

Refined Toward Wholeness

Scripture Reading — 1 John 3:1-3

We know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. — 1 John 3:2

The word *lavish* doesn't occur very often in the Bible, so its use here in 1 John 3 is striking: "See what great love the Father has lavished on us . . . !" This is where our salvation begins: with the overwhelming, overflowing love of God.

John then continues by contrasting what is now ("we are children of God!") with what will be: "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." And this describes the finished project, the good work in us that God is bringing to completion (Philippians 1:6). Now we see "only a reflection as in a mirror" (1 Corinthians 13:12), but when we see Christ as he is, we shall be like him.

"All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure," says John. Hope in Jesus is the bridge, the link between the love lavished on us now and becoming like him when he appears. This is love that is determined to bring us home. This hope is not wishful thinking; this is *active* hope, purifying hope—that is, hope that surrenders to the purifying fire of the Spirit of God as he burns away every part of us that is not pure and good.

It's a good habit to look back over each day, give it up to God, and pray some words like these:

Prayer

Lord, use your purifying fire to burn away the parts of me that hurt and dishonor you and others. Help me to die to those things so that I can really live, filled with the wholeness of Jesus. Thank you, Lord, for the good work you have begun in me. Keep purifying me each day. Amen.

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Printed on August 14, 2020

