

The Star Witness Testimony

John 1:29-34

As we come to the word of God I would invite you to take your Bible with me and turn to John 1 for this message entitled, "The Star Witness Testimony." Our text for today is John 1:29-34 which is the testimony of John the Baptist who we're calling John the Witness regarding the identity of the Messiah.

The Gospel of John is like a courtroom drama where the Apostle John sets forth his case that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. His goal? That we would believe and by believing, have life in his name. John doesn't tell us this until 20:30-31, but having this in mind helps us understand the underlying purpose of everything he includes in his Gospel.

Last week we saw that after his opening arguments in vs. 1-18, John begins his Gospel by calling to the stand John the Baptist who is the star witness of his case. There will be other witnesses throughout the Gospel, but none so prominent, none so articulate, and none so significant as John.

John the Witness is the last of God's prophets before the arrival of Jesus. John's ministry fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 40:3 as we saw last week. Our text tells us that the identity of the Christ was revealed to John by God Himself.

So John didn't come to his conclusions based on his personal experience with Jesus or his hearing of Jesus' teaching or observation of Jesus' ministry. John is the witness because he is sent from God and given direct revelation from God.

In our last day in court we heard from vs. 19-28 the identity and the credibility of John. That is how all witnesses who get called to the stand start their testimony. They are asked to identify themselves and give some explanation of their relationship to the defendant or otherwise explain the relevance of their testimony to the case.

John is a combination of an eye-witness and an expert witness because his very mission from God was to reveal the identity of the Messiah to the world. That was his vocation. And his humility in doing just that and calling no attention to himself is what makes him credible. But he's not just an independent expert who gives his opinion on matters in general, his testimony is based on what he saw. There is perhaps no stronger testimony than an expert eye-witness.

Now, as the court begins its second day of testimony, John gives us four truths about Jesus that confirm that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. And the necessary result of this testimony, my friends, is that you and I would believe in Jesus.

The call to believe in Jesus is certainly a direct call to any of you—young and old—who have not yet believed in him. But believing in Jesus is just as necessary and applicable to all of us who have come this morning already believing in him. We'll see that as we close.

Let's read the passage and then we'll dig into John's testimony. Follow along as I read John 1:29-34. . . .

With the opening words "the next day" we're given a timestamp that puts John's testimony in the context of other events. Rather obviously, this means that the testimony of John we're going to hear today comes the day after his opening testimony in vs. 19-28 where he responded to questions by religious leaders.

But take note of the fact that in vs. 35 it says again, "The next day," and then verse 43 says again, "The next day," and then 2:1 opens with the words, "On the third day." This tells that John 1:19-2:12 covers roughly a week's span of time. Now the apostle John doesn't tell us where this week falls in the overall timeline of Jesus' life and ministry because it's not pertinent to his case, but it certainly raises our curiosity since we have all four Gospels in front of us.

What we read in vs. 29-34 is not the occasion of Jesus' baptism. This is not the first time John the Witness has seen Jesus. Based on what Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell us about the baptism of Jesus, vs. 32-33 speak of what happened at the baptism of Jesus in the past. So if this isn't the baptism of Jesus, when did this happen? When did John see Jesus coming to him?

Well, both Matthew 3 and Luke 3 record that after Jesus was baptized, the Spirit led him into the wilderness where he fasted for 40 days. At the end of that time, when Jesus was the most physically and thus spiritually vulnerable, the Devil came to tempt him hoping to end his ministry before it began. After successfully resisting those temptations, Jesus was so weak that the Scripture says angels came to minister to him, which I take to mean they fed him and helped him regain his strength.

After this, both Matthew and Luke tell us that Jesus returned to Galilee, which is the region where he and his family lived. Piecing together the four Gospels, in the first few weeks of his time in Galilee, Jesus called his disciples, he, his family, and his disciples went to a wedding in Cana which is near Nazareth, and he moved his

family from Nazareth which is about in the middle between the Mediterranean and the Sea of Galilee to Capernaum which is on the Sea of Galilee.

The week of events we read here in John 1 occur as Jesus is traveling from his time in the wilderness in the south back to Galilee in the north. So when John the Baptist sees Jesus coming toward him, it's been well over a month since the baptism. Some might even say several months, depending on how long it took Jesus to physically recover from 40 days of fasting in the wilderness.

The verbs here in vs. 29 are in the present tense making this a vivid description. It's like the apostle asks John, "Take us back to that day and tell us what you saw." It literally reads, "The next day John sees Jesus coming toward him and says, 'Behold!'" The word "behold" is simply an exclamation to alert the listener. The speaker would not just say the word but point to direct the attention of those around them.

This word is used many times and is often translated as Look! or See!. In 3:26, John the Baptist and his disciples are on one side of the Jordan baptizing people, and Jesus and his disciples are on the other side of the river baptizing, and John's disciples say, "Look, he is baptizing and all are going to him!" Here in our text, when John sees Jesus coming to him, he lifts up his arm points to Jesus, "Behold! Look!"

And so begins his testimony declaring four truths about Jesus that confirm that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Consider the first truth: Jesus is the Lamb of God

1. Lamb of God

LOOK at what he says in vs. 29. . . .

It's hard for us to appreciate the significance of this statement because this is familiar language to us. But I want you to try to appreciate the significance of this declaration from John. This is at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Jesus hasn't done any miracles, and he hasn't preached any sermons. No one knows who Jesus is. As Jesus walked along the Jordan amidst the crowds of people coming to be baptized by John, there was nothing about him that stood out. As far as everyone knew, this man was just one of the thousands of Jews coming to hear John preach and receive the baptism of repentance.

So for John, who everyone rightly knew to be a prophet, to point someone out of the crowd and make this declaration is shocking. It's the kind of moment seared into the memory of those present and rehearsed in the years to come that they were there the day that John the Baptist pointed out the Messiah for the very first time.

In the moment, though, the people were probably somewhat confused. What does he mean that this man is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world? What is he talking about? You see, this is not language that comes directly from the Old Testament. They had never heard their Rabbi's say anything about a coming Lamb of God. And the idea of taking away the sin of the world isn't a concept the people were familiar with.

So where does John get this? What is he talking about? Well, as I said, John is a prophet. He received direct revelation from God. So in this declaration, John is not repeating something found in the Law or the Prophets; as a prophet he is speaking a word from the Lord and revealing something the people were not expecting. But as is the case with all new revelation, it's consistent with and makes sense of what had already been revealed in the Scripture.

To understand what this means we start with the fact that lambs were one of the common animals used for sacrifice going back over 2,000 years. In Genesis 22 when Abraham and Isaac were near the mountain where Isaac was supposed to be sacrificed, Isaac said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Do you remember Abraham's response? "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." In saying that Abraham is not prophesying about the Messiah, but he does pluck the scarlet thread that runs throughout Scripture about God's redemptive plan to save his people from their sin.

Another time that thread is plucked is in Exodus 12 just before the Lord redeems his people from Egypt. Before the final plague, the Lord gives this instruction to Moses, "Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. . . and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight. Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. . . . The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt."

In many places the Bible draws a direct line between God's redemption of his people from Egypt and his redemption of his people from sin. One of those stands before us as the Lord's Supper. The sacrificial lamb at Passover is the central element because it's what prevents the people from experiencing the same plague as the Egyptians.

There are many, many more passages we could look at that undergird why John would refer to Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, but for the sake of time let me take you to Isaiah 53. Keep your finger here and turn to

Isaiah 53 with me. This is the great chapter which ought to have given the Jews an expectation of a Messiah who would be put to death to pay the death penalty of sin. This passage really begins in 52:13 which starts, “Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted.”

And then if you look at 53:12 it moves to a conclusion saying, “Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong.” So this passage begins and ends with triumph. This passage cries out, “Victory!” But that victory comes at a cost. LOOK again at vs. 12. . . . This victorious servant of the Lord achieved victory not by dealing out death, but by being put to death. He did not receive a crown standing on the slain, but by being slain.

He bore the sins of many, and in bearing their sin, he accepted the penalty of death. LOOK back at vs. 5. . . . The servant of the Lord did not die for his own sin; he sacrificed himself for our transgressions and our iniquities. The language of sacrifice is used in vs. 10 where it says. . . . The Mosaic Law has many kinds of offerings and sacrifices for different reasons, and different animals are prescribed depending on the type of offering. Bulls, goats, rams, lambs, turtledoves, and pigeons are the most common ones. What kind of animal sacrifice is the servant of the Lord? The closest we get to an answer is vs. 7. . . .

Be careful with the language here, he doesn’t say the servant of the Lord is a lamb. He says that his silence is like a lamb led to slaughter, and like a sheep before its shearers.

That’s about as close as the Old Testament gets in describing the coming deliverer as the Lamb of God. But the second part of John’s statement, “who takes away the sin of the world” is much clearer in this passage. Verse 5 says, “He was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities.” Vs. 6 says, “the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” The end of vs. 8 says, “he was stricken for the transgression of my people.” Again vs. 12, “yet he bore the sin of many.” Those are all different ways of expressing the fact that the servant of the Lord, the coming deliverer, takes upon himself the sins of others. And in taking their sin from them, there is no longer sin on them. And do you know what you call someone who has no sin? Righteous. LOOK at vs. 11. . . .

If I can throw a New Testament passage in here, this is the same truth as 2 Corinthians 5:12, “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” The righteous—which is to say, sinless—servant of the Lord bore the iniquities of many so that many could become righteous. He takes their sin from them and upon himself such that God declares them to be righteous.

Coming back to our text, through divine revelation the prophet John pulls together the scarlet threads running throughout the Old Testament and sees them all terminate on Jesus and declares, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”

Perhaps you’re wondering about that last part—“he takes away the sin of the world.” Does this mean that everyone in the world becomes righteous? No. “World” is here used categorically here, not exhaustively. It’s meant to refer to mankind without distinction, not mankind without exception.

Think of it this way: 1 John 4:14 says, “And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.” What the apostle John means is that Jesus is the only Savior the world has, not that he saves every person in the world. In the same way, to say Jesus takes away the sin of the world is to say that anyone in the world who believes in Jesus can have their sin taken away, even as it says in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

This is the work of the Christ. Yes, part of his work is to establish his kingdom on the earth—and he will do that one day—but the first order of business was to take from among his enemies who deserve his wrath, some—even many—whose sin he would take away such that he would make them his people.

John the Witness makes this first declaration about Jesus which confirms that Jesus is the Christ. He then goes on, in the same breath, to make a second declaration to all those standing there, namely, that Jesus existed before John.

2. Existed before John

LOOK at vs. 30. . . .

Jesus existed before John. It seems that in recording this, the apostle John assumes his readers are familiar with Luke’s Gospel. Because it’s only there that we learn that John the Baptist is around six months older than Jesus. Now, nearly 30 years later, no one would be able to tell which of them was older just by looking at them. But John’s statement here is meaningful only if Jesus was born after John, which was the case.

I touched on this when we studied vs. 14-18 because this statement by John is quoted in vs. 15. The context there was the apostle John declaring that Jesus is the very God of Exodus 34 who declared Himself to be full of steadfast love and faithfulness. So here, as a follow up to declaring Jesus to be the Lamb of God, John

the Baptist declares that Jesus is not merely a man created by God to be the final sacrifice, but Jesus existed before he was born.

I remind you that in this culture they thought of age in terms of rank—not strictly in the same sense as military rank, but in the sense of deserving greater respect, deference, and to some degree, authority.

Jesus used this cultural ethic to stump the Pharisees in Matthew 22. He said, “How is it that David, in the Spirit, calls [the Christ] Lord, saying, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet’? If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?” The Pharisees could not conceive an answer that explained how David could call his own son, “Lord.” In a similar way, John the Baptist is here saying that Jesus ranks higher than him, because even though Jesus was born after him, he existed before him.

By declaring his pre-existence, John effectively asserts the deity of Jesus, especially when combined with his final testimony in vs. 34 that Jesus is the Son of God. How did John know that Jesus existed before both of them were born? Again, divine revelation. LOOK at vs. 31. . . .

Note that not only here, but also in vs. 33 he says, “I myself did not know him.” On the surface this is puzzling. Based on what the other Gospels reveal about the relationship between John and Jesus, is this really true? Is it possible that their mothers who were relatives would never introduce their sons to each other? It would seem difficult to accept that the angel Gabriel would tell Zechariah and Elizabeth that their son would be the forerunner to the Messiah, and then Gabriel would tell Mary that her son was the Messiah, and then these women would spend three months together while both boys were in the womb, and then the two would never meet again?

In fact, remember that when Jesus went to be baptized by John several weeks before this moment, John said to Jesus, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” Wouldn’t that mean that John not only knew Jesus, but knew that he was the Messiah?

What does John mean, “I myself did not know him”? The answer is not found in some nuance of the Greek word of what it means to know. Rather, the answer is found in a larger theme in the Gospel of John that I haven’t drawn out yet in our studies, and which I’ll only address briefly for the moment. In this Gospel, the apostle John gives significant attention to the idea of knowing Christ.

It begins in vs. 10 when he says, “the world did not know him.” And then in vs. 26 John the Baptist says the religious leaders don’t know the Christ who is already on

the scene. If you do a simple word search for the word “know” in this Gospel, you’ll find that it occurs nearly 100 times which is more than the three other Gospels combined. Knowing the truth about Jesus is a significant theme of the book.

But as we’ll see when we get to certain passages, the issue is not intellectual knowledge such that stating a fact changes one’s state of mind from not knowing to knowing. The issue the apostle John emphasizes throughout the book is whether one has received divine revelation—not necessarily in the prophetic sense, but in the sense that God has opened the mind of a person to know and believe in Jesus. We don’t have the time today to trace that out, but here’s how that applies to what John says here.

When John says that he did not know Jesus, what he means is he did not have intrinsic knowledge of him based on personal life experience or personal relationship. That was not the basis of his knowledge of Jesus. Rather, he knew Jesus the Christ on the basis of divine revelation. It’s true that John likely could have said, “I knew Jesus because he’s my second cousin”—or whatever their relation was. But he didn’t. Why? He didn’t want his testimony to be based on personal, subjective, opinion.

His testimony about Jesus was not at all based on what his parents told him, or any interaction he may have had with Jesus early in life. No, his testimony was based on undeniable divine revelation. And we know this, because this is what he says in vs. 31-33. LOOK at it again. . . .

John’s ministry of baptism was the God-ordained method by which the Lord would confirm the identity of Jesus to John personally (vs. 32-33), as well as give John the platform to broadcast the identity of Jesus—just as he does in this testimony (vs. 29-30).

Again, he says, “for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.” In prophesying the coming of the Messiah, the Old Testament gives no indication as to how the Messiah will be revealed except through the ministry of the forerunner as we saw last time from Isaiah 40:3.

The prophets of old were proclaimers—they conveyed messages from God privately to kings and publicly to the people. They called the covenant people of God to return to the Lord through obedience to the Law. The prophets were also itinerant in that they travelled to whomever they were to deliver a message.

John the Baptist was a proclaimer, but he wasn’t itinerant. He lived in the wilderness and his ministry was centered in the wilderness. As well, his ministry was not just proclamation, but he called the people to demonstrate their

repentance and submission through the act of baptism, which is why he needed to be at the Jordan. So the people had to come to him to hear the message, and they had to come to him to be baptized.

This was designed by God so that when it was time for Jesus to be publicly revealed, large masses of people from all over Israel would already be gathered, listening to the forerunner. And those masses would then spread the word to the rest of the nation. The proclamation from the John filled the air with talk of the Messiah who had arrived. This is why it did not take very long before Jesus couldn't go into cities due to the crowds that surrounded him. Yes, there were still questions and not a little debate, but the general population were more than ready to make Jesus king as we see in 6:15.

So vs. 31 tells us that the purpose John's ministry of baptism was to reveal the Christ. Then in vs. 32-33 we see that John's ministry of baptism is what the Lord used to confirm the identity of Jesus. LOOK at it again. . . .

Here John tells us what he saw when Jesus was baptized. Listen to how Matthew describes what happened in Matthew 3, "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; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." Matthew, Mark, and Luke all give the same testimony.

The words in our text are not John the apostle giving us this account, they are John the Baptist declaring to everyone around him what he saw when Jesus was baptized. And as he describes what happened, he also says that the Lord had previously revealed to him that this would be the sign to identify the Christ.

What was it he was to be looking for, and what did he see after Jesus was baptized? I'll tell you what he didn't see—a dove. Often when you see a depiction of this scene, a dove is shown. But John didn't say he saw a dove, he says he saw the Spirit descend like a dove. In other words, he didn't see the form of a dove, he saw a spiritual essence descend and rest on Jesus in a similar way that a dove descends and lands. And how does a dove land? Gently.

Perhaps one could say that's how all birds land—I don't know of any that crash land, do you? So why did John specifically refer to a dove? Many birds have similar qualities, but there's something in our common perception that when we think of a dove in particular, gentleness is what comes to mind. This overlaps with Jesus' instruction to, "be wise as serpents but innocent as doves."

The point is that Spirit did not come down like fire from heaven, nor did He come down like a hawk grabbing prey. He came down in a smooth and gentle descent. What the Holy Spirit actually looked like, John doesn't say. But whatever John saw, it was not visible to anyone else except Jesus. Like Balaam's donkey who alone saw the angel until the Lord opened Balaam's eyes, or like Elisha who alone saw angelic armies until he prayed for his servant's eyes to be opened, with God-enabled vision, John saw what the other Gospels say Jesus saw—the Holy Spirit in some form descending and resting on Jesus.

This is what the Lord previously told John to be looking for, and this is what he saw when Jesus came out of the water. As he recounts his vision and the revelation from God to the people, he adds a third truth about Jesus.

3. He baptizes with the Holy Spirit

In John's testimony of Jesus, he testifies that Jesus is the Lamb of God; he testifies that Jesus existed before him; and third, he testifies that Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit. Did you notice that at the end of vs. 33? LOOK at it again. . . .

John uses not the personal pronoun as if to say, "He is the one," but the demonstrative pronoun, "This is the one." Mark 1 tells us that one of the messages John gave to those he baptized is this, "I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." Here, John is saying, "You know how I've been saying that the Christ would baptize with the Holy Spirit? This is him!" This is his testimony.

In saying that Jesus is the Lamb of God he testifies to the redemptive work of the Jesus. In saying that Jesus existed before him he testifies to the deity of Jesus. And in saying that Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit he testifies to the New Covenant fulfillment of Jesus.

There are many who have formulated a doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit that goes far beyond what the Scripture teaches. Some say the baptism of the Holy Spirit is something that can happen sometime after salvation that gives a Christian unique spiritual empowerment. Some say the baptism of the Holy Spirit is always manifested by speaking in tongues. Others say the baptism of the Spirit is temporary and can happen many times in a person's life. The Scripture does not teach these ideas and others like them.

We could do a whole message on the baptism of the Spirit—what it isn't and what it is—but since the teaching on the Holy Spirit is prominent throughout the Gospel of John, for the sake of time today I'm only going to say what it is and then we'll unpack it as we come across the teaching of the Spirit throughout the Gospel.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the work of God whereby He sends His Holy Spirit to indwell a person at the moment of salvation. To baptize means to immerse, and when the Holy Spirit takes up residence in a person's life, that indwelling is not limited to a closet or a room or a floor. No, his presence permeates the entire life.

But listen: The Holy Spirit is not a substance such that through use or sin or some other means one can be depleted of the Spirit and needs to be refilled. Rather, the Spirit is a divine person who is personally present and exercises rule over a person's life. To be full of the Holy Spirit means to be fully controlled by the Spirit.

Last week I noted that the first element of the New Covenant in Ezekiel 36 is a cleansing work which may have given rise to the expectation that the Messiah would practice baptism. Here's another element of the New Covenant promised in Ezekiel 36: "And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules."

This New Covenant promise is the indwelling Holy Spirit who will enable and empower obedience in the believer's life. The work of Jesus the Christ is to inaugurate the New Covenant such that believers receive the Holy Spirit. When we get to the Upper Room discourse in John 14-16 we'll have the blessing of studying in depth the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life. For now, John's testimony is that Jesus activates the New Covenant promise of the Holy Spirit, which further confirms that he is the Christ.

4. He is the Son of God

The final truth about Jesus to which John testifies is that he is the Son of God. We'll consider this quickly. LOOK at vs. 34. . . .

All that we've read in vs. 29-34 is the declaration John the Baptist made to the crowd when he saw Jesus coming to him. Having testified that Jesus is the Lamb of God, that Jesus existed before him, and that Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit, John concludes his testimony with the pronouncement that Jesus is the Son of God.

The language of sonship comes from two key Messianic passages in the Old Testament. The first is 2 Samuel 7 where the Lord promises to King David that He will establish his kingdom forever through his son. The Lord says, "I will be a father to him and he will be my son." The second passage is Psalm 2, a messianic psalm where the Lord speaks directly to the Messiah saying, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you." So the Messiah is revealed in the Old Testament as being the Son of God.

Title reveals in no uncertain terms the deity of Jesus. We see this most clearly stated in John 5:18 where it says, “This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.”

To be the Son of God is to be of the same nature and essence of God. Though the religious leaders of the day repeatedly rejected the notion that the Christ would be divine, as a true prophet, John declares that this is precisely the case and Jesus is that divine Christ. I remind you of how the apostle John opens his Gospel in 1:1-2. . .

Before Jesus heals one person or performs one miracle or does anything that reveals he is truly man and truly God, John the prophet declares this to be the case.

Conclusion

With this, the star witness steps down from the witness stand and the first proof of the apostle John’s case comes to an end. We’ve heard from this expert witness—a prophet who received direct revelation from God—that Jesus is the Lamb of God, the pre-existent one, inaugurator of the New Covenant, and the Son of God.

It would not be difficult to prove John wrong. If Jesus lived like any other man, if he could do nothing except what anyone could do, if he taught what everyone else taught, if he suffered and died like everyone else suffered and died, never to be seen or heard from again, John would prove to be a false prophet and his testimony perjury.

But the next three years of Jesus’ life and ministry—his teaching and miracles—and then his death, his resurrection, and his ascension only prove that John was a true prophet and his testimony must be heard.

What will you do with that testimony? If you have not believed in Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, will you keep on rejecting the truth, or will you believe? If you’re hesitating, why? Do you not trust this testimony? Do you need more evidence? Do you love your sin too much to submit to Jesus?

Many throughout history—even most of us in this room—have trusted this testimony and found that yes, indeed, Jesus takes away sin. We’ve found forgiveness in Jesus who gave his life to save sinners. Believe in Jesus and you too can have your sins forgiven. Jesus forgives murderers, rapists, and terrorists. He forgives liars and thieves and the sexually immoral. He forgives abusers, addicts, and gangsters. And believe it or not, he forgives homeschool moms and hard-working dads and compliant children—yes, even teens. He forgives the young and old, rich and poor.

Jesus forgives people from every nation and every ethnicity. Jesus saves and forgives any and every sinner who comes to him in faith, believing who he is as the Son of God and trusting what he did as the Christ in dying on the cross to take the place of sinners and rising from the dead. Believe in him today and you can have your sins taken away.

Now, most of you came this morning already believing in Jesus. To you and to me the testimony of John the Baptist raises this question: If you really believe that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, what hinders you and me from joining the chorus of witnesses and proclaiming the truth of Jesus to others?

Whatever answer comes to your mind, know that as one who has been baptized with the Holy Spirit, you have the power of God within you, and you hold the truth of God in your hand. There is nothing we lack except the boldness of John the Baptist. But do you know what made him bold? It's simply this: he believed that Jesus is that Christ, the Son of God who came to save sinners who, apart from Christ, will be rightly judged forever in hell. There is no greater news, there is no more important news, there is no more loving act than to clearly and boldly testify of Jesus.

Because of what Jesus has done for us, let us join the great cloud of witnesses who have been bold and unashamed to speak of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to those who desperately need him.