



CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

December 12, 2021

"Three Witnesses"

Sunday school at 9:30, Service at 10:30 with King's Kids.

NEWS

No Wednesday Night Classes on December **22** & **29**, 15th Yes, 22nd & 29th No.

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I JOHN 5:5-12, ⁵Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? ⁶This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. ⁷For there are three that testify: ⁸the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. ⁹If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son. ¹⁰The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son. ¹¹And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹²He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

Verse 5 is a pivot closing out the logical loop that the person who knows God, loves God, and so, trusts God. They therefore _____ God's Commandments to love Him and His children... The loving of His children is the _____ proof of all the rest.

In order to love, you must actually _____. It is not an academic exercise, nor is it a state of being, it is character built and demonstrated by _____.

Hebrew מָשִׁיחַ (mä-shē-āḥ) means "Anointed One." God would Save the people Himself through His eternal King/Priest/Prophet the _____. Which, in Greek, is Χριστός (ḫrē-stōs) the _____.

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

Right behavior... Here the activity of loving... Must always be predicated on right _____.

Who is the man Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, that we should _____ in Him? He is "the One who came by water and blood," What? It is the totality of Jesus Christ's ministry.

It began with His glorious _____, and it ended with His brutal _____.
(Matthew 3:14-17 & Luke 23:46).

The Holy Spirit consistently proclaims Jesus to be the Christ because He _____ do otherwise. Truth not only tells the Truth; it cannot be _____ about Truth, especially when it's the greatest Truth.

All three witnesses testify to Jesus' mortal _____ and full submission to God.

Verse 9 reminds people that they readily accept the testimony of two or three humans, how much more should they accept _____ testimony?

Historically, Jesus was Baptized, He was crucified, and the Holy Spirit came upon the Disciples in the Upper Room. Beyond that all three are _____ witnesses as well.

The Spirit testifies to us as we have been made _____ in Christ.

The Water testifies to us as we have been _____ into the Body of Christ.

The Blood testifies to us as we have been _____ from all unrighteousness.

Verse 10 describes the two types of people. Those who believe already know because the testimony of God has been manifested within them. Those who disbelieve not only prevents them from experiencing the Truth, it also reveals that they exist as entities declaring Almighty God a liar.

All people know and are entirely without any defense at all (Romans 1:20, etc.).

The content of God's testimony to the world is this: He "has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son."

Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____



1 John

Love one  another

Advent

2021

3rd Sun.

*For You
are my hope,
O Lord God*

Psalm 71:5



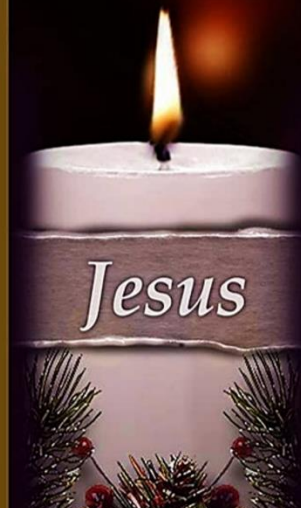
*For God so loved
the world that
He gave His only
begotten Son*

John 3:16



*And the Word became
flesh and dwelt among
us, and we beheld
His glory*

John 1:14



*And you will have
joy and gladness,
and many will
rejoice at his birth.*

Luke 1:14



*"Glory to God in
the highest, And
on earth peace,
goodwill
toward men!"*

Luke 1:14





1 John 5:5-12, 5Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? 6This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. 7For there are three that testify: 8the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. 9If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son. 10The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in

the testimony that God has given concerning His Son. 11And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

We ended last week with verse 5. I mentioned that it is a pivot verse that closes out what was said before, and introduces what comes next. The logical loop from before was that the person who knows God loves God and so trusts God. They therefore obey God's Commandments to love Him and His children... The loving of His children is the concrete, examinable, experiential proof of all the rest.

That ability to love others is derived from trusting God enough to take some of the love that He's given to you and, as an act of faith in Him, step out and give that love to someone else. We've come full circle.

The point last week was that in order to love, you must actually love. It cannot be merely an academic exercise, nor can it be some esoteric spiritual state of being. What it is, is character that is built by and demonstrated by physical activity. It's like being a pilot.

I don't care how much you know about flying, or how much you think of yourself as a pilot, until you strap in and leave the cradle of earth, you're no pilot. In order for love to be perfected in you, you must spend it on others in reality.

The problem is that it is incredibly difficult to stay appropriately on task. We usually vacillate between doing too much on our own and not enough on our own.

At issue is the fact that the goal is to merely allow God to love others through us, which means that we end up doing nothing on our own. Yet, we cannot get to that place without practice. We cannot do it without doing. Initially, it will seem as though we are doing more than God, but it's only an illusion. One that will dissipate as you get more accustomed to the process. Not only will you see that it was really God all along in retrospect, you will begin to see that it is God in the moment going forward. You will rely on Him to direct you and you will know that He is the one doing all the doing. How do we get there?

Take the bull by the horns. Pray and move and do. Do as much as you can without becoming too disappointed, irritated, or offended. Too much disillusionment hurts your faith, too much annoyance makes you self-righteous, too much pain makes you resentful. The right answer is, with the correct attitude, do, until it starts to upset you and then back off a bit.

The thing that makes it all possible is trust. When we know God well enough to truly trust Him, we can endure a bit of discomfort as we pursue obeying His command to love. That, at the end of the day, is faith, or belief in Jesus.

The one who has that kind of faith has joined the Victor's side and has therefore become a victor themselves - an overcomer of this world that is opposed to God. As verse 4 concluded "whatever is born of God overcomes the world".

Verse 5 then... How are we "born of God"? By believing that "Jesus is the Christ". We are going to use that term "Christ" a lot today so let's review what it means. Many Old Testament passages led the Jews before, during, and after Jesus' earthly sojourn, to

understand that one day God would intervene Himself and save them from their sins. He would do so by sending His specially “Anointed One”, which in Hebrew is, מָשִׁיחַ (mä-shē-ax̄), we say Messiah. The Messiah foretold by what are then called Messianic passages and prophecies was to be an eternal King/Priest/Prophet, which only made sense to the Jews if He was some part of God Himself coming to the earth. Conservative Jews still await the Messiah today. The Greek word for the “Anointed One”, or Messiah, is Χριστός (x̄rē-stōs) the Christ, and so His followers Christians.

Now in verse 5, that person is further defined. It runs parallel to verse 1 and makes the object of belief identical. A belief that the man Who was Baptized in the Jordan and Who was Crucified on Calvary is both the Christ and also the Son of God.

You cannot believe one without the other. We’re now getting into some of those “above the line,” items of Salvific belief that we talked about a few weeks ago. In order to be Saved all you need do is believe in Jesus. Truly that is all. The more to it than that bit, is in order to do that you must put your faith in the true Jesus, not

in some false Jesus. Beyond that, your belief must be genuine enough to be life changing. So, again, it's only one thing and that is Jesus, always only Jesus, but it must be the actual Jesus and it must be real faith.

Since this is so vital to where you will spend eternity, I think it's worth a little time and thought to discuss it further. Well, evidently the Holy Spirit inspired Apostle John thought so as well. Now he is going to talk about it here. Why? Because right behavior... Here the activity of loving... Must always be predicated on right belief. As I say, my friends, ideas matter.

God never tells us to do something without telling us why. He doesn't have to do that, but He does, and it isn't because He's trying to convince us, or coax us. It's because He wants us to choose to do because we agree with Him that it's the right doing. Since our basis of love is Jesus, John will define Who the man Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, is...

He is, in verse 6, "the One who came by water and blood," that's clarified, "not with water only, but with water and with the blood." The two things cannot be separated just as loving God and obeying Him cannot

be separated, just like Jesus the Christ and Jesus the Son of God cannot be separated.

What does water and blood mean? Well, there are many ideas. All the way from the water and blood of His human birth to the water and blood that flowed from His side on the Cross, to the ridiculous notion of it referring to the water and blood represented in the Communion sacramental wine. The easy Truth is that John is referring to the totality of Jesus Christ's ministry to mankind.

It began with His glorious Baptism, and it ended with His brutal death. The water of the Jordan River and His blood poured out on what we call Good Friday. It means that Jesus was a human man who lived His life in submission to God and died His death in submission to God. Both beginning and end and so the whole incarnation focused as His ministry demonstrated the meaning of Son. He acted like God's Son.

The Baptizer also named John said to Jesus, "I have need to be Baptized by You" (Matthew 3:14). Jesus neither confessed, nor repented and yet He did humble Himself to demonstrate His affiliation with the people

and surrender to God. All four Gospels record this monumental event and all four of them do so after proclaiming that the man Jesus was the One and Only Unique Son of God - that He was the eternal Word of Almighty God made flesh. The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a Dove and the Heavenly Father proclaimed, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased" (Matthew 3:17).

The earthly life of the Savior, as the Christ began there. It ended in spilled blood. The fact that Jesus died is irrefutable. It is an essential cornerstone of Christian orthodoxy that God made man died by giving up the life that was in Him.

Jesus as the Christ had to die, Jesus as the Son of God could not die. From the Cross He said, "Father into Your hands I commit My spirit" (Luke 23:46). Whereupon Jesus "breathed His last." He surrendered His life because not even God could take it from Him and thus ended His sojourn on planet earth as one of us.

The fact that His sacrificial death worked was proven by the unanimous testimony of over 500 people that

Jesus rose from the dead three days later. His bodily Resurrection confirmed that He was truly the Son of God.

Those two markers point out that Jesus was fully mortal human and simultaneously fully eternal God. More, that He remained fully submitted to the Father's Will throughout and thus completely sinless. You see being completely unopposed to God's Will is to fully obey God, which is to entirely love God and mankind.

Jesus loved God enough to allow sin to be made His own and He loved mankind enough to pay for that sin with His life. How do we today know that it is true?

We have the Scripture to be sure. We have the historical evidence, and we have the heritage of 20 centuries of Saints. But how can you and I truly know? Precisely the same way the people John first wrote to could know. It is the consistent testimony of the Holy Spirit.

Before we get to the how, John answers the why. The Holy Spirit consistently proclaims Jesus to be the Christ the very Son of God because He cannot do

otherwise. The Bible declares that God is Truth. In fact, in this very Letter. Jesus said of Himself, Ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωὴ (John 14:6). “I AM”, I AM that which I Am, I exist as “the way, and the Truth, and the Life.” You know the rest... “no one comes to the Father but through Me.”

Well, here it should come as no surprise at all that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of ἀλήθεια. The Holy Spirit can just as easily as Jesus, say, I AM the Truth. Of course, He points to Jesus as the Christ. He cannot do otherwise because He is Truth and because Truth cannot tell a lie, even if it is a lie of omission. Truth not only speaks Truth; it cannot be silent about Truth, especially when it's the greatest Truth of all. Therefore, it ends up being the Holy Spirit's primary job in this world at this time. Another way to view it, is the Holy Spirit was sent as the Great Comforter. What is the greatest possible comfort of all? Knowing Jesus as the Christ.

How? Back around we go to Chapter 3, verse 24, we know that God and we, are mutually abiding through Christ, by the Holy Spirit Whom He has given to us.

The indwelling Holy Spirit confirms within you that it is true. When I met Jesus in a life-altering way, He came across the room through my desk and embraced me as I struggled to shrink away from His Holy presence. I knew without question that it was Jesus the Christ and I also know that it was the Holy Spirit that gave me that experience. Let the Holy Spirit show you Jesus.

Verse 7&8 clarify and emphasize the three witnesses. Now, put together, obviously the Holy Spirit comes first.

All three testify to Jesus' mortal humanity and full submission to God. At the time the problem people had was in accepting that Jesus was fully human and fully subservient. They had no problem believing that He was fully God. Today we have the reverse problem. No one has any issue at all believing that Jesus was a man - they have trouble accepting Him as God. You must believe both equally to believe in the true Christ.

In this Letter, John has clearly declared Jesus to be God, the easily accepted thing, here his primary focus is to make sure that people believe that He was also one of us. You must accept Jesus as simultaneously both.

I suppose I need to say something about the Johannine Comma. If you were following along in a KJV, or NKJV Bible, you might have noticed that I left some words out. The KJV in verses 7&8 adds, “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.”

That extra content about the “Father and the Word and the Holy Ghost”, is true. No reasonable Christian would argue with the Truth of it and the reason they wouldn’t is because that Truth is stated in the Bible repeatedly, if not as concisely as this.

Not a single scholar today believes the additional words are original to John’s Letter. There are a whole host of reasons, not the least of which is that it actually distracts from and diminishes the argument that John’s making here. If John would have written these words, he wouldn’t have written them in this spot.

I don't want to get into a whole deal about it now. If you want more information, come to Sunday school or set up an appointment with me and I'll be happy to go over all the pluses and minuses. I only bring it up now, because I know some of you use the KJV and will have noticed that I skipped some words. Why did I skip them? The NASB doesn't have them, in fact I'm not aware of a single translation in the last 150 years that contains them. Does it change anything? Not really, at least not importantly. The addition messes up John's flow, but we can still understand. The absence removes a clear statement about the Trinity, but there are mountains of other Scripture that testify to the Trinity.

John's argument is that three witnesses, here on earth, unanimously testify to Jesus. Verse 9 is a Greco-Roman argument from the lesser to the greater. It reminds people that they are happy to accept the testimony of two or three human men, well God is certainly more trustworthy than that, and so, how much more should they accept His testimony? God testifies through the three witnesses of Christ's Baptism, His tortuous death and through the other Paraclete - the Breath of God - the Holy Spirit that He sent to earth.

The three are one and can be thought of collectively as the testimony of God. Before we take it from there, let's consider something deeper in the three witnesses and we'll understand why the reference to the Trinity found its expression here, besides the obvious "three in agreement as one," thing.

1) Historically, Jesus was Baptized, and the Holy Spirit came upon Him, and the Father declared His pleasure. 2) Historically, Jesus was crucified as sin and gave up His life force. 3) Historically, the Holy Spirit was sent and came upon the Apostles and Disciples in the Upper Room.

That's three great witnesses, but I already said that the Holy Spirit witness was a personal witness to individuals. Likewise, the other two. Beyond historical witnesses all three are present personal witnesses as well. 1) The Spirit testifies to us as we have been made alive in Christ. 2) The Water testifies to us as we have been reborn into the Body of Christ as members of God's family. 3) The Blood testifies to us as we are entirely cleansed from all unrighteousness, as it is the

Blood of the New Covenant, Christ's blood shed for the forgiveness of our sin.

So now the three testify as one within us His children, the Spirit giving us life the water birthing us into the family and the Blood washing away all that stands between us and Him, us and each other as well - if we'll only see it.

It is the Father Who orchestrates and accepts us as His children, it is the Son Who has created a way of being righteous and it is the Spirit Who breathes new life into us daily. There's your Trinity.

Now taking God's testimony as a whole we find through the perfect tense and other syntactical relationships in verse 9 that it is His Son Himself. God's testimony to humankind is that He gave His One and Only Word of God to be made flesh. That's the testimony given. It was given as an historical reality some 2,000 years ago and its effect lasts forever into the future without ever being diminished.

John needs to develop that thought a bit more, but before he does, he wants to clarify once again through

both positive and negative parallel statements what this means to people.

Verse 10, starts, “The one who.” and the parallel within the verse starts identically as “the one who.” Both statements describe a type of person. It isn’t about activity or even ideas as it is about core being here. We have often seen that ideas lead to who you are and what you do, but right here John is once again dividing up the entirety of all humanity. Every person who has ever lived, or who is living now, or who will live in the future, is one of these two types. The first type is the type who believes and the only other type that can possibly exist is the type who does not believe.

For the first, their belief in Jesus as the Son of God already confirms the fact, because the testimony of God has been manifested within them as part of the process of belief. That’s why, while rational, while reasonable, true belief will always be a leap of faith. A leap immediately rewarded with more faith, but a leap, nonetheless.

As for the other type? Their refusal to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, not only prevents them from

experiencing the Truth, it also reveals the fact that they exist as entities declaring Almighty God to be a liar. They're not just calling God a liar, their very existence their entire being proclaims God to be a liar. We often minimize the sin of unbelief, but unbelief is itself a force asserting God to be evil, sinful, vile, untrustworthy, and worthless.

How can Heaven function with that? For such people there cannot be union with God, and disunion with God, is literally Hell.

You might object and say that those who do not believe have not been given the opportunity, the information, the nurture to believe. Wrong. According to the Bible all people know and are entirely, utterly, without any defense at all (Romans 1:20, etc.).

Verse 11 gets back to the thought we need to understand a bit better. The content of God's testimony is plainly stated. God's testimony to the world is this: He "has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son."

Eternal life is another way to say right relationship with God. That's another way to say loving God, which

means knowing God, which means trusting God, which means obeying God, which means loving God and loving His other children. Eternal life starts here and transcends physical death. The Kingdom of Heaven starts now and transcends time.

It can only be found in Jesus the Son of Man, Who is the Son of God, our Christ, our Lord and Savior. Give Him praise and glory! Jesus declared many times and in many ways that He was the life-generating, life-giving, and life-sustaining force.

He said, Ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωή. “I AM”, I AM that which I AM, I exist as “the Resurrection and the Life.” It is the utter defeat of death and the inextinguishable life force. Jesus went on to say, “The one who believes in Me will live even if he dies and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die.” See that? If you believe in Jesus, you will live eternally even if you die - that’s “the Resurrection”. He went on to say if you live - meaning after Resurrection - believing in Me, you will never ever, ever die again - that’s “the Life.” “Do you believe this?” That’s the very question Jesus Himself asked. “Do you believe this?” (John 11:25&26).

Verse 12 nicely rounds it out clarifying and emphasizing so that there's no mistake. "He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. Another positive/negative parallel eliminating any other possibility. There are only two kinds of people. Those who have, hold, possess life and those who have, hold, possess death - which one are you?"