

The Marvelous Privileges of Adoption, Part 6

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Now let us turn in our Bibles to that portion of the Word of God we have just sung, 1 John 3, and I shall read the first four verses.

"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this cause the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, when He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is. And every one that has this hope set on Him purifies himself, even as He is pure."

Let us pray again and ask God that by the Spirit, He will come and teach us of His own truth.

Our Father, we were reminded in the previous hour of our great privilege and solemn responsibility to buy the truth. Help us in this hour to pay whatever price of mental discipline we must pay to buy the truth of this passage. Help us, Lord, where the passage will bring pressure upon us and demand things of us if we are to truly embrace it. May we be willing to pay any price to obtain the truth and be determined no price is high enough to cause us to sell it. Come with Your grace and power and minister to us we plead. In Jesus name, amen.

According to John's purpose statement in chapter 5, verse 13, John wrote this particular letter in order to strengthen the assurance of the true children of God and to expose the invalid assurance of those that one author called the successionists (according to chapter 2 and verse 19, those who had left the fellowship of the church but were continually troubling the church with their false doctrine and with their false claims that they knew God). So again and again throughout this letter, John sets before his readers three categories of tests by which the people of God may have their assurance strengthened. And those who are not the people of God may be exposed for what they really are. Those three categories of test are, number one: the moral or the ethical test, that is, the practice of righteousness on the one hand, and the non-practice of sin on the other hand, and a life of determined, principled obedience to God's commands. John says if you are not one who is practicing righteousness, who has not forsaken sin as a way of life and whose feet are not planted in a path of principled obedience; you claim to know God, you're a liar, and the truth is not in you. The second test is the social or the fraternal test: love for the brethren. And again and again John comes back to it:

"He that loves not, knows not God."

"By this we know we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren."

Love for the brethren, love manifested in deeds of self-giving benevolence. And then the third test is the doctrinal test, particularly a right doctrine of the person of Christ. John speaks to the fact that the true doctrine of Christ leads to the conclusion that in the person of Christ, we have true humanity joined to true deity: two natures in the one person forever.

Now in chapter 2, John returns to one of these moral or ethical test. Look at verse 29: "If you know that He [Christ] is righteous, you know that everyone who does righteousness is begotten of Him." Then we can drop right down to verse 4 and see how he continues that test. "Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He was manifested to take away sins; and in Him is no sin. Whosoever abides in Him sins not: whosoever sins has not seen Him, neither knows Him." Well, what do we do, then, with chapter 3, verses 1-4. Well, it's a parenthesis. For at the end of chapter 2, he used the term "begotten of Him." And as John thinks of the wonder of being a child of God by divine begetting, he breaks out into this parenthetical statement of four verses concerning the wonder of our adoption into the family of God and of our being birthed into the family of God. And he says, "Behold [stand back in amazement] what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God." And it is in the midst of this parenthetical section that John, then, sets before us the seventh blessing of adoption. The seventh blessing of adoption, at least in terms of my preaching of those blessings: the hope of future glorification as the children of God.

Now I've already set before you six of the great blessings of adoption. When God takes us into the number of His children and then tells us we have a right to all of the privileges of the children of God, what are the blessings that come with that? Well, first of all, we are given an inviolable and irreversible status as the sons and daughters of God. Secondly, we are introduced to the family of God in which Christ is our elder Brother. Thirdly, we are made heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. Fourthly, we are given the Spirit of adoption, enabling us to cry, "Abba, Father." We are given, fifthly, the promise of our Father's provision of all of our needs. And then, as we saw two weeks ago, the sixth privilege of adoption, we have our Father's loving discipline.

Now as a capstone over all the blessings of adoption, John here sets before us blessing number seven: the hope of future glorification as the children of God. Now why do I use the word hope? Well, you will notice in verse 3, whatever John's been talking about in this parenthetical statement, he calls it hope. "Everyone that has this hope set upon Him," or more literally, "has this hope upon Him." Now the word hope is a wonderful, rich Biblical word, but we use the word in a way that is quite different from the way in which it is used almost without exception in the New Testament. We use the word to express a desire or a wish: "Hey John, I hope to see you next week (i.e. I have a desire to see you)." Or you might say as a student, "Boy, I really hope that I'll get on the honor role this semester or this term." You're using the word hope as expressing a desire or a wish. Whereas, in the Scriptures, the word hope means far more than that. It means nothing less than this: a confident expectation and conscious longing for a promise but not yet experienced blessing of God's salvation in Jesus Christ. And that's precisely how John uses it here. And therefore, we're going to dig into this passage as we consider together this seventh blessing of

adoption, the hope, the confident expectation and conscious longing for the promised blessing of our glorification, the hope of future glorification as the children of God. That's our subject this morning with this passage as our text. And there are four basic units of thought in the passage.

The first is this: we have an affirmation of our present position as the children of God. Look at verse 2: "Beloved, now are we children of God." A simple affirmation of our present position as the children of God. Notice how John addresses these Christians. He calls them beloved. They are beloved of God. And while God has a general love to all men and to His whole creation, when you find this word used, it exclusively refers to the people of God. They are beloved. They are the people whom God has sovereignly and graciously made His children by the legal act of adoption and by the experience of the new birth. This is made plain in verse 1: "Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God, and we are." So this is a love that is inseparably joined to people being made the children of God.

And what does John affirm with respect to them? That they have a present position or status as the children of God. And how did they become children of God? Well, in John's Gospel, chapter one and verse 12, he gives us half of the answer: "But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become [and here's his same word for children] children of God." He gave the right to become children. That's speaking of adoption, that legal transaction in the family court of heaven where, based on the work of Christ, a believing sinner is taken into the number and given all the rights and privileges of the children of God.

But then in the Johannine language, we become children of God not only by an act of adoption upon the reception of Christ, but by an act of begetting by the Holy Spirit. Verse 29 of the previous chapter: "If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who also does righteousness is begotten of Him." That's a reference to regeneration, the divine begetting, the new birth that John speaks about in John 3 when recording the words of Jesus to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born again [from above], he cannot see [he cannot enter] the kingdom of God."

And so John begins this passage with an affirmation of our present position as the children of God. So he desires that the most recent convert in the churches where this letter would circulate, the most untaught disciple along with the most mature and seasoned saint, would sense with John. Notice, he doesn't say "you," but he says, "we." "Beloved, now are we [all of us together] the children of God." And he wants them to be assured that is their spiritual position.

Let me say before moving on to our second head, if you've not had direct dealings with God in Christ, you've not received the Christ of Scripture for who He is and for what He has done; if you've not experienced the divine begetting, you've not been born again by the Spirit. You are not beloved; you are not a child of God. You are a child of wrath; you are a child of the devil. That's the teaching of the Word of God.

But now secondly, not only do we have an affirmation of our present position as the children of God, but we have an explanation of our hidden or veiled condition as the children of God. Again, look at verse 2: "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be." Here John is giving an explanation of our hidden or veiled condition, not our hidden or veiled position. No, our position is clear,

we are the children of God now. But with respect to the "not yet," it is not yet revealed, manifest, made open and plain (which is the significance of that verb) what we shall be. And here we are introduced to that pervasive Biblical teaching of the "now" and the "not yet." And the language comes right out of this text: "Beloved, now are we the children of God, but it does not yet appear what we shall be."

What is the "not yet"? The "not yet" is what we shall be as the children of God. We are an amazing work. That's why John could say at the beginning of this parenthesis, "Behold, stand back in utter amazement at the love that would constitute us the children of God, and we really are His children. Beloved, now we are his children." He's getting the message through: we're an amazing creature to be a child of the living God. We who were besotten in our sins and our blindness and our rebellion; there was nothing in us to draw forth the love of God. It was sheer sovereign, divinely initiated love. And God stood to gain nothing by putting us into His family when He had His holy Son and holy angels, and yet He did it. But we're a work in progress. It is not yet made plain and openly revealed what we shall be. Now, we're not moving to a higher or more glorious position. There is no higher or more glorious position than being a son or daughter of the Living God. So when it says, "It is not yet manifest what we shall be," he's not referring to our position. But he's referring to what is entailed in the fullness of being a child of God.

Let me give you a simple illustration. Most of you regard caterpillars as ugly, little furry, worm-like creatures--most women anyway. Now there may be some of you men who are fascinated with bugs and things; who like to get down close to them and admire their colors. But for the most part, I think any time I've seen a woman see a caterpillar--"Yuck!"--nothing attractive. But when that caterpillar goes into its cocoon, there's a monarch butterfly going to come out. It is not yet manifested what that furry, ugly, worm-like creature shall be. It shall be from larva to a beautiful monarch butterfly. Here John says, "We are, here and now. We have the status: children of God." There's the affirmation of our present position. But then he gives the explanation of our hidden or veiled condition: "It is not yet manifested what we shall be."

Now we come the heart of our teaching this morning. Point number three: a declaration of our future glorification as the children of God. Look at the text: "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that [not if, but as all the modern versions translate it], when He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is." Here is John's declaration of this seventh great blessing of our adoption of being a child of God, a declaration of our future glorification as the children of God.

Look with me at four lines of thought in this part of the text. First of all, what is the essence of our glorification as the children of God. According to our text, it is nothing more or nothing less than being made like Christ. "It does not yet appear what we shall be; we know that when He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him." Now that does not mean we shall be deified. Any religion that speaks of God being everything and all of us being merged into Godhood is sheer blasphemy and religious nonsense. The distance between God the creator, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and anything He creates, including us, is the distance of infinity. And you and I will never be elevated to deity. So when it says we shall be like Him, it does not mean we shall be deified. It does mean that what God purposed in His electing foreknowledge love will actually be realized in our experience.

And what do I mean by that? Simply this: Romans 8 tells us in verse 29, "For whom He foreknew [that is, those whom He knew beforehand with distinguishing love and purpose to save them], He predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son." And then in Ephesians 1:4c-5 "in love: having predestinated us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself." That choice of God of a vast multitude of sinners out of Adam's race, He purposed from (how can we speak of these things?) the very first impulses of His choosing love, that when He was done with us, He could plant us next to His Son and say, "You're just like Him." As a creature, He's the second person in the Godhead, the creator, the sovereign Lord and ruler. But in terms of perfected humanity in a glorified body, we shall be like Him. That is the essence of the glorification of the children of God.

And what will that mean in particular? You've heard me often quote J.I. Packer: "It will mean nothing less than a sinless soul inhabiting a deathless body." Let's park on those things for a little bit. A sinless soul, what will that mean? All remaining sin totally removed. All of those instincts and impulses of my soul that make me want to be defensive when my faults are exposed, that make me excuse them or transfer the guilt to others, all of that indwelling sin that makes me instinctively pit myself and serve myself and seek myself--all remaining sin totally removed, all susceptibility to sin totally removed, all of those magnets in my soul that so easily draw to it what is forbidden by God, all of the magnets dug out of my soul, all of the darkness in my judgment that skews my perspective of reality, all of the darkness in my judgment removed, all of the twistedness of my affections, where I love what I ought to hate and I hate what I ought to love--every last bit of it forever removed. We shall be like Him--that's Jesus. And furthermore, all of the Christ-like graces of meekness and lowliness and teachableness and inclination to obedience with unmingled delight, love unchallenged with selfishness, joy unmixed with sorrow flooding my whole soul.

People of God, we shall be like Him, a sinless soul inhabiting a deathless body. What's a deathless body going to be like? Well, let Paul answer for us from 1 Corinthians 15. "This body will be sown [that is, planted in the ground] in corruption; it is raised in incorruption." There is nothing that will be worn out with time, nothing that will decay with time. "It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory." It is sown with all of the marks of death all over it. In spite of the cosmetology of the undertaker, it is sown in dishonor. It's an ugly thing when planted. It will be raised in glory, the outshining of the very perfections of God's work. "It is sown in weakness." That last enemy comes, and he says, "There's my victim, and I'll get him." And he gets us. "It shall be raised in power." What kind of power will surge through these bodies in the day of resurrection? What will they be capable of doing? I have my fantasies--I'm not going to tell you what they are. But the text says, "raised in power." "There is a natural body; there is also a spiritual body," that is, a body suited to life in which we will be totally filled with the Spirit and animated by the Spirit. And think of a body that will be able to follow all of the impulses of a sinless soul that wants to glorify God to the maximum. And when those passions and desires are in us and stirred, our bodies will leap in obedience and never be weary, never be worn out, never be decayed.

We shall be like Him. That's why Paul could say, "He shall fashion the body of our humiliation." This present body is a constant source of humiliation if you are in touch with reality. You may not feel it too much if you're in your teenage years and you don't have aches and pains and the rest yet, although some of you as teens, you do. But it's a body of our humiliation--the weakness, the weariness, all that pertains to this body in our present cursed situation. And it says He will transform us, this very

body, and fashion it after the body of His glory, the body which He now has at the right hand of the Father. And I'm personally persuaded that His resurrection body that was here on earth for forty days was not fully the body He now has. That was still suited for life in this cursed world. The body He now has is suited for the place He now has at the right hand of the Father. And God's going to make that the template of your body, not even the body of His resurrection--the body of His glory. You say, "Pastor, you're going crazy." No, that's Bible. That's not me, that's Bible. He shall fashion your body after the template of the body of the glory of Christ who is at the right hand of the Father. That's the essence of the glorification of the children of God. That's the monarch butterfly coming out of the cocoon. "It's not yet manifest what we shall be." But here the declaration of our future glorification as the children of God, the essence of it: we shall be made like Christ.

Now notice, secondly under this declaration, the occasion of our glorification as the children of God. The essence: a sinless soul inhabiting a deathless body. The occasion--look at the text: "It is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, when He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him." This term "manifested" or "revealed" is one of the standard words for the second coming of our Lord Jesus. And as I intimated earlier, the New King James Version, ESV, NASV, NIV all render it "when," not "if," but "when He shall be manifested." The occasion, then, of our glorification as the children of God is not when we're planted in death. It's when He returns in glory and in power. He must reign until He has destroyed the last enemy, and the last enemy is death. That enemy is not yet destroyed. So when it says, "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is," what is the occasion of this glorification? It is His manifestation in His second coming, when He comes in clouds and the holy angels with Him. Colossians 3:4 is a wonderful text to buttress this perspective: "When Christ, who is our life [here's the same word] manifested, then shall you also with Him be manifested in glory." And the glory is not a place; it's a condition. We'll be manifested with Him in glory. We will share in the glory of a glorified Christ.

Then thirdly, what's the context of our glorification as the children of God? Look at the text: "We know that, when He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is." The context of our glorification as the children of God will be the undimmed vision of Christ Himself. And I've cried to God and said, "Lord, what's the connection?" "We shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is." "Lord, what's the connection?" And I scoured my commentators, and I'm not sure what the connection is. I've got a little idea of what it may be, and I don't mind preaching my maybes when they're Biblical. Alright, 2 Corinthians 3. The context of our glorification as the children of God is the immediate sight of Christ. And could this at least be a pointer in the answer to the question, "What's the connection?"

Verse 18 (speaking of our present experience): "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror [not directly, but as something reflected in a mirror or possibly through a glass] the glory of the Lord, are [right now] transformed into the same image from glory to glory [one stage of glory to another], even as from the Lord the Spirit." And here the Apostle is telling us that, as believers, as we behold our Lord as in a mirror, we behold Him in His Word; we behold Him in His ordinances; we behold Him in the company of His saints. And what is happening as we behold our Savior? The Holy Spirit is doing a work of transforming us from the inside out into the likeness of Christ. Well, if that work is going on here and now while we do not see Him face to face, can it be there is something about the face-to-face sight of Christ

that will complete the work of transformation into the image of Christ? It's going on now by degrees. Will it then in that burst of spiritual energy? I don't know, but I have to be honest with the text and say the context of our glorification as the children of God will be nothing less than the very face-to-face sight of our Lord Jesus.

But then notice, fourthly under this head, the certainty of our glorification as the children of God. What does the text tell us? This is what it tells us: "We know that [John doesn't say, 'I know as an apostle,' but 'we the company of God's new covenant community all know'], when He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is." And then in verse 2, he had said, "It is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know...." Those are words of certainty ("shall be" and "we know")--the certainty of our glorification as the children of God, a certainty based upon the very words of Jesus, based upon the words of those two shining ones when He ascended up into heaven and said, "This same Jesus shall descend in like manner." All of the promises that are yes and amen in Christ. It is certain, as certain as we are now the children of God, as certain as it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. It is certain that God's work having begun in us will be perfected at the Day of Jesus Christ. I say, this is the seventh marvelous blessing of adoption: our glorification as the children of God.

We looked at the directions that John has given to us, the affirmation, the explanation. Now we come to an assertion of our personal sanctification as the children of God. Verse 3: "And every one that has this hope set on Him purifies himself, even as He is pure." Look at the scope of this assertion and then the heart or the meaning of this assertion. John says, "Every one [and then he uses unusual construction] that has this hope set on [literally 'upon.' The word 'set' is not in the originals] Him." In other words, everyone whose hope of glorification is built upon true saving union with Christ, not a decision ("O, I've decided for Jesus. I'm now His"), a profession of faith. No, no, this hope he says is upon Christ. That's the picture of the person who has rolled the whole weight of his soul, his life, his being upon Christ. Everything about him rests upon Christ. And John says, "Here's the scope of my assertion: everyone that has this hope in Him...." What will be true? Here's the heart of the assertion--look at the activity described and the standard identified. What's the activity true of every true child of God? And here I beg of you, don't wiggle out of the Word. If what John says is true of every single true child of the Living God, everyone truly resting upon Christ and Christ alone--what does he say? What is the activity described? Look at it: "And every one that has this hope set on Him [and it's a present tense use of the verb--continually] purifies himself, even as He is pure."

Now this verb (?) frequently refers to ritual purification. In John 11:35, people were going up to Jerusalem to purify themselves in the light of the coming Passover. In Acts 21, Paul took some vows, and he purified himself ritually before he went into the temple. However, it's also used of morals: spiritual, ethical, practical purification. 1 Peter 1:22 says, "Seeing you have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth...." He's referring to their conversion. When in repentance and faith, they laid hold of Christ, they underwent an internal, moral, ethical purification from sin, what Romans 6 calls death to sin. Romans 6:15: a change of masters from sin to righteousness. And then in James 4:8, James says "Purify your hearts you double minded." There again, it's internal, spiritual purification. So when John writes, "And every single one that has this hope set on Christ is continually purifying himself," what's it mean? It means that everyone who has this hope in reality, not in mere profession, not in mere word, but in reality, is constantly purifying himself.

What's that mean? I didn't think I could cleanse myself from my sin. No, but I can continually go to the fountain open for sin and uncleanness. Or as John said in 1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I can engage in fresh actings of faith in the sacrifice of Christ. Chapter 2: "These I write unto you that you may not sin. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins." We can engage in the mortification of our sin. Romans 8:13: "If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you shall live." Jesus speaks of the cutting off of right hands, the plucking out of right eyes. 2 Corinthians 7:1: "Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Or Hebrews 12:14: "Follow after peace with all men, and the [holiness] without which no man shall see the Lord." The activity described--and this may be why John used this rather unusual word rather than the standard word for pursuing holiness, because in ritual purification, the one to be purified is consciously active. He washes his hands; he abstains from touching a dead body; he abstains from sexual relations. Whatever was required in ritual purification, the person to be purified was consciously, deliberately engaged in the purification. And so he says, "And every one that has this hope set on Him purifies himself." Yes, only the blood of Christ can cleanse from sin. Yes, only the Holy Spirit can empower us to mortify our sin. Yes, only the Holy Spirit can empower us to mortify our sin. But we purify ourselves. And if you're not continually purifying yourself, your hope is a vain hope. It has no Biblical basis. The activity of all who are the true children of God, who will be glorified when Christ returns and receive the final blessing of their adoption--they are all, without exception, engaged in this activity of purifying themselves.

That's the activity described. Now look at the standard identified. It's right there in your Bibles. Don't go out and say, "I don't agree with Pastor Martin." This is not Pastor Martin. I've labored hours over words that I might bring you the Word of the Living God. And I want you to look at your Bibles. What does it say is the standard? "And every one that has this hope set on Him [continually] purifies himself, even as He is pure." Christ Himself is the standard of purification. Christ, of whom the writer to the Hebrews says, "He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." The Christ who could say, "Which of you convinces me of sin?" It is the One to whom demons spoke and said, "What have we to do with You, You holy One of God?" When He was conceived in Mary's womb: "That holy thing which is conceived in you is of the Holy Spirit." Jesus Himself is the standard towards which we press in the continuous engagement in self-purification. That means that we never come to the place where we say, "Well, my life is respectable enough to make others in Trinity Baptist Church comfortable with me, and make me comfortable with myself that I'm not now what I once was. I've given up this; I've turn away from that. This sin no longer marks me; therefore, I can coast. That's not what the text says. The text says, "And every one that has this hope set on Him [continually] purifies himself, even as [his standard is Christ Himself]."

We're not only free from outward violations of the law of God but the inward violations of motive, of desire, of reaction to wrong, of a disposition in a situation of misunderstanding. He was concerned with the state of His own heart, so that when the Father from heaven said, "This is My Son, My beloved in whom I am well-pleased," the Father who saw every motion of the heart of Jesus, every disposition of the Spirit of Jesus, every inclination of the will and desires of Jesus could say, "Everything pleases Me." "And every one that has this hope set on Him purifies

himself, even as He is pure." I didn't write it, but I am determined to preach it into your conscience. That's the standard. John Cotton, the 17th century Puritan, stated the truth of this text this way: "Every Christian who hopes to be like Christ hereafter in glory cleanses himself to be like Christ in grace now."

And dear people, this part of my text cuts the nerve, lets out the life blood of two soul-destructive errors. Hear me carefully. On the one hand, the error of perfectionism. There are those who have taught that it is possible, by the grace of God and by the infilling and empowering of the Holy Spirit, to be brought to the place where we no longer sin in this life. That's called perfectionism. Now if perfectionism were true, this text is not true because it is in the present tense of the verb (?). "Every one that has this hope set on Him [is continually purifying] himself [all the way to glory]." And furthermore, if the standard is Christ, is there any mortal ready to say, "I am as holy as my Savior." You see, it absolutely bleeds the life out of perfectionism.

But that's not your danger. It bleeds the life--and I've labored over the words. I went through my dictionary and my synonym finder etc., and I'm making two words up because I couldn't find one that's already made up--it cuts the nerve, it slits the throat of casualism and contentedism. And do you know what I mean by those two words? Casualism: no more radical racking and hewing, no merciless treating of our remaining sin, no doing what Peter says: "On your part adding all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to your virtue knowledge, and to your knowledge self-control." Seven graces! And Peter says, "Coming in alongside what God has already given to life and godliness, adding on your part all diligence, add to your faith these virtues." The picture of the child of God in the Bible has no sympathy for casualism.

Contentedism: "We've made enough progress to be respectable. We would never be the subjects of church discipline." But there's no growth in likeness to Christ: no growth in love, no growth in humility, no growth in compassion for the lost, no growth in sensitivity to heart sins, to mental sins, to the sins of the patterns that you have with your wife, patterns of irritability and patterns of touchiness and patterns of responses that when your children hear them, they know they're sinful. But you don't even feel them, let alone repent of them, let alone go in tears to your wife and ask her forgiveness. You don't even feel them. Why? Because of casualism and contentedism. The child of God who is purifying himself with Christ as the standard can never be content with where he is.

Now what are you going to do about it? The old man's poured his guts out again. What are you going to do with what you've heard? There it is in the Bible. And along the line of this series on adoption, you say you've been thrilled with this and thrilled that. At the end of the day, everyone that has this hope in Him, continually purifies himself, even as He is pure. Is that you, pressing after Christ Himself as your standard? I doubt Christ slept as some of you do when the Word was taught in the local synagogue. "O, but we lost an hour's sleep." Yes, a lot of us do.

Dear people, the burden of my heart as I come near the end of my ministry in this place is, I really wonder how much wood, hay, and stubble sits in these pews. A hand shake at the door, "Thank you, Pastor, for your ministry," but nothing changes. The people closest to you, if you had the courage to ask them, would tell you nothing changes. There are couples sitting here with the same kinds of tensions in your marriage you had ten years ago. Shame on you if you name the name of Christ. You're not purifying yourself of the defilement of those things that cause those

tensions in your marriage. And what will it take, in God's name, what will it take to bring you to the place where you're done with casualism and contentedism? May God grant that the Lord Himself will deal graciously with you that you might have the joyful, unbounded delight of saying with Robert Murray McCheyne,

"When I see Thee as Thou art
Lovely with unsinning heart

No one will say that who is not presently cleansing himself with Christ Himself, not only as the standard, but as the source of our strength. You see, it's when you begin to get serious about dealing with heart sins, with sinful patterns, then you'll see how deeply engrained they are and how impossible it is to make any progress without laying hold of Christ and His grace and your provisions in union with Him.

And for those of you who sit here glibly professing to be Christians, you know nothing of this cleansing of yourself, even as He is pure. May God grant that the Lord will have dealings with you and bring you to the place where you fall down before the Living God and cry for mercy and for grace.

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