**Assurance while waiting - John 2:28-3:2**

# Intro

* Last in series on Original Message. We trun to last NT writer - apostle John. Bishop at Ephesus; Island of Patmos till death; +-AD90
* No need to tell you he had a clear Eschatology - Revelation. But not now - requires a series on its own.
* Last man standing who touched Jesus; New Era of Apostolic Fathers - Ignatius & Polycarp - We find just as w Peter & Jude, urgent appeal to keep to the Original Message - the Gospel of Jesus Christ: Already Gnosticism - letter deals largely with it.

# Lit Context

* ch2 - all the reasons for writing; summed up as: the Christians are Vulnerable. Vulnerable to Sin, Doubt, Vanity, False Teachers, (idolatry, ch5 - anything that may substitute place of Christ in our worship)
* so 2:28 - very first imperative in light of it, "And now, little children, Abide in Him" because only those who Abide in Him have assurance at His return"

# Abide

* Most of our time spent on Assurance we have in Christ, but then necessary first to explain, "Abide"
* => 'Abode' : where we live. Lit: remain
* John 15 - Jesus: Vine, branches, Abide in me and I in you; ANy branch that does not cut off and thrown into the fire. Only those who abide are safe.
* Important Observation: epistles of the NT assume faith/confession of the churches - but recognises that there might not be faith. Hence even here: "Little Children...so we are" yet at the same time, imperative, "Abide". Peter said the same: 2Pet1:10; Paul in 2 Cor 13:5

Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election (2Pe 1:10 ESV)

Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?-- unless indeed you fail to meet the test (2Co 13:5 ESV)

* Last week "Labour of Waiting: essentially Abiding; guarded by communion with Jesus through His word and prayer
* So before we consider assurance we have in Christ, we must be clear who the assurance is for: it is exclusively for those who abide in Christ. In every church there are people who confess or have confessed, but are not Abiding in Him today - the last thing they need is confidence, assurance, comfort and certainty. They can receive nothing from these verses until they cross the first Imperative: *And now, little children, Abide in Him, so that...*
* APP: Maybe you need to get this right first.

# PRAY

# Proposition

* For each and every one who Abides, John the last standing apostle, wants us to be Confident, Convinced, Comforted and Certain of our Future with Christ. So in these 4 verses we have 4 assured Benefits of Abiding in Christ
* DOUBT is a real vulnerability - Let it be replaced this morning

## 1. We can be confident in His Presence (read 28)

* 1st Q in EEIII : in his presence, confident? Imminent encounter and readiness required.
* pictures here : 'presence' = parousia - physical return of Christ to wrap up history, judge the world, and bring New Creation
* Already, apostle John believed it could happen any moment.
  + Lit IF. (Not IF he comes at all, but IF he comes NOW)
  + (cf John 21 - 'the saying spread that John would not die until Jesus returned' - and they believed it because last standing apostle! But John rebuts it.)
  + The point here is - the church must be ready even as if He were to suddenly appear now.
* Whoever abides in Christ will stand confident and not shrink back in shame (guilty before a judge) -- WHY SO?
  + Already answered in 2:1b - *we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (1Jo 2:1)* - an Advocate. Appealing on your behalf [THAT OUGHT TO GIVE CONFIDENCE! The Judge is your advocate! (*Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died-- more than that, who was raised-- who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.* (Rom 8:34)]
  + Not begging or bargaining for us - Justice completely served: v2 - Propitiation.
* FCF: May be burdened by your past. CONFIDENCE => when you abide in Christ, his death is yours, his justification is yours, his life is yours, his righteousness is yours. ABIDING is HIDING - ABIDE-IN Him = HIDE-IN Him. That is the free gift of salvation to all who will believe

## 2. We can be assured of our rebirth (read 29)

* *he, you, everyone, who*... there was some confusion - because a large amount of false teachers - even their own friends; who they'd once felt fellowship with - saying that how you live in the body is unimportant (cf Jude - license, *who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality*(Jud 1:4) - so which teachers do we follow?
* FCF: may be confused by the "church" - ILLUS: new believer confused about 'Christian' couple - prophesying, yet living together in sexual sin.
* John reminds them that those who abide will show it in their behaviour - Christ-likeness in them => something we ought to be convinced of, cf "*you may be sure*"... Again, more assurance - we need not Question.
* And it's a logical conviction: *If you know* (have arrived at the full conviction) *that He is* [Absolutely] *righteous* - [and righteousness is Absolutely defined by Him] - the source*...you may be sure that everyone who practises righteousness [*Jesus-type righteousness, that one] *has been born from Him* i.e. if we think in terms of cause-effect: Living like Christ is the effect, rebirth is the cause
* > And that convicts us personally. One way or the other. Is my walk = my talk?
  + Christ changes people, by spiritual rebirth. One of the benefits of abiding in Him is being convinced that He has indeed rebirthed us, because "the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, the pride of life" is surpassed with love for Christ; Humility of Christ in us; Hatred of sin; Love for enemies; Hunger for God, Delight in Him and His word
* (2:26-27) John wants to remind them of the new life they experience: If we are abiding, we will be able to see it too.
  + [How do I know if I'm born again? Some diagnostics: Where's your trust? What's your greatest desire?
  + How can I become born again? Repentance [Renouncing self] and True Faith in the advocate-propitiator Jesus]

## 3. We can be Comforted by His Love (read 1)

(With all these assured benefits, who wouldn't *want* to abide in Christ - the sin within us wages war against Christ)

* FCF: one reason we may lack assurance is rebirth puts us at odds with the majority of mates, colleagues, community, society - may wonder, "Am I the crazy fool?". It's a life of things unseen, but everyone else is living in the concrete world (cf Peter: "where's the promise of this [parousia]?"
* John's counsel is - Don't look to the world's hatred of our faith, Look to God's Love for us! Those who abide in Christ can be comforted by His Love
* And not just the fact of it... but "kind of love"
* Different kinds of Love. The Love which the world has.
  + In the world we have "cookie" love - "Ooh, I love that" - love directed to self - can even manipulate to get what self wants
  + In the world we have "celebrity" love : latest star, fad, - Here today, gone tomorrow - love which gets tired and ceases
  + In the world we have "kamikaze" love - I mean betrayed love which makes you want to drive your car off the cliff
  + (Being loved by the world is not all it's made out to be)
* But the Love of God is the kind of Love which adopts cookie, celebrity and kamikaze lovers into His own family. cf
  + "that we [once in the world] can be called [what we once weren't, but now are:] Children of God
* John explains, as Jesus said to him and the others, 'If you were still of the world, would love you as its own; but because I took you out, therefore at odds - hate you as hated Me."
* 1) "Behold"! the love of God is far greater than the love of the world
  + Love of God is steadfast - as high as Heavens above earth
  + Love of God is effective - as far as East from West, removed our sins
  + Love of God is permanent - as a Father compassion on His child, so the Lord on those who fear Him (Ps 103:11f)
* Be-Hold and Be-Comforted : you are not the crazy fool.

## 4. We can be certain of Glory

* "glory" - 'like Him' (2)
* Notice sandwich structure, 28+2, "when He comes"
  + may we see again place of the 3rd part of the gospel. If you've been mindful and shifted your thoughts around this, then I've succeeded in my goal for this series:
  + to see the centrality of 2nd coming in all Christian life; to have it enter conversation; to shift our hope from now to then; to get perspective on the present; to be irresistibly drawn to more communion with Christ
* The final benefit of Abiding in Christ, which John puts forward for us, is certainty of glory. cf John 14:3, "*And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also*"
* There's a contrast here between this age, as vulnerable children where we need assurance and comfort, and the age to come!
* (2) '*now*' [of faith,, *not yet appeared*] ... *but know* [ certainty! based on 1st 3 assurances.. *like Him*
  + exactly whatever the New Body will be - will be just like Jesus: Archetype of Righteousness, Archetype of Humanity
  + (I think this means that because we'll be free from all sin, when we see him as He is, we will be able to, and be immediately desiring to imitate Him)
  + Note v3 - anticipating this changes the way we want to live now!
* Certainty of Glory - prophesied by prophets, Jesus and Apostles;
  + Job 19:26 (oldest lit) *And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God*
  + Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. (1Co 15:49 ESV)
  + When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. (Col 3:4 ESV)
  + But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. (Phi 3:21)

Well this concludes our series on The Original Message - Have you heard it? What incredible assurance.

Come and take shelter - receive the Word of God; Hide in Him and Remain, that you may have His complete assurance: to be

Confident in His Presence, Assured of your New Birth, Comforted by His Love, Certain of Glory