); New (as it pertains to the supreme example of Christ)
         1. ***“Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently” (1 Peter 1:22,*** ASV)
         2. **John 13:35** – **love for each other is a hallmark of true discipleship of Jesus.**
      2. **(vv. 10b, 12)** – Cain is given as the quintessential case study of why a refusal to love the brethren identifies one as a child of Satan, not God.
         1. **Focus** – WHY DID CAIN MURDER ABEL?
         2. **Started with initial sin** – lawlessness **(v. 4**) – connects one with Satan **(v. 8).**
            1. Disobeyed God’s instruction for sacrifice.
            2. Rejected by God.
            3. Aversion toward the practitioner of righteousness, Abel.
            4. Acted out in an extreme form of unrighteousness – murder.
         3. **Hatred of brethren is a hallmark of sonship of Satan, especially as it is bred by an aversion to righteousness.**
      3. **(v. 13) – 3:1b** – the world, those in darkness/unrighteousness/sin, has always been intolerant toward righteousness – if you abide in Him you can expect hatred, if you are hated by the unrighteous you can know you abide in Him.
   2. The Transition from Death to Life Manifested by Love **(vv. 14-15)**
      1. **(v. 14a) – 2:8, 10** – love is the natural disposition and product of one wo has been ***“born of Him” (2:29)*** – if you love you can have confidence in your identity with Him.
      2. **(vv. 14b-15)** – having established the end point of hatred, John ties the logical conclusion up in dramatic fashion – **HATRED IS THE INCEPTION OF MURDER – who would say a murderer has eternal life, or fellowship with God?**
2. Confidence at His Coming **(3:16-23)**
3. The Assurance of Deed and Truth **(3:16-18)**
   1. We want to be confident that we are identified with Christ – ***“born of Him”*** – when He comes **(2:28-29).** Therefore:
      1. We purify ourselves **(3:3).**
      2. Which means not practice sin, but practice righteousness as He is righteous **(3:4-9).**
      3. Which includes not hate the brethren but love them as He loves **(3:10-15).**
   2. **These concepts are not merely theoretical, but very practical, with concrete manifestations – i.e. YOU DON’T GAIN CONFIDENCE BY MERELY KNOWING THAT THIS IS THE CASE.**
      1. **CONFIDENCE DOES NOT SIMPLY COME FROM THEOLOGICAL ACCURACY.**
      2. **CONFIDENCE DOES NOT SIMPLY COME FROM DOCTRINAL ACCURACY.**
      3. **CONFIDENCE COMES WHEN WE TRULY KNOW WHO GOD IS THROUGH CHRIST, WE KNOW HIS WILL, AND WE CARRY IT OUT IN PRACTICAL, EVERYDAY LIFE.**
   3. The supreme example – **(v. 16)** – the sacrifice of Christ – **cf. John 13:34; 15:13** – as He has loved, no greater love.
      1. The desire for the greatest benefit of another.
      2. The submission to God’s parameters defining what that benefit is.
      3. The denial of self to the extent of extreme sacrifice – the ultimate sacrifice.
      4. **(v. 16b)** – we ought to be willing to do the same for each other.
   4. A suggested application – **(v. 17)**
      1. **(v. 16b)** – as daunting a task it might seem, we might be inclined to eagerly assent to it.
      2. John shows it starts now, in everyday practicality – **cf. James 2:14-17; 4:17** – I’m willing to die for him, but not give him something I have that he needs?
   5. A demanded conclusion – **(v. 18)** – the confidence we crave comes by living the gospel, not simply speaking it – LOVE IS AN ACTION.
      1. **Application** – this is true of any call of the truth, not only love of brethren. We must WALK JUST AS HE WALKED **(2:6).** Higher “knowledge” like the Gnostics claimed means nothing if they’re living selfishly and defiantly.
4. The Assurance of Our Hearts **(3:19-23)**
   1. The context ends as it began – desire for confidence when He comes **(2:28),** ***“by this we know…and shall assure our hearts before Him” (3:19***).
   2. ***“by this”*** – **(v. 18)** – living righteously, and loving as Christ loves – deed and truth.
   3. **How can I know I am right with God? How can I become confident for His second coming? – DO HIS WILL!**
   4. A heart test (conscience):
      1. **(v. 20)** – in your heart you know you fall short and are not living right.
         1. Others may not know, but God does!
         2. **1:9** – do this, rather than acting as though you are okay.
      2. (**v. 21**) – in your heart you honestly know that you are walking faithfully. YOU CAN BE CONFIDENT!
      3. NECESSITY – **(v. 7)** – let no one, not even yourself, deceive you.
   5. Benefit of ***“abiding in Him”*** and being ***“born of Him”*** that only bolsters our confidence – **(v. 22)** – prayer for help that He hears!
      1. Limit – **5:14** – according to His will.
      2. Purpose – **John 15:7-8** – bearing fruit.
      3. **Cf. Hebrews 4:15-16** – are we in need, confidently come to the throne of Grace!
   6. **(v. 23)** – summarizes all that He just said – the reason for the confidence is that we keep His commandments, which is that we ***“believe”*** (active, obedient faith, faithfulness) and ***“love on another”*** – If you do this you can be confident that at His coming you will appear with Him in glory (**cf. Colossians 3:4**).

**Conclusion**

1. Christ will come again in glory, and there will be a revealing of the children of God – **3:2**
2. Will we be of that glorious number who are identified with Christ?
3. God offers us confidence through the standard Christ life – if we imitate His life, and walk in righteousness and love, avoid sin and hatred, then we can assure our hearts before God, and we are ready for His coming.