



FBC Dickson

UNFAILING LOVE IN UNCERTAIN TIMES- DEFEND THE CERTAIN TESTIMONY THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST •

1 JOHN 5:6-12 • 8/23/2020

MAIN POINT.

To discuss 6 witnesses that bear testimony that Jesus was the Christ.

INTRODUCTION

What is a witness?

Why is a witness so valuable when it comes to providing reliable testimony?

In this passage of 1 John, the Apostle is going to mention six witnesses that testify to the truth about Jesus. It's not that Jesus' testimony about himself needed corroboration. He was God in the flesh, and as God, he cannot lie. But nonetheless, we see John identify these witnesses. All of them help shed light on the person and work of Christ and verify that he was indeed the flesh and blood Son of God. For the sake of our discussion I will group them in three groups as John discusses them in this passage.

UNDERSTANDING

There are 3 groupings of witnesses listed in this passage

1. The Water, the Blood, and the Spirit (v.6-8)

Read 1 John 5:6-8

What do you think John means by "water" and "blood"?

What is it about the Spirit that John points out that makes His testimony trustworthy?

What is the significance of 3 witnesses mentioned in v.7? (Hint: read Deut 17:6)

The Water:

The word "water" in this passage probably refers to Christ's baptism. If so, how does the baptism of Jesus testify to the truth of who he is?

Read Matthew 3:13-17

What was unique about the baptism of Jesus?

What is it about this event that bears testimony to who He is?

This baptism provided an opportunity for the true identity of Jesus to be revealed. It is a unique moment. Just picture in your mind what John and the people saw here. As Jesus came up from the water, the heavens open. That in and of itself is amazing. The portals of the invisible Kingdom of Heaven open, and for just a moment mere mortals get a small taste of the divine realm. As the heavens are opened, we see the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descend on Christ. Then the most amazing things happens, God speaks! He declares Jesus to be the Son, and He expresses His divine delight in Him. All of the Trinity are present in this moment of commission for Jesus. His earthly ministry begins here, and both the Spirit and the Father have testified and bore witness that Jesus is the Son, the second member of the Trinity.

In what ways does our baptism testify to the truth of who Jesus is?

How does it testify to what He has done for us?

The act of baptism itself testifies to who we now are in Christ. We are dead to sin and alive with Christ. And just as the Trinity was present at Jesus' baptism, so we also baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The baptism of a new believer in Christ is their first public testimony to who they now are. It is a beautiful picture and a powerful witness.

The Blood:

The second witness John names in verses 6-8 is the blood. Most scholars believe this refers to Christ's atoning death on the cross. So how does His death bear testimony to who He is? What Jesus actually accomplished on the cross is a testimony to who he was.

So in your words, what is atonement?

For our sake, I will simply define atonement this way: a "biblical doctrine that God has reconciled sinners to Himself through the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ." The idea is that of an exchange.

In order for sinful man to be made right and reconciled to a holy God, something must be offered in his place. His sin must be atoned for in order to be accepted by God. (you can read Leviticus 16 for a detailed description of Old Testament Day of Atonement) . Jesus saw Himself as the fulfillment of all the Old Testament law. He saw himself as being that perfect sacrifice required for man's sin. But how do we know that God saw Jesus as the fulfillment of the atonement? The testimony of the cross bears witness to this. As Jesus died he cried "It is finished". He saw his death as fulfilling the work the Father sent him to do. Christ's testimony from the cross was that he had done everything needed to redeem His people and to atone for their sins.

There is also powerful testimony to who Jesus is surrounding the events of the crucifixion.

Read Matthew 27:50-54

What miraculous and supernatural events happened soon after Jesus died?

What is the significance of those events and how do they bear testimony to who Jesus is?

How would you explain the words of the centurion in v.54?

And of course let's not forget the most powerful testimony of all surrounding Christ's death, the resurrection. By raising Jesus from the grave, God clearly testifies that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God. His sacrifice has been accepted, and no more blood need be shed for the forgiveness of sin.

The Spirit:

The final witness in this group is the Spirit. The fact that the Spirit has come convicting us of sin, indwelling the believer's hearts, and reminding us of the words of Jesus validates the testimony of Christ. In John 15:26, Jesus promised His disciples that the Holy Spirit would come. He said, "when the Counselor comes, the One I will send to you from the Father- the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father- He will testify about Me." The Holy Spirit by His very nature testifies to who Jesus is, and the Holy Spirit, being God, cannot lie. Therefore, all of His testimony regarding Jesus is true. In verse 8, John says that the water, the blood, and the Spirit are all in agreement that Jesus is the Son of God in the flesh. This is referring back to Deuteronomy 17:6 which states that no one can be condemned to capital punishment without the testimony of two to three witnesses. The witness of the water, the blood, and the Spirit more than satisfy this demand. But that is not all. There are still three more witnesses to testify.

2. The Witness of the Father and the Believer (v.9-10).

Read 1 John 5:9-10

In what ways is God's testimony the greatest and most powerful testimony about Jesus?

How does a believer bear testimony within himself of Jesus?

What does John say about the unbeliever in this passage?

The Father:

The Bible is very clear: God delights in his son. No one knows the Son like the Father. Jesus is the beloved Son. In Isaiah 42:1, God speaks of his Son this way, "This is My Servant, I strengthen Him, this is My Chosen One; I delight in Him." John is making an argument here in verse 9. If we are willing to receive the testimony of men, how much greater is God's. In a court of law, if multiple witnesses come forth and speak to the truth of something then because they collectively have testified to the same thing we believe them. Their words can either acquit or condemn someone. If we accept the validity of two or three witnesses to decide matters on earth, ought not God's testimony be accepted all the more.

In what ways specifically has God testified to the truth of His Son?

God has provided ample evidence that Jesus is His Son. Other than audibly declaring it at both Jesus' baptism and the Transfiguration, he has also left us the historical testimony of Jesus in the Gospels. We have the eye-witness accounts of the life of Jesus in the Gospels.

The Believer:

John says something very interesting in verse 10. He says that those who believe in Jesus as the Son of God have a testimony within them. When we confess Jesus with our mouths, God makes that confession a reality in our hearts. God's Spirit works in us to testify to the truth about Jesus.

Read Romans 8:16

So this testimony is an internal testimony in every believer. Isn't it true that sometimes you need to be reminded of the love of God for you? But isn't it great to know that you don't have to look to an outside source for that reminder? God has put a constant every day reminder in you with the gift of His Spirit. It daily bears internal testimony to our hearts of who Jesus is and who we are in Him. We can know for sure that we belong to God because of this internal witness.

This verse also comes with a warning to those who would refuse the testimony of God regarding His Son. To reject God's testimony about Jesus is to call God a liar. Anyone who would deny any aspect of who Jesus is, as revealed to us by Scripture, is calling God a liar. We are called to accept the testimony of God about Jesus. Anything less than that or more than that is false teaching and should be rejected.

In what other ways do we testify to the truth of who Jesus is?

3. The Witness of Eternal Life (v.11-12).

Read 1 John 5:11-12

When you think about life eternal, what comes to mind?

Eternal Life:

A message that you get very loud and clear from John throughout this whole letter is that to have Jesus is to have eternal life. It is also clear from this passage that eternal life is a gift of God. It isn't something you earn or can purchase. It is part of God's gift to those who trust in Christ. To have Jesus is to have eternal life. And this isn't just life unending. It is that, but it is so much more. Jesus the Son is by his very nature eternal. To be granted eternal life, therefore, is to participate in the very eternality of Jesus. This is the sum of the testimony concerning Christ. The gift of eternal life testifies to the fact that Jesus is God, and as such he is eternal. He is the endless fountain of life itself. By imparting that to those who believe, he gives witness to the fact that He is the Son.

There is also a warning here. Verse 12 is very clear that to not have the Son is to not possess eternal life. See, there is something worse than physical death, and that is spiritual death. We will all spend eternity somewhere. To face eternity without Christ, is to face it with not only the certainty of physical death but eternal spiritual death as well. If only true eternal life can only be found in Christ, then to die without Him is to face what the Bible calls the second death.

How does this truth give urgency to sharing the gospel?

APPLICATION

How can you better prepare yourself to be a better witness for Jesus?

Who do you need to bear testimony about Jesus to this week?

Spend some time this week thanking God for the gift of Jesus, His Spirit, and eternal life this week.

PRAYER

Write a prayer for your small group here.

COMMENTARY

1 John 5:6-8

Water and blood constitute external, objective witnesses to who Jesus Christ is. They refer to Jesus' baptism and death. John combats the dualism of false teachers who asserted that the "Christ-spirit" departed from the man Jesus just prior to his death on the cross. John writes to show that God has given testimony to the deity of Jesus through both His baptism and death. The verb "bears witness" and the noun "testimony" both come from the same Greek work and are used a total of nine times in this section. The basic meaning is "someone who has personal and immediate knowledge of something".

"Three that bear witness", the OT law required the "testimony of two or three witnesses" to establish the truth of a particular matter. (Taken from The MacArthur Bible Commentary)

The Spirit - Evidently the Holy Spirit. The assertion here is, that that Spirit bears witness to the fact that Jesus is the Son of God, 1 John 5:5. The testimony of the Holy Spirit to this fact is contained in the following things:

(1) He did it at the baptism of Jesus. Notes, Matthew 3:16-17.

(2) Christ was eminently endowed with the influences of the Holy Spirit; as it was predicted that the Messiah would be, and as it was appropriate he should be, Isaiah 11:2; Isaiah 61:1. Compare Luke 4:18; Notes, John 3:34.

(3) the Holy Spirit bore witness to his Messiahship, after his ascension, by descending, according to his promise, on his apostles, and by accompanying the message which they delivered with

saving power to thousands in Jerusalem, Acts 2.

(4) he still bears the same testimony on every revival of religion, and in the conversion of every individual who becomes a Christian, convincing them that Jesus is the Son of God.

Compare John 16:14-15.

(5) he does it in the hearts of all true Christians, for "no man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost," 1 Corinthians 12:3. See the notes at that passage.

The Spirit of God has thus always borne witness to the fact that Jesus is the Christ, and he will continue to do it to the end of time, convincing yet countless millions that he was sent from God to redeem and save lost people. (Taken from Barnes Notes on the Bible)

1 John 5:9-10

If we receive the testimony of men – As we do continually, and must do, in a thousand instances, if we would not give over all business, and even refuse taking necessary nourishment. The testimony of two or three credible witnesses, according to the law of Moses, was deemed sufficient to prove any matter of fact; and indeed human affairs in general, even the most important, are conducted and determined by depending on the testimony of men. Nay, and we not only receive the testimony of men, when they bear their testimony in a solemn manner, upon oath, before magistrates, but we rely on one another's word from time to time, and sometimes concerning things of great moment: the testimony of God is greater – More valid, of higher authority, and much more worthy to be received than the witness of men, be they ever so numerous, or ever so respectable for their understanding and their integrity; so that we may rely on it with the greatest assurance. For this is the testimony of God – Namely, this six-fold testimony, and especially that of the last three mentioned witnesses, of the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: which he hath testified of his Son – As the true Messiah, the Saviour of the world, able to save, even to the uttermost, all that come unto God by him; and actually saving all that believe in him with their heart unto righteousness. (Taken from the Benson Commentary)

"he has the testimony in himself" refers to the inward testimony of the Spirit," the internal realization that Christians have of the Holy Spirit's presence and work within them. "Has made him a liar" refers to people who reject the Son of God as Savior, or are indifferent to the Son, are provoking God to his face. (taken from ESV Study Bible)

1 John 5:11-12

So what is being testified to? That eternal life comes from God through his Son Jesus and through no other way (vv. 11-12). This statement is very likely directed at the antichrists who charged that the readers did not really have eternal life through Christ. Scripture makes it clear that we do have eternal life through Jesus. To deny this is to deny God's testimony and to call God a liar. (taken from Smallgroup.com)

And this is the record,.... The sum and substance of it, with respect to the person of Christ, and the security of salvation in him, who is the true God, and eternal life:

that God hath given to us eternal life; which is a life of glory and happiness hereafter; in the present state is unseen, but will in the world to come be a life of vision, free from all the sorrows and imperfections of this; and will be of the utmost perfection and pleasure, and for ever. This is a pure free grace gift of God the Father, proceeding from his sovereigns good will and pleasure, and which he gives to all his chosen ones, for they are ordained unto eternal life; to as many as he has given to his Son; to all that are redeemed by his blood, and are brought to believe in him: to these he gave it in his Son before the world began; and to the same in time he gives the right unto it, the meetness for it, and the pledge and earnest of it; and will hereafter give them the thing itself, the whole of it, to be possessed and enjoyed by them in person, to all eternity.

And this life is in his Son: not only the purpose and promise of it, but that itself; Christ asked it of his Father in the covenant of peace, and he gave it to him, that he might have it in himself for all his people; and here it is safe and secure, it is hid with Christ in God, it is bound up in the bundle of life with him; and because he lives, this life will never be lost, or they come short of it. (Taken from Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible)