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KNOWING THAT WE KNOW HIM

WITH THE END IN MIND || JOHN 2:28-3:3

What is something you're really looking forward to?

If you are part of the student ministry, you may be looking forward to beach camp. If you are approaching your sixteenth birthday, you are looking forward to the day when your parents toss you the keys. If you are engaged to be married, you're caught up in planning the perfect wedding and dreaming thoughts of your life together. If you're about to graduate you're probably envisioning a sweet career, an employer that pays you far more than you are worth, a garage full of toys, and epic weekends. If your employer has been paying you more than you're worth for a while, maybe you are looking forward to drawing down on your 401k, exotic travel and time with the grandkids. Perhaps it's much simpler for you. You're just looking forward to brunch and a leisurely afternoon before diving back into our crazy life in the suburbs.

The things we look forward to, fill our lives with hope and energy, they make even our most difficult moments far more bearable.

John tells us the one thing we should be looking forward to more than anything else is Christ's return. Knowing Christ is the best thing this world has to offer, and with Christ, the best is always yet to come. John warns us to live in a way that we will not be ashamed at his appearing and encourages us to live in eager expectation of his return.

UNASHAMED AT HIS APPEARING (2:28-29)

2:28 And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.

29 If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

1. John encourages us to continue (remain or abide) in him. What do you think it means to continue in him? What is God's responsibility and our responsibility when it comes to continuing (remaining or abiding) in him?
2. What are some things that might bring shame when Christ appears?
3. What gives us confidence as we anticipate his return?
4. What do you think it means to be "born of God?"
5. What does John expect of those who are "born of God?"
6. What are some other things we might expect from those who are genuinely born of God?
7. What are some of the key differences between our attempts to "do what is right" and the righteousness that results from being "born of God?"
8. How confident should we be if we are relying on our own righteousness?
9. How confident should we be if we are experiencing the transforming power of his righteousness?

TRANSFORMED BY HIS APPEARING (3:1-3)

3:1 See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, ¹ we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ³ All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

1. Our English translations fail to capture the impact of John's opening line. The NIV reads, "See what great love the Father has lavished on us." The ESV reads, "See what kind of love the Father has given us." Both of them capture nuances inherent to the text. The NIV emphasizes the grandeur

of God's love. The ESV emphasizes the kind of love we experience from God. A helpful paraphrase might be, "Notice the incredible way in which God has already loved us..."

- a. What is especially extravagant about the way that God has loved us in Christ?
 - b. Why is being a "child of God" an unfathomable privilege?
 - c. How would you describe the inherent privileges of being a "child of God?"
 - d. What does this tell us about what God has in store for those who love him?
2. John tells us, "the world won't get us..." What are some reasons the world can not begin to comprehend what it means to be "a child of God?"
 3. Why is John hesitant to speculate on what we will one day be?
 4. What does John tell us, in fact, we will one day be?
 5. How should the fact that God has "predestined us to be conformed to the image of his Son" impact our hopes and dreams right now?
 6. According to John, what is it that will transform us into Christ's image? Why do you think this is true?
 7. Read 2 Corinthians 3:18. How does this passage shed light on the transforming power of "seeing Christ as he is?"
 8. According to 2 Corinthians 3:18, what are the factors that lead to greater Christ-likeness now?
 9. How can you be more fully engaged in the process of genuine gospel transformation?
 10. How does the hope of being like Christ have a purifying effect on our lives?