

Carpe Diem Coram Deo

1 John 2:28 - 3:10
Grace Church / 12-5-10

Introduction

It likely goes without saying, that the majority of us want a meaningful life which makes a significant difference in the lives of others and future events. A question which then follows is how can I live in such a way so this becomes a reality?

In the past four months we have been in and out of the 1 John, the letter written by the Apostle John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to the Christians in various churches across Asia Minor, present day Turkey.

Recurring themes have been, fellowship with God, knowing and abiding which is walking in obedience to the truth.

This brings us to chapter two and verse twenty-eight. Would you stand with me please and follow along in your text while I read it. It is page 1022 in the pew bible.

It is a bit unfortunate that the chapter is broken where it is. Verses twenty-eight and twenty-nine belong to the first ten verses of chapter three. When I ask the question "what is he talking about" the answer is "those who are followers of Christ" or as it is stated here "little children". Fourteen times in this short letter believers are referred to as children. What is he saying about the children of God? He is telling us how to have a meaningful life that makes a significant difference.

The title I have given to this study is Carpe Diem Coram Deo. It is also the key thought for the morning. Now exactly what does Carpe Diem Coram Deo mean? It is a Latin term. Some are familiar with carpe diem, it means to seize the day. In Horace, the phrase is part of the longer *Carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero* - "Seize the Day, trusting as little as possible in the future", and the ode says that the future is unknowable, and that instead one should scale back one's hopes to a brief future, and drink one's wine. That is not what John is saying here but quite the opposite. That is why I have added the phrase "Coram Deo" which means "in the presence of God".

Our key thought for the morning is; **"carpe diem coram deo"**. Or stated differently **"seize everyday to the glory of God by living all of life in His presence"**.

As children of God we are to seize each day, to pluck it as if it were a flower to be enjoyed and to do so knowing that we are living out our lives in the very presence of God.

Now the question becomes, how do I achieve that? Grabbing from every day all the gusto and opportunity that it provides knowing I am living it out before the face of God. Well John tells us here how we are to do so. There are three things I want to bring to your attention with the hope that when we get to the "so what" the Holy Spirit would have seized our hearts and minds and infused a fresh burst of His power which allows us to live every moment in such a fashion that He receives the glory.

Here is the first observation to make. Look in verse twenty-eight with me please.

1 John 2:28 (ESV)

And now, little children, **abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.**

We have seen this word abide twenty-three times in seventeen verses. It is an important aspect of the Christian walk. What does it mean to abide? Let's take a closer look at the text.

It is the word μένω and has the meaning; "to remain or persevere. It has the meaning of a person who stands with another, i.e. to be and remain united with Jesus. One with him in heart, mind and will. So the question becomes how do I achieve this abiding. Well the text gives us a contrasting example.

Look with me in verse twenty-nine.

1 John 2:29 (ESV)

29 If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.

Now look at verse nine of chapter three.

1 John 3:9 (ESV)

9 **No one born of God makes a practice of sinning**, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.

When we think of what it means to abide, we cannot escape the fact that it has much to do with my behavior. **Practice and abiding are synonymous in meaning.**

It may be that you are here this morning and are mired up to your nostrils in behavior that is not consistent with one who has been born of God. Jesus said to Nicodemus "unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.

There is a contrast going on in these verses. It is between the righteous and the unrighteous. Look at verse four.

1 John 3:4 (ESV)

Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.

Does this mean a Christian never sins? No it does not mean we are perfect in every way. We are in process. It is called the process of sanctification or progressive sanctification.

When we do sin, and we all do, what is our recourse? It is found in chapter one verse nine.

1 John 1:9 (ESV)

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Let me state for us this first observation. Abiding simply means,

1. Practicing my faith day by day.

Some of us have sung the hymn "work for the night is coming". One of the verses goes like this;

Work, for the night is coming. Work thru the sunny noon;
fill brightest hours with labor—rest comes sure and soon.
Give ev'ry flying minute something to keep in store;
work for the night is coming when man works no more.

John 9:4 (ESV)

4 We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work.

In other words "carpe diem coram deo"

(Assurance)

Let's move on to the second observation to which we can apply the term "carpe deim coram deo". That is "pluck everything out of every day as if you and Jesus were face to face".

There is likely no greater source of energy and motivation to do or accomplish something than the confidence that you are on the right track. Confidence that the ability to achieve is available and that indeed you are making progress. Look again at verse twenty-eight.

1 John 2:28 (ESV)

And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.

There is a progression of events. The exhortation is to abide in Christ by practicing righteousness so that when Christ appears we will be confident when we see him face to face. There are other things in this text which point to confidence, I will use the word assurance to mean the same thing, happens before the appearing of Christ.

Verse twenty-nine says "if you know that he is righteous, you **may be sure** that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him. Cf 3:2, 5 "know"

This is the assurance that indeed my sins have been forgiven through Christ and I have been given new life, that is, I have been born again. Assurance of salvation is a wonderful thing. It is not a position of pride but a position of humility. We recognize we are totally at the mercy of God. It is by His grace that we have come to faith in Christ.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV)

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

As 2 Corinthians 5:17 says;

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

From this comes a confidence, a boldness to continue to live out the life God has laid before us as his children. It seems to me that abiding and assurance are reciprocating positions. One feeds the other and feeds off the other.

You want confidence to face the challenges of the day? Abide in Christ. Live your life "coram deo" as if before the face of God. Which is of course the reality of the situation.

You want to live a life of remaining tightly connected to Christ, then you can be assured that when you abide in Him this is the best thing that could ever happen to you.

Confidence of not being ashamed comes from understanding what it is that God has done in order to secure our salvation.

Jesus said that all the Father gives to him will come to him.

John 10:25-30 (ESV)

25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, 26 but you do not believe because you are not part of my flock. 27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one."

The word "works" here in this passage is the same as "practices" in 1 John. In other words there is a sense in which Christ abides in the Father because he does the work which God has sent him to do. What is that work? To put together the family of God. He calls them sheep here; in First John we are called little children. He is referring to the same group of people. What does Jesus say about these sheep, the children of God?

He says that we hear his voice and follow him. Why? Because he has given to us eternal life and we will never perish. In other words, we are to have assurance we are indeed the children of God. Notice what else is said, "no one can snatch them out of my hand" and not only that but the Father who is greater than all has us in his hand and no one can snatch us out of God's hand. That is assurance. Do you have that assurance? Do you know you are a child of God? I am not speaking in some general politically correct way and saying "you're ok, I'm ok, and we're all ok". All you have to do is believe in a god. No, God has a name and it is through Jesus we know him.

Now, let's go back to 1 John. Why is it we can have this assurance? Why is it we can practice righteousness? We find the answer in verse nine.

What is the seed of God doing in me? It is working, abiding. The same thing I am doing as a believer in Christ, I am remaining in Him.

1 John 3:9 (ESV)

No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, **for God's seed abides in him**, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.

What does it mean that God's seed abides in us? You will recognize this word when I say it. It is "σπέρμα". Why are we children of God? It is because we have been born again by the act of God's regeneration through the Holy Spirit. It is God's seed that has taken root in our hearts. It reminds me of the parable Jesus told about the sower who sowed some seed. Some fell on rocky soil, some fell on good.

What does the seed of God by which we have been born do for us? Verse three says that it purifies us. "**And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.**" Hope is another word for assurance. It is not used in the sense that you hope it doesn't snow this afternoon.

2. Trust in the hope that comes because God has planted His seed in you.

(Appearing)

Notice how many times the idea of appearing shows up here.

While there were many appearances of Christ in His thirty-three years on earth, there are only two appearances which Scripture speaks of and each ushers in another phase of the coming kingdom of God. The first one has already happened. The second one we are waiting for. Here is what is said about his first appearing.

1 John 3:5 (ESV)

5 You know that **he appeared** to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.

1 John 3:8 (ESV)

8 Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the **Son of God appeared** was to destroy the works of the devil.

The first appearing of course was his birth in the town of Bethlehem. We are about to celebrate his birthday in a few weeks. Verse eight tells us the reason that Christ first appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. That was accomplished when Christ was crucified, buried and rose to live after three days. The jaws of death, which Satan had locked on every human was effectively broken. The penalty of sin was paid in full. It was finished at the end of Christ first appearing.

John speaks of both appearances here. The second appearing is in verse twenty-eight

1 John 2:28 (ESV)

And now, little children, abide in him, **so that when he appears** we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.

"and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him".

We should live in the moment, i.e. seize the day, all the while keeping an eye on the sky. Why? Turn in your bibles with me to 1 Cor. 15:50-58. Please follow along as I read. Paul is writing about the second appearing of Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:50-58 (ESV) Page 962 in the pew bible

50 I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the

imperishable. 51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

“Death is swallowed up in victory.”

55 “O death, where is your victory?
O death, where is your sting?”

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.
57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

His exhortation is not unlike that of John which we are looking at this morning.

The second appearing is yet future. When we are not quite sure, though God does give us some indication what to look for. The important thing is to make sure you are ready for his second appear. Verse twenty-eight in chapter two reads;

1 John 2:28 (ESV)

28 And now, little children, abide in him, so that **when he appears we may have confidence** and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.

What will cause us to shrink back when Christ returns? There are mainly two things. First of course would be not to acknowledge him as personal savior right now. Actually for those who have not responded to his offer of grace and mercy it will be much more that shame you will experience. It will be absolute fear.

John is speaking to Christians in this text. He is reminding us there is coming the day when Christ will return to gather his people and put into place a new heaven and earth. It will be

the time when all believers will be with Christ face to face. It is at this time we do not want to shrink from him in shame.

Secondly, what will cause this shame? It will have been the failure to abide, live a life of Carpe Diem Coram Deo. It is seizing every day as an opportunity to live out our lives in the presence of God.

1 John 3:3 (ESV)

And everyone **who thus hopes** in him purifies himself as he is pure.

We find this subject of hope in the book of Romans chapter five. Again I would like to read some verses for you. (page 924 in pew bible)

I draw out of these verses this observation.

3. Live in the moment but keep an eye on the sky!

So What?

Carpe Diem Coram Deo

Seize everyday to the glory of God by living all of life in His presence.

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