

The Witness of Jesus Christ

“This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.”

I John 5:6-10

Introduction:

1. This sermon deals with the fifth chapter of brother John’s first epistle, emphasizing the record of Jesus Christ.
2. The subjects of this chapter are those things that witness the Person of Jesus Christ and prove our eternal life.
3. We may know we have eternal life by believing Jesus is the Son of God and loving and working accordingly.
4. The record of Jesus Christ is neither obscure nor limited to just one witness: there are many diverse witnesses.
5. Lip service to Jesus Christ is merely devilish; God is not in all the thoughts of the wicked (Ps 10:4; Jas 2:19).

Faith is a Witness (5:1a)

1. Faith to believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, is evidence a man has already been born of God.
 - a. He that believeth [*present tense; active voice*] is born of God [*perfect tense; passive voice*].
 - b. The perfect tense is an action completed [*perfected*] in the past and still true in the present.
 - c. In modern English we would say, as do direct Greek translations, “He has been born of God.”
 - d. We prove this priority of action by comparing John’s previous points (I John 4:7 cp I John 3:14).
 - e. Consider John’s verb tenses proving the priority of regeneration to faith elsewhere (I John 4:15).
2. Unless a man is born again, he cannot see God’s kingdom, let alone believe on its King (John 3:3).
 - a. Being born again is God’s work, apart from human efforts, to prepare us to believe (John 1:12).
 - b. God’s work of grace in causing the new birth is like the sovereignty of the wind (John 3:8).
 - c. He that is of God – already born of God – is able to hear and understand (John 8:43-45,47).
 - d. The sheep of Christ are able to believe – they do not believe to become sheep (John 10:26).
 - e. Only those already saved and called are able and willing to believe on Jesus (I Cor 1:18,24).
 - f. The gospel is hid from others, for they are lost and blinded by the devil’s power (II Cor 4:3-4).
 - g. The presence of faith is evidence of eternal life and God’s gift (II Cor 2:14-17; II Thess 3:1-2).
3. Jesus is the Christ = Jesus of Nazareth, Son of Mary, is God’s anointed and chosen Messiah and Son.
 - a. The record given in the Scriptures is what we know and believe by faith in God (Matt 1:16-25).
 - b. Our English Christ is a translation of Greek Christos, from Hebrew Messiah (John 1:41; 4:25).
 - c. The Messiah, or Christ, was always known to be the Son of David and Son of God (Matt 16:16).
4. Therefore, if you believe that Jesus of Nazareth is God’s anointed Son, you have the witness of faith!
 - a. Most do not have this witness, and there is little value in trying to tell them of it (II Thess 3:1-2).
 - b. Repentance that acknowledges the truth – or the creation of faith – is God’s gift (II Tim 2:24-26).

Love is a Witness (5:1b-3)

1. Faith leads to love, which is the combination proving the children of God and eternal life (5:1b).
 - a. Nothing matters in Christ Jesus that most men worry about, but faith working love (Gal 5:6).
 - b. We must add to faith several Christian graces, but love is emphasized among them (II Pet 1:5-7).
 - c. The proof of election is the work of faith, the labor of love, and patience of hope (I Thess 1:2-4).
 - d. All men know we are Christ’s disciples by our love of one another; it is evidence (John 13:35).
 - e. Our love of God results from God’s prior love of us; we prove it by love of others (I Jn 4:19-20).
 - f. Much of John’s epistles were dedicated to teaching and emphasizing the love of the brethren.
 - g. This is the more excellent way of serving Christ than an apostle with gifts (I Cor 12:28-31).

2. Loving others properly is based on two things – loving God and keeping His commandments (5:2).
 - a. The proper motive and foundation must be the love of God – it destroys all selfish ambitions.
 - b. The proper actions of love are determined by His Word – it destroys all false concepts of love.
 - c. Beginning with the Ten Commandments, we see two tables of laws – four to God and six to men.
 - d. Loving your neighbor as yourself will include all the commandments of the law (Galatians 5:14).
 - e. The definition of loving another is found in I Corinthians 13:4-7. There is no higher definition.
3. Loving God is keeping His commandments, which is the way we all measure love of others (5:3a).
 - a. If we love someone, we want to do those things that please them and avoid displeasing them.
 - b. There are other aspects of loving God, but they are vanity without keeping His commandments.
 - c. Who cares if someone sends you a birthday card, but does those things that clearly irritate you!
 - d. Jesus gave this rule several times here and in John’s gospel (John 14:15,21-24; 15:14; I Jn 2:3-5).
 - e. By loving God and keeping His commands, we will automatically and rightly love one another.
4. God’s commandments are not grievous – heavy and hard – and they are for our prosperity (5:3b).
 - a. Jesus said His yoke was easy and His burden was light (Matt 11:28-30; Acts 15:10; Gal 5:1).
 - b. The way of wisdom – the life of righteousness – is the way of pleasantness and peace (Pr 3:17).
 - c. The only reason they seem hard is when we are living carnally and view them in the flesh.

Victory is a Witness (5:4-5)

1. The born again child of God will overcome the world, for he possesses faith to be able to do so (5:4).
2. Our Lord overcame the world, and our faith is the substance and evidence of His victory (Jn 16:33).
3. The Hall of Faith is not just given for our entertainment; it should show us the victorious way to life.
4. Mental assent and lip service to Jesus is nothing; continuing victoriously is everything (John 8:31).
5. A person that truly believes Jesus is the Son of God will not be long in chasing this world’s vanity.
6. If any man is truly in Jesus Christ, by faith and baptism, he will be a new creature (II Cor 5:17).
7. Any light affliction we endure here cannot be compared to the glory to be revealed (II Cor 4:16-18).
8. Scripture declares we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us (Ro 8:34-37; Rev 12:11).

The Water is a Witness (5:6a)

1. Jesus of Nazareth was revealed as the Son of God at His baptism in the Jordan River (Matt 3:13-17).
2. John Baptist bare record that God told him exactly how to identify the Son of God (John 1:19-36).
3. Prior to that event, He was merely the son of Mary, and perceived son of Joseph, with many siblings.
4. Daniel prophesied Messiah would be anointed in 26AD, one-half week before death (Dan 9:24-27).
5. What a glorious demonstration of the identity of Jesus Christ; it exceeds anything of any other man.

The Blood is a Witness (5:6b)

1. Jesus of Nazareth was declared to be the Son of God at His bloody crucifixion (Matthew 27:50-54).
2. The combination of events that took place there caused even the Roman centurion to confess Him.
3. The resurrection from His bloody death was even further confirmation (Romans 1:4; I Tim 3:16).
4. Even while hanging helpless on the cross, one of the thieves humbly recognized His unique Person.
5. Pilate knew he had a unique Man before him and that He was innocent, and his wife also knew it.
6. The water and blood combination here is not what John saw at the crucifixion (John 19:31-37).
 - a. The emphasis in that passage is John’s noting of two scriptures fulfilled (Ex 12:46; Zech 12:10).
 - b. His bloody death was certainly what John had in mind, for he witnessed His death firsthand.
 - c. There are two witnesses – water and blood – not just one combination. Note the need for three.
 - d. When these witnesses are carried to the verse 8, we can see clearly the need for three witnesses.
 - e. In what sense could Christ have come by the water and blood of John 19:34? It does not fit.
 - f. The issue at stake is His identity as the Son of God, which His baptism and death each declared.
 - g. Only Mary truly knew that Jesus was the Son of God by the angel’s testimony (Luke 1:35).

The Spirit is a Witness (5:6c)

1. We do not have a set of three yet, as we will in 5:8. The Holy Spirit is bearing witness in the present.
2. We would know nothing of Jesus' identity as God's Son at His baptism and death without scripture.
3. We would know nothing of Jesus' identity as God's Son at His baptism and death without preachers.
4. The scripture of truth was inspired by the Holy Ghost, without which we would not know the record.
5. We are also told about an internal witness of the Holy Spirit, even by Paul (Rom 8:14-16; Gal 4:4-6).
6. John had already stated at least twice this presence of the Spirit to bear witness of Jesus (3:24; 4:13).
7. The Spirit is the Spirit of truth, and He did bare witness of Jesus Christ in many ways (I Tim 3:16).

The Father is a Witness (5:7a)

1. The verse being introduced by the coordinating conjunction *for* includes the Trinity with the Spirit.
2. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jehovah God, and all members of the Godhead are in full agreement.
3. But beyond even full agreement, they are also one in nature, for there is only one God Jehovah.
4. We are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and this Trinitarian formula of record (Matt 28:18-20).

The Word is a Witness (5:7b)

1. It was the Word made flesh that was the Son of God, and John beheld His great glory (John 1:14,18).
2. Recall, John was one of the privileged apostles that was in the holy mount with Christ (Matt 17:1-9).

The Spirit is a Witness (5:7c)

1. The Holy Spirit was given to Christ without measure and testified of Him in many ways (John 3:34).
2. The incontrovertibly great mystery of godliness has Jesus being justified in the Spirit (I Tim 3:16).
3. These three are one in nature and testimony, giving the ultimate of THREE witnesses (Matt 18:16).

Gospel Preaching is a Witness (5:8a)

1. How does the Spirit bear witness in the earth? By His inspired scriptures that declare God's record.
2. How does the Spirit bear witness in the earth? By the gifts of the ministry and gospel preaching.
3. The great company of preachers gave the gospel throughout the world (Rom 10:18; I Tim 3:16).

Baptism is a Witness (5:8b)

1. We identify with Jesus Christ and accept the record God gave of Him at our baptism (Rom 6:3-6).
2. The eunuch's condition for baptism – taken from modern Bibles – is our theme here (Acts 8:37).
3. We must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ; Paul rebaptized those following John (Ac 19:1-7).
4. This ancient rite has been kept up in the world for 2000 years, in spite of enormous efforts against it.
5. Baptism is the answer of a good conscience to God for the life, death, and life of Jesus (I Pet 3:21).

Communion is a Witness (5:8c)

1. It is at the Lord's Supper we show our common union in the Person and work of Jesus (I Cor 10:16).
2. The Passover symbolism was fulfilled by Jesus Christ the Lamb shedding His blood (I Cor 5:7-8).
3. This ancient rite has also been kept up in the world for 2000 years, in spite of great efforts against it.
4. Communion is no light matter; it is the corporate event by which we confess allegiance to a coming King, and it is by this memorial supper we remember the Son of God's death until He returns.

The New Man is a Witness (5:10-13)

1. We will take the witness of men for things we cannot prove. Consider Genghis Khan, Christopher Columbus, George Washington, in court cases, in real science, in so-called science, and such like.
2. But the witness, testimony, or record God has given of His Son Jesus is far greater than any man.
3. There are numerous events and numerous witnesses with a 2000 year history to confirm our faith.

4. Do you believe the testimony God has given of His Son? If you do, then you will surely live like it.
5. But we also have the Spirit within us that confirms we are the sons of God (Rom 8:14-16; Gal 4:6).
6. John had already stated at least twice this presence of the Spirit to bear witness of Jesus (3:24; 4:13).
7. We are given eternal life by the sovereign choice of God in our union to Jesus Christ (I Jn 4:9-10), which was effected before the world began by God choosing us in Him (Eph 1:3-5; II Tim 1:9).
8. If 5:12 is merely repeating about faith and eternal life, it would be vainly redundant with 10 and 13.
9. Further believing is sought, for eternal life is not a mere decision, but a life of believing (John 8:31).

Answered Prayers are a Witness (5:14-17)

1. The children of God have confidence He hears and answers their prayers – and also the experience!
2. The confidence we have by the witnesses and record of God, including His Spirit, gives confidence.
3. Brothers help one another by prayer and conversion when they fall into sin (Gal 6:1-2; Jas 5:16-20).
 - a. All sins are unto death legally considered, but this passage about prayer is different (Rom 6:23).
 - b. The wages of sin is eternal death (Rom 6:23), and sinning saints die practically to fellowship.
 - c. Restoration is certainly possible for many faults that may overtake a person, as David and Peter.
 - d. Effectual and fervent prayer can help, and so can direct efforts at conversion by a good brother.
 - e. The “death” here must be more than the “death” of fellowship described by turning from truth, for such loss of lively fellowship occurs with any sin that separates a believing child from God.
 - f. The “life” here must be the same “life” to which the man in James is restored by a brother.
 - g. The “death” here must be the final, incorrigible, and obstinate state of a man in total apostasy.
 - h. It was primarily a Jewish condition addressed by an apostle to the Jews about apostasy (Gal 2:9).
 - i. It would include antichrist false professors that crept in among the early saints (I John 2:18-19).
 - j. The Bible describes a terminal, irremediable judgment on men rejecting reproof (Prov 29:1).
 - k. Since Jesus had ascended to heaven, it was not possible for the unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which was to witness Jesus healing by the Spirit and ascribe it to devils.
4. But there is another kind of sin that does not deserve prayer – apostasy from Jesus Christ (5:16b).
 - a. Paul warned about this sin at least four times to the Hebrews (2:1-4; 6:4-6; 10:26-31; 12:25-29).
 - b. John’s ministry was to these same circumcised believers – the Hebrews – (Galatians 2:9).
5. Any unrighteousness is sin, but believers may take due consolation in such sins (I John 1:8,10; 2:1).
 - a. While in these bodies of flesh, we will sin; but born again children of God do not sin lightly or casually, nor do they continue on in sin without righteousness, as does the devil (I John 3:4-10).
 - b. And they are able and willing, yea eager, to confess their sins and restore fellowship (I Jn 1:7,9).

Holy Living is a Witness (5:18-19)

1. Born again children of God do not sin – that is, they do not continue in sin without righteousness.
2. John has just concluded a matter of prayer, that there are sins not unto death; lest they should presume that such sins could be allowed loosely, he returns to his argument about sinning (3:4-10).
 - a. We must put a sense on sin here, for the immediate context admits that brothers will sin (5:16).
 - b. There is a keeping of yourself that is the evidence of eternal life (Phil 2:12-13; II Pet 1:5-11).
 - c. Satan tempts all saints, even John and Paul, but cannot touch them seriously (Jas 4:7; I Cor 7:1).

Eternal Life is a Witness (5:20-21)

1. We are saved to know and have an understanding of God and His Son Jesus Christ (John 17:2-3).
2. It is Arminian tomfoolery to believe we are responsible to know and understand by human means.
3. Knowing and understanding God is a gift of God, for which we should rejoice (Jeremiah 9:23-24).
4. Idols are any replacement for the love of God in our lives, such as simply covetousness (Col 3:5).
5. We are called to be separate, and we should be so with great care (I Cor 10:19-22; II Cor 6:14-18).

Conclusion:

1. We approach the communion table of Jesus Christ with full appreciation for the understanding He has given.
2. God testified that Jesus was His Son by His death with its many signs, including the centurion's declaration.
3. We perpetuate that witness in the earth by taking up a cup symbolizing His blood as God's Son (I John 5:8).

For Further Study:

1. The sermon outline, "Mystery of Godliness," ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/sermons/pdf/mystery-of-godliness.pdf>.
2. The sermon outline, "Hidden Wisdom," ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/sermons/pdf/mysteries-of-hidden-wisdom.pdf>.
3. The sermon outline, "Name Above," ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/sermons/pdf/a-name-above-every-name.pdf>
4. The sermon outline, "Jesus Is Jehovah," ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/sermons/pdf/jesus-is-jehovah.pdf>.
5. The sermon outline, "Sonship of Christ," ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/sermons/pdf/sonship-of-christ.pdf>.
6. The sermon, "I Have Begotten Thee," ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/sermons/pdf/this-day-have-i-begotten-thee.pdf>.
7. The sermon outline, "Love Is the Greatest," ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/sermons/pdf/love-is-the-greatest.pdf>.