

1 John Chapter 5C

Early in my Christian life I was enamored with the dramatic testimonies of conversion that were given by men like Nicky Cruz and Raul Reese.

- Some of you may be old enough to remember the movie, “The Cross and the Switchblade” which depicted the early ministry of David Wilkerson and the powerful testimony of Nicky Cruz who was once a vicious gang member.

Years later at a C.C Pastor’s conference I had the pleasure of meeting Raul Ries. Raul’s dramatic conversion was documented in the movie “Fury to Freedom.”

- Raul was a very angry young man who took his anger out on his precious wife. One day as he was waiting for Her to come home from work with a shot-gun in his hand. While he was waiting he turned the TV on and heard the Gospel. With gun in hand, he repented of his sin and trusted in Christ for his Salvation.
- I am happy to say that Raul and his wife Sharon are now coming up on their 50th wedding anniversary.

But you know friends, it has been my experience that some of the most dramatic testimonies of men have regrettably ended in great humiliation

- I remember a certain man at a men’s conference who boldly testified to the great power of God that delivered him from sexual addiction His testimony was greeted by the applause of the crowd, but sadly within one short year like a dog that returns to his vomit he played the fool and returned to his sin. (Lost wife)
- I also remember a local pastor whose testimony was being published in a book entitled “From Prison to the Pulpit” when sadly he was sent back to prison for drug trafficking.

Very often, to our own detriment we overemphasize the testimony of men. We idolize Christian Celebrities and focus Far too much attention on human experience and too little attention to the Testimony of God.

- You see, the testimony of man can be tainted by remaining sin. Admittedly, we all stumble. Even the best of us succumb to temptation and yield to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life.
- But friends, despite our human frailties we who have received the first fruits of the Spirit are called to declare the goodness and loving kindness of our Savior.
 - Like Paul in his letter to Titus who wrote

Titus 3: 3 **For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.** 4 **BUT when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared,**

5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

* Our testimony is all about HIS work of grace!

Now remember the purpose for John's writing, here in his first epistle is to provide Believers with the assurance of eternal life. (1 John 5:13)

Throughout his letter, John has been weaving together three strands of evidence that testify to the saving work of God in the lives of God's people. Remember them?

- They are: Truth, Love and Obedience. John has been masterfully weaving these three attributes back and forth like a French braid, displaying the beauty of God's saving work in the lives of his beloved children.

Now because these attributes have not yet been perfected in us, John moves on to a more certain testimony upon which the assurance of our salvation can be firmly established and that is the testimony of God.

- IN verses 6 – 12, the root word for Testimony, witness is used 10 times.

IN this paragraph the testimony of God's saving grace is confirmed by three witnesses; & since this is the testimony of God there is no question to its credibility.

- Confirmation – As I said the testimony of God is confirmed by 3 witnesses.
- Credibility - Because this is the testimony of God it must be believed.
- Consolation and Cost – There is great gain for those who believe and great loss for those who don't

We remember from last week that everyone who is born of God has been given the gift of faith whereby they believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

- And now moving on to Verses 6-8 John informs us that true belief in Jesus is grounded in, established on and confirmed by the three-fold witness of God.

1 John 5: 6 This is he who came by water and blood — Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. 7 For there are three that testify: 8 the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.

- These three elements in the testimony of God read almost like the clues to a crossword puzzle, and the scholars work very hard to fill in The boxes of the puzzle with a variety of interpretations.
- Well you can read all of the possible interpretations on your own, this morning I would like to focus on what I believe is the most simple and most widely accepted interpretation.

According to John, the Testimony of God is threefold, the first two elements are historic and the final element is spiritual.

- The water and the blood speak of two historic events in the life of Christ.
- The witness of the spirit that John speaks of refers to the spiritual confirmation of the Gospel that is brought about in the heart of every true believer.

And John assures us that when we believe the testimony of God we indeed possess the gift of eternal life that God has provided through his Son, Jesus Christ.

Now I believe that the water spoken of in Vs 6-7 is a reference to the baptism of Jesus Christ and the blood is a reference to his death. These two historic events bracket our Lord's earthly ministry like a divine set of parenthesis.

- In both of these events, we see the testimony of the Father confirming the identity and saving work of his Divine Son.

When John adds, “**not by the water only but by the water and the blood,**” he is making a very important theological point that highlights the error of the False Teachers who were plaguing the church at the end of the first century.

- You may remember from our previous study that the worldly philosophy of Plato was infiltrating the church in John's day through group of false teachers.
- These Heretics said that Jesus was just a man, upon whom the spirit of Christ came at his baptism. They went on to say that the “**Spirit of Christ**” left the man Jesus before his death so that He died as a mere man and not the God-Man
- IN essence, the false teachers said that Christ came by water BUT not by blood. Let's consider the testimony of God in these two historic events.

Remember, at the beginning of Christ's earthly ministry the Father gave testimony to His beloved Son as he stood in the waters of the Jordan.

Matthew 3: 16 **And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; 17 and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."**

- Keep in mind, to this point Jesus had done no miracles, he had preached no sermons and yet God the Father testifies to his holy life and his unique sonship by exclaiming, **"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."**
- Jesus did not become the Holy Son of God through the baptism of John. In fact, there was Never a time when He was Not Holy and there was never a day, an hour or even a moment when Jesus was not the Son of God.
- The words of the Father bear testimony to his eternal, unchanging identity.

The second witness that John points to is the BLOOD. Of course, the blood is the testimony of God that took place through the suffering and death of Jesus Christ.

- Contrary to the error of the false teachers, the shedding of Jesus' blood was not a denial of his deity but rather the crowning glory of his work as God's suffering servant.
- John records for us yet another time when the Father spoke from heaven, and the context of this communication concerns his impending death.
- Jesus is speaking:

John 12:27 "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. 28 Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."

- Knowing that he was about to bear the wrath of God on behalf of those who would be redeemed, expressing the angst of one who was about to endure unprecedented suffering Jesus said: what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour.
- This is the HOUR in which the full measure of God's glory will be revealed through the death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. AND all that Jesus asks is that the Father's name would be glorified.
- And the Father responds, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."
- God has been glorified through the sinless life of Christ and he will yet be glorified in the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ as well.

BUT my friends the testimony of God is not only heard in the rumbling voice of the Father, here in John 12 it is also seen in the historic events that took place at the Crucifixion. Matthew records them for us:

Matthew 27:45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.

- A supernatural darkness occurred in the middle of the day and that darkness symbolized the wrath of God that Jesus was enduring on the cross.
- The Testimony of the blood takes us to Matthew 27:51 where at the moment of His death the veil in the temple was torn from the top to the bottom.

Matthew 27: 50 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. 51 And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.

- The tearing of the veil at the moment of Jesus' death dramatically symbolized the results of His sacrifice. Through His death He opened the way into the presence of God for all those who would believe..

The miraculous testimony of the Father at the death of His Son brought the precious gift of faith to a Roman Centurion who was standing near by. He saw the darkness, he felt the earthquake he watched the face of Christ and filled with awe he cried out:

Matthew 27: 54 "Truly this was the Son of God!"

So we see, the testimony of the water and the blood are historic facts that every human being needs to consider, but the final testimony of God in this three-fold cord of divine witness is the testimony of the Spirit. And this testimony is reserved for those whose eyes have been opened through the new birth to see the glorious kingdom of God.

1 John 5:6B **And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.**

- The assurance of God's testimony concerning Jesus Christ comes to us by the Holy Spirit and his testimony is certain because, "**The Spirit is the truth.**"

Now, when we say that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth we are confessing Not Only that He is true but that he is the SOURCE and REVEALER of all divine truth.

On the night that Jesus was betrayed he told his disciples:

John 16: 13 **When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14 He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.**

- I thank God that he sent the Spirit of truth to dwell with us, opening our blind eyes to the Kingdom of God and guiding us into all truth.
- But I think it would be helpful for us to ask How, When and Where we can find the testimony of the Spirit.

The Apostle Peter tells us that the testimony of the Spirit comes to us externally through the pages of Holy Scripture.

2 Peter 1: 20 **knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**

- The "more sure word of prophecy," as Peter calls it has come to us by the Spirit in the Word of God.
- The Psalmist tells us that the Testimony of the Lord is SURE!
- Jesus told us that, "**Heaven and earth will pass away but His Words would never pass away.**"
- Peter tells us that "the grass withers, the flowers fall, but the Word of the Lord remains forever."

And so we find the External testimony of the Spirit in the Word of God but I believe there is also an internal confirmation of the Spirit abiding within every believer.

The Spirit confirms the truth of God's Word internally in the hearts of those who are born of God, those who believe that Jesus is the Christ. Paul writes:

1 Corinthians 2 9 **But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"** 10 **these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.** 11 **For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.** 12 **Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.** 13 **And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.**

- The Spirit of God Reveals the Truth of God in the Hearts of Those who Believe.
 - BY the Spirit, through the Word we Know where we came from, we know how and why we were created, we understand the origin of evil and we rest in the hope of Christ's coming to set all things right.
 - Even in suffering we possess a living hope because the Spirit assures us that He works all things together for the good of his beloved people.
 - When the Word of God is being proclaimed there is a burning in our hearts that comes by the Spirit.
- Listen to the testimony of John Wesley.

As the preface to Martin Luther's Commentary on the book of Romans was being read on May 24, 1738. The testimony of John Wesley was recorded:

"about a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

- Wesley testifies to the divine heart Burn produced by the Holy Spirit as the Word of God is being expounded.
- This is the same burning heart that was experienced by the two men who traveled the road to Emmaus.

Luke 24:32 **They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"**

- Friends, does your heart burn within you as the Word of God is being proclaimed? That is the Testimony of the Spirit!!

NOW because this is the testimony of God you can be certain that it is true.

Credibility - The credibility of God's testimony.

1 John 5: 9 **If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son.**

- Here John emphasizes the absolute necessity of Believing the testimony of God concerning Jesus Christ, and he does this through an argument that moves from the lesser to the greater, comparing the lesser testimony of man to the greater testimony of God.

Now Friends, most of us eagerly receive the testimony of man in a variety of forms.

- We believe the testimony of those who sell cookware and vacuum cleaners on QVC and we fill our cupboards with all kinds of treasures.
- We watch those wonderful advertisements for Toyota, where the cars are playing hide and seek and say, I really want one of those! It looks like so much FUN! We believe the testimony of men.
- Well here in Vs 9 John says, IF we believe the testimony of men (whose knowledge and understanding is limited) shouldn't we believe the testimony of Almighty God concerning his son?

John wants us to know that there are only two possible responses to the Testimony of God, Belief and unbelief. These two responses have two very different results.

- We learned last week that Belief, or the gift of faith comes as a result of the New Birth. Since the believer is filled with the Holy Spirit the testimony of Christ is actually dwelling IN each and every child of God.
- BUT, to reject the testimony of God in unbelief is to call God a LIAR!

1 John 5:10 **Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son.**

- Now listen, John is not being overly dramatic in his language. He is earnestly telling the truth. Anyone who rejects this clear testimony of God, anyone who suppresses the truth in unrighteousness is in essence calling God a LIAR.
- This testimony of God that is substantiated through the historical record of Christ's baptism and death, that same testimony which is confirmed by the Spirit of Truth carries eternal consequences.
- There is no way to be neutral! God has spoken. We either trust him and believe his testimony or we reject His Testimony and call him a liar.
- TODAY you are either believing or you are unbelieving. The idea that there is some kind of middle ground for people who are called "Seekers," is a lie.

Romans 3: 10 **as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands; no one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."**

Up to this point John has been emphasizing the witness of God concerning the person and work of the Lord Jesus. But now he goes on to declare the benefits of believing God's testimony and the great cost of unbelief.

Our final point is Consolation and Cost

1 John 5:11 **And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.**

- Throughout his writing John identifies eternal life with the person of Jesus Christ.

In chapter one speaking about the incarnation John said:

1 John 1: 2 **the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us**

Later in Chapter 5 John tells us that Jesus Christ IS eternal life.

In 5:20 **And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.**

- Because God's gift of eternal life is given "In his Son" it follows that He who has the Son HAS life. Vs. 12

12 **Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.**

- To have the Son means to be indwelt by the Son, and we understand from the Scripture that this indwelling takes place at the time when we are Born of God and believe on Jesus Christ.
- To have the Son is to have eternal life because the Son himself is the eternal life that was WITH the Father.
- Of course the opposite is also true for those who remain in unbelief. They do not have the Son and therefore they do not have eternal life.
- So you see the Cost of unbelief is exceedingly HIGH! Unbelievers do not know God in this life and when this life is over they will be cast eternally away from his presence into outer darkness.
- Oh my friends hear the words of the Apostle Paul

2 Corinthians 6:2 **Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.**

- Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God came to us as the image of the invisible God
- For all of eternity he dwelt in loving union with the Father and the Spirit.
- But because God so loved the world, Jesus Christ left his home in glory, came to the earth, being born of a virgin he lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father.
- Being despised and rejected by men he offered his perfect life as a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of those who would believe.

In love he bore the penalty for sin that we rightly deserved. ALL of us, like sheep have gone astray, rebelliously wondered through this life in our own way and the Lord has laid upon Him, upon Christ the iniquity of us all.

1Jo 4:10 This is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

- If you will repent, express sincere remorse for your sin and entrust your life, past, present and future to the Lord, YOU will be delivered from the punishment that is coming upon those who refuse to repent and believe.
- I implore you this morning, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.