

TRUTH COMMUNITY

- TEACHING GOD'S PEOPLE GOD'S WORD -

God's Own Testimony to Christ

1 John 5:6-12

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It is no surprise to you when I say that we live in a postmodern world that among other things, the man's tolerance for all religions. You have seen the bumper stickers that say coexist which seeks to blur distinctions between Christianity and other religions, putting Islam and Judaism and other Eastern religions all on the same plane, calling us to coexist as if those distinctions were not important. To say, as we do as believers, that we have the truth that other people do not, that we have the light and that other people are in darkness is denounced as being arrogant and unkind.

Today's passage gives us clarity in an age of false tolerance, it gives us clarity to understand in depth why our assurance is real and it also gives us confidence to proclaim the gospel in the age that is hostile to claims of absolute truth. We are clear, we are definitive, we believe the truth, not out of our own merit but because this is what God Himself has testified to. And this is our passage for this morning, 1 John 5:6. I am praying desperately that I get through this entire passage here this morning. 1 John 5:6-12. Let me read the passage to get us started and set it in our minds here this morning. It is a very great passage, a very encouraging passage, a very definitive passage about the exclusivity of Christianity:

This 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. For there are three that testify, the Spirit and the water and the blood and the three are in agreement. If we received the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater. And the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son. The 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. And the testimony is this that God has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life. He who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

A black and white passage, so characteristic of the apostle John. Let me set the context for you to this passage and just reminding you that John is writing to defend his readers against a particular form of false teaching that had arisen in the late first century. These false teachers that John was combating had a bizarre notion that the humanity of Jesus of Nazareth was simply an illusion that was used by a spiritual messenger who had come to enlighten men. This Christ spirit, they said, that came upon the man, Jesus came upon Him at His baptism and left before He

was crucified—that’s really crucial as you will see later. This Christ spirit supposedly left before He was crucified. And so there was not a true incarnation of God according to these teachers. There was not a true incarnation of God at Bethlehem and at the cross, there was just a little parenthesis of time this man Jesus’ life where a spirit descended upon Him, used His human faculties for a period of time and then departed—simply an idea of bringing the light to men. That is the general context of what John was refuting when he wrote this book. That attack on truth back then was different than the attack on truth that we face now in our postmodern times.

But what I want you to see, what I want you to understand by way of introduction is that the response is the same. The upholding of truth is the same regardless of the manifestation of the attack on truth that any particular age brings to bear. The response is to go back to the testimony of God about His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, that is the testimony that we point to. There is no higher authority that we could appeal to than the authority of God, the testimony of God and that is what the apostle John does in this letter.

Now, reminding you of the very opening verse, chapter 1:1, turn there if you will if you haven’t already. John opens this entire letter by refuting that false view on the humanity of Christ, he says:

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands concerning the word of life, and the life was manifested. And we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us.

He is stating that we are apostolic witnesses of the reality of the incarnation of Christ, God in human flesh. We saw Him with our eyes, we heard His voice with our ears, we handled His flesh with our own hands. What we saw was real, it was not an illusion—that’s the opening salvo in this entire letter, so he strikes a blow right from the beginning of it.

Now, you are familiar with the book of 1 John, we have been going through it for ever it seems like. In the chapters that follow, chapters 2, 3, 4, and up to chapter 5, John kind of pivots away from talking about the incarnation specifically and he describes what true believers are marked by. He helps us identify who a true Christian is, who a true believer in Christ is. True Christian is marked by obedience to God, love for God and love for the brethren and a belief, they marked by a doctrinal belief in the true Christ and in true salvation. We covered that at length because John covered it at length.

Now however, as we come back to chapter 5, John is going to circle back to where he started at the very beginning of the letter to talk about the person of Christ Himself and this is what I want you to see. Now that he has described his exhausted discussion of the marks of true Christians and he says there in chapter 5:5, turn back there with me now as we get back to our text, he says:

Who is the one who overcomes the world but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

He has wrapped up, he has concluded his discussion about who true Christians are, they overcome the world. Now, understand what is happening here, he is now going to pivot away from discussing the marks of true believers to talk about the object of their faith, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is going to discuss Christ now and he is going to verify Christ, he is going to show forth the credentials of the man Jesus of Nazareth as being the true incarnate Son of God. And I want you to notice the method that he uses, he appeals to the testimony of God Himself. What we see in this passage, verses 6-12 is we see God's own testimony to Jesus Christ. God has testified to His Son. He has testified repeatedly, He has testified in the past, He testifies now, He has testified in a variety of ways. God has spoken, God has affirmed Christ to humanity. And it is a sin of unspeakable proportions to reject Christ, to question even the concept of truth. These things ought not to be questioned, these things ought to be embraced because the highest authority in the universe, the Lord God Himself has spoken and said this is my Son, this is the truth, this is what you must believe to be saved.

And those who reject that message, understand, they are not meant to be pitied, they are men under condemnation because they have the audacity and the arrogance to declare God's testimony as unbelievable and untrue—that is a most serious sin for them to commit.

For those of us that believe in Christ, what this passage tells us is that our faith in Christ, our confidence of salvation rests on the very authority, very authenticity, the veracity of God Himself, our faith is grounded on the most reliable testimony that there is . It is not in evidential apologetics that make a probability case in favor of Christ, in favor of the existence of God. No, our testimony is based on certainty, the certainty that comes from the testimony of God Himself—that is what this passage is saying and that is what we are going to see here this morning.

There is two main parts to what I want to show you as we consider God's own testimony to Christ. The first part we are going to title the content of God's testimony to Christ and there will be three sub points to that that we will get through and then secondly the consequences of God's testimony to Christ. The content and the consequences of God's testimony to Christ are the two main points for here this morning:

1. The Content of God's Testimony to Christ

The content of God's testimony to Christ. This is just a wonderful passage even though initially it seems obscure when you read it for the first time.

The content of God's testimony to Christ, here is the summary point. God has testified to humanity, that the man, Jesus of Nazareth, who walked in the land of Israel 2000 years ago is the true Son of God, He is the Christ, He is the exclusive savior of mankind, God has testified to that in a way that cannot be contradicted—that is the context of the testimony that we are looking at here. What you must understand, especially in this postmodern world that we are living in is the fact that the majority of men reject that testimony, that the majority of men will not hear that testimony does not diminish the truthfulness or the certainty of what God has said. We do not evaluate the testimony by the extent to which men receive it, we don't subject the truth of God to

a majority opinion poll. God's own testimony is verified by God Himself and that's what you must see in this passage here this morning. So we are going to look at chapter 5:6 here as we dive in to the text. The apostle John says:

This 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.

And then as you go on to verse 12, when you count them out, you see that there are ten different times, at least in the Greek text, ten different times where the word "testimony" is used. God's testimony to Christ is the central theme of this passage. Notice as we get in to it here that this testimony is all pointing to the one that John is emphasizing at the start of verse 6. He says:

This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ.

The center of our thinking as we go through this passage should be Jesus Christ. "This is the one who came by water and blood..." John says. And then he goes on and says "the Spirit testifies..." "There are three that testify..."—(verse 6) "The testimony of God..." "The testimony that God has given concerning His Son..."—(verse 9) "The testimony is this that God has given us eternal life..."—(verse 11). Testimony, testimony, testimony, all undergirding the central dominating authority, the central dominating person of Jesus Christ. And so undergirding the proclamation of Christ in the gospel is the testimony of God that says I affirm this, this is true and I have testified to this in the past and I testify to it now—that's what this passage is teaching us to understand.

John is explaining how God has certified Jesus during Jesus' earthly ministry in order to give us who are Christians certainty in our faith to drive away doubt, to drive away questions so that we might live in the confidence of faith that says "I know and I have believed the truth." And a man who has that as the cornerstone of his approach to life, the cornerstone of his heart convictions is a man who is prepared to live and glorify Christ until God calls him home. Notice what John says now as we are getting in to verse 6. He says, this is the one, he is pointing to Jesus Christ, pointing forward to the one that he has been discussing. He ended verse 5 by saying Jesus is the Son of God, in verse 6 he names Him specifically, Jesus Christ. In the middle he says "This is the one who came by water and blood." Somehow God's testimony to Christ is centered on water and blood.

What does that mean? That sounds kind of obscure and it is a little bit obscure as you read it. But when you think through the whole New Testament, you realize that this is very obvious what he is talking about. Somehow through water and blood, Jesus was manifested as being the true Christ, the only Christ, the exclusive Christ.

What does it mean? First of all, let's clarify briefly what it does not mean because there have been different views of this throughout church history. Some have said in the past that when John refers to water and blood here, he is referring to the moment of the crucifixion when the soldier pierced Jesus' side and water and blood flowed out from His side. But that's not what that is talking about here. Jesus did not come to us, He did not come to mankind at that moment,

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He was already here and John is referring to a past time, “This is the one who came by water and blood.” So while there is a verbal parallel, this really doesn’t fit, that’s not how Jesus came to us, He was already here. Water and blood came out of Him at that moment, He was not manifested to us at that point. So that’s not what John was talking about here. It is true that water and blood came out, that’s just not his point right now.

Others have said that water refers to baptism and blood refers to communion. They say it is a reference to the church ordinances. Those ordinances are symbolic testimonies to Him that the church has followed throughout the centuries. But again, look at the verse here, verse 6, “This is the one who came by water and blood.” It is referring to a past act, a past time as John was writing in about A.D. 90. It is referring to a past time when Jesus came, it is not referring to an ongoing ministry of the church. And so those are not what John is referring to here.

So, okay, you said what it doesn’t mean. What does it mean? What do water and blood mean? The context remember, is God’s affirming testimony to the reality of Jesus Christ, to the truthfulness of this. The water and the blood have to be tied to some kind of testimony that God has given to His own Son. Here is what it means in general and we will get in to the detail of it. God the Father affirmed God the Son, Jesus Christ at defining moments in Jesus’ earthly ministry. God made known publicly in unmistakable ways to the people that were there at that time that this was His true Son and they should listen to Him and we are going to see that. God affirmed Christ at those defining moments in His earthly career. And this passage goes on to say that God is testifying to Christ even now, even today, even as I speak and proclaim the word of God to you, He is testifying to Christ even now. That’s what this passage is saying to us in an overview manner. Now I want to take you to the details of it.

What is the content of God’s testimony to His own Son? John gives us three aspects of the content of that testimony. There are three sub points here. What we are going to see is that God testified to Christ.

A. God’s testimony at Jesus’ baptism

The first sub point is God’s testimony at Jesus’ baptism. And here is what he is saying. Jesus came to us by water in the sense that God affirmed Jesus publicly at His baptism with a resounding voice from heaven. Turn back to Matthew chapter 3. I want you to see the narrative portion of this. Matthew 3:13-17, the account of Jesus’ baptism:

Jesus arrived from Galilee to Jordan, coming to John (referring to John the Baptist) in order to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him saying “I have need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” But Jesus answering said to him “Permit it at this time, for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” And he permitted Him.

So John the Baptist baptized the Son of God in public view. Verse 16:

After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water...

There is the water, and notice what happens, this was miraculous, this was God's testimony that we are about to read:

...behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him.

So the Spirit of God came down upon Christ as a public affirmation of Him.

(Verse 17) And behold, a voice out of the heavens said "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

God at that defining, opening, public moment of Jesus' ministry sent the Spirit down upon Christ and said with His own voice from heaven "This is my beloved Son..." The ministry of John the baptist had brought attention to John and then he draws attention to Christ. The Spirit came down on Christ. God speaks from heaven and as it were, points down and says "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." God has testified at Jesus' baptism that that man, Jesus of Nazareth, was His own Son in whom He was well pleased.

Now, be prepared to write down a couple of scripture references, we are not going to take the time to turn there here. But that baptism fulfilled prophesy about the Messiah, it fulfilled Old Testament scriptures that were pointing to who the true Messiah would be. In Psalm 2:7, the psalmist said:

I will surely declare the decree of the Lord, He said to me "You are my Son, today I have begotten you."

The Messiah would be marked by God saying "You are my Son."

Isiah 42:1:

Behold, my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom my soul delights. I have put my Spirit upon Him, He will bring forth justice to the nations.

The Messiah would be marked by God declaring Him to be the Son in whom He was well pleased. The Messiah would be marked by the placing of the Spirit upon Him—God did that at Jesus' baptism.

And so, when Jesus was baptized with water, God manifested Him to the public, God manifested Him and said this is my Son, see my Spirit upon Him, listen to Him, as it were, this is the one to whom we listen.

The water that marked Jesus' entry in to His public ministry, the baptism says, Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus is the one in whom God is pleased. Look over in the gospel of John chapter 1, beginning in verse 29 where John the Baptist saw Jesus coming to him and said:

Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

(Verse 31) I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel. I came baptizing in water. John testified saying “I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven and it remained upon Him. I did not recognize it, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me (God’s testimony here) He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit. I myself have seen and testify that this is the Son of God.

There was more than Jesus going in to the water that happened at His baptism. God was saying “This is my beloved Son... This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” God testified to Christ at His baptism. As part of the content of God’s testimony to Him, God made Him known. God with His own voice acknowledged, authenticated and certified Jesus to a watching world.

Now secondly, that’s the meaning of the water, Jesus came by water in the sense that God manifested Him to us in water. Now notice what it says, going back to 1 John 5:6:

This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ. Not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood.

Why does he say it that way? Well, remember the false teaching that I referenced at the beginning. They said that Christ’s Spirit left before Jesus was crucified. John here is refuting that with the second aspect of the content of God’s testimony. What we are about to see is God’s testimony at Jesus’ crucifixion.

So we have God’s testimony at Jesus’ baptism “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” Secondly, we have God’s testimony at Jesus’ crucifixion.

Now, let me just pause here and say this. This is God’s testimony, it belongs to Him, it is what He has said. What I want you to understand is this that we are talking about a testimony that is completely independent of you, it has nothing to do with you. This was God’s testimony before you were born. It is God’s testimony that will exist after you are dead. This is God’s testimony that is true whether you ever existed or not. We are looking in to the heart, the mind, the actions, the character, the work of God here. This is what God has done for His Son. And we, as it were, are witnesses to this as we see this explained in the scripture. This is not about your subjective belief, it is not about your faith, this is about God’s testimony to His own Son, this is very holy ground.

B. God’s testimony at Jesus’ crucifixion

God gave testimony at Jesus’ baptism, now we are going to see that God gave testimony at Jesus’ crucifixion. Now listen, this is crucial because the false teachers said that Christ’s Spirit departed before the crucifixion. What does that mean? What is the significance of that?

What it means is, if what they were saying was true, it meant that Jesus died as a mere man, that there was not anything unique about His death, there was nothing unique about His person at the crucifixion—He simply died as an ordinary man. If what they said was true, and that would have a completely destructive impact on all of Christianity because that would mean that Jesus was not a divine savior, He was only a man. It would mean that Jesus did not really atone for our sins because there was no divine element to His death to give capacity to it—it would contradict all of Christianity.

While it might sound esoterically appealing to those who were drawn to such things, the truth of the matter is that what they were teaching at that time would undermine and negate your salvation. And so John writes a much extended epistle explaining why that is not true in showing the marks of true Christians. And here what he does is he appeals beyond the testimony of man and he appeals to the testimony of God. What I want you to see is that what is at stake here is no innocent difference, there was no innocent difference between these false teachers and what true apostolic teaching was, just as there is no innocent difference between Islam and Judaism and Catholicism being true Christianity, these are not innocent differences, these are not matters of opinion, these are matters that go to the very truth of God. This is God's truth, this belongs to Him, we are not at liberty as men to contradict it.

Now, God's testimony at Jesus' crucifixion, what does that mean? How did Jesus come to us by blood? Well, what John is saying here is that Jesus came to us by blood in the sense that God testified in a nonverbal manner this time, God testified in a nonverbal, but miraculous manner to the reality of His Son at the crucifixion. God testified to the reality of Christ at His crucifixion, this time He simply spoke in a nonverbal manner.

Go back to the gospel of Matthew with me to Matthew 27, beginning in verse 50. This is God's testimony to His Son at the crucifixion and be looking for the climax to this testimony at the end of the passage:

And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up His Spirit.

He had shed His blood unto death. And what happened at that moment? What happened at a singularly defining moment through all of history, all of humanity. What happened at that singularly defining moment of the eternal plan of God for the Lamb of God who was slain before the foundation of the world? Did it just passed like any other moment? Hardly, look what happened in verse 51:

Behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks were split. The tombs were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection, they entered the holy city and appeared to many.

This is miraculous, the earth shook, rocks were split, graves were opened, dead men raised and went in to cities and spoke to those who knew they were dead. This was not an ordinary moment. This was a supernatural moment unlike any other. This is God's testimony to Christ.

You see His hand behind the miracles, affirming Christ in His death. And those were men that God singularly used to seal this testimony, to show the reality of it that what these miracles pointed to gives the conclusion that John is pointing to in 1 John chapter 5. Look at verse 54:

Now the centurion and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said “Truly, this was the Son of God.”

They got God’s testimony, they understood it, they saw these miracles and said this authenticates the inscription above Him “This is Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews.” God’s testimony compelled them to that conclusion. Through that supernatural testimony, the supernatural events that accompanied the death of Christ, God certified to the world the same exact message that He certified at His baptism—this is my Son, this is the Son of God, “This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” God testified to that at the crucifixion of Christ in a miraculous way—that was His testimony.

God testified to Christ at His baptism, God testified to Christ at His crucifixion, God affirmed (get this) God affirmed the bookends of Jesus’ public ministry. He affirmed the beginning at the baptism, He affirmed the end at the crucifixion and gave His certificate of authenticity on everything that happened in between—this is God’s testimony to His own Son. And I hope that the weight of the holiness of that reality is settling upon your mind. These are not empty stories from the past, this is what God has said about His own Son, this is how God has certified Christ to the world.

Now, God didn’t leave it there, God’s testimony goes even further. What is it that gives the power to those historical facts? What is it that leads us without excuse today if we don’t believe those things? I mean, I wasn’t there, physically wasn’t there when Jesus was baptized. You weren’t physically there when Jesus was crucified, and yet you are accountable to believe that as though you were. You have the same accountability to believe that today as if you had physically been there at that moment. What is it that gives that power, what is it that brings the history to the present as if it were, and compels us to believe and makes us accountable to believe?

C. God testifies by the Holy Spirit

Well, thirdly, the third aspect, the third content of God’s testimony to Christ—John refers to God’s testimony by the Holy Spirit. God testified at the baptism, He testified at the crucifixion, now He testifies by the Holy Spirit. Go back to 1 John, chapter 5. This is so compelling, this is God’s testimony. Look at the end of verse 6:

It is the Spirit who testifies because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify, the Spirit and the water and the blood and the three are in agreement.

God certifies Jesus to us today through the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit. When the story of Christ is told, when the Bible is read, when the word of God is preached, the Holy Spirit is

speaking through those things to the hearts of men saying this is true, you must believe this. The Spirit gives understanding to our minds and conviction to our hearts at the same manner of testimony that happened at the baptism and crucifixion. He compels us, He testifies to us that this Jesus about whom we read, this Jesus about whom we speak, this Jesus about whom we hear, this is the Son of God who takes away the sin of the world. The Holy Spirit, God Himself, the third person of the blessed trinity, throughout the world is testifying to the truth of these matters whenever scripture is read, whenever the gospel is truly preached. The Spirit is, as it were, authenticating that and He does that in part by the power by which the word of God and the preaching of the word of God come to the hearts of those who hear. That is the work of the Spirit, there is no intrinsic power in the speaker, there is no intrinsic power in the preacher. But when the preacher is speaking in accordance with and in agreement with the testimony of God, the Spirit is laying His affirmation on that and that brings the power to the spoken word.

Now a brief side note about the text here. The King James version, the New King James version have material in verses 7 and 8 that the modern versions including the one I am using here don't include, I'm not going to spend a lot of time on that, you can pick up any commentary, any book on the canon of scripture that will address that. The reason that the modern versions had excluded that because those brief sections in the King James and New King James do not appear in any Greek manuscript before the 14th century. It wasn't something that John originally wrote and that's why the modern versions exclude it. You can read about that on your own if you are interested, I just need to briefly mention it here.

Let's get back to what John actually said and what he is saying to us now, verse 6:

It is the Spirit who testifies because the Spirit is the truth.

The Holy Spirit assaults our unbelief, it assaults our dead spirits, it overcomes our unbelief to see the truth. And what I want you to see is that the Holy Spirit has been an ongoing theme in the book of 1 John, and this ministry of the Holy Spirit to believers has been emphasized throughout.

(Chapter 2:20) You have an anointing from the holy one and you all know.

(Verse 27) As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you and you have no need for anyone to teach you. But His anointing teaches you about all things and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.

The Spirit of God teaches our minds, it instructs our minds that these things are true and it gives us understanding, illumination to receive the things of God that the natural man in his own flesh rejects.

(Chapter 3:24) We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given to us.

(Chapter 4:13) By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

The Holy Spirit testifies to Christ, He testifies to the truth of these matters.

Now, look at the end of verse 6 with me again:

It is the Spirit who testifies because the Spirit is the truth.

Notice something really basic about that, present tense, ongoing testimony from the Spirit. It is not a past tense event that the Spirit's testimony represents, it is the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit that testifies to these things until Christ returns, and He is doing that now, He is bearing witness, He is testifying. It is not that He testified past tense, it is that He testifies now. And the fact that you and I cannot see His ministry with our physical eyes does not diminish the truth and reality of what He does. It does not diminish the accuracy and the truth to which He testifies, it does not diminish the reality of His work. The fact that you and your sinful humanity, you and your limited human flesh cannot see it does not mean that it is not verified. Spirit of God is His own verification, there is no higher authority, the Spirit does what He does by the freedom of divine sovereignty and the word of God tells us that He does that, we see the fruit of it and the reality of the Spirit's work is established by factual testimony from God Himself, even though we cannot see it. Jesus said that the wind blows where it wishes, you cannot see it, but you see the effect of it.

Many of you here today are the effect of the work of the Holy Spirit because you believe in Christ. The only reason you believe in Christ is because the Spirit of God moved in your heart. You are an expression of the work of the Spirit, you are not the arbiter of its reality.

Notice in verse 7:

There are three that testify, the Spirit, the water and the blood...

There are three witnesses testifying all in the same direction, God has testified baptism, crucifixion, by His Spirit. Think about this, the Bible says in multiple places that evidence is confirmed, the truth of the matter is established on the testimony of two or three witnesses. (Deuteronomy 19:15, 2 Corinthians 13:1, and other places in the scripture.) Evidence is confirmed, established that is true on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Do you realize what God has done? God testified verbally at the baptism, He testified nonverbally and miraculously at crucifixion, He testifies personally now by the witness of the Holy Spirit. The truthfulness of these matters is established by the threefold witness of God—it is established, this is not subject to debate. I don't care what the "coexist" bumper sticker says and neither should you because the profiteers who make money off of that cannot contradict God's testimony. They can't by clever slogans bring down God's testimony and make it on a parallel of that which is false—it's an abomination. God has testified through water, blood and the Spirit that Jesus is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

And beloved, that's why we are not at liberty as Christians to participate in that postmodern spirit that makes all religions a path to God. Jesus said:

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me.

We proclaim an exclusive salvation without apology because we cannot contradict God's own testimony, we are not at liberty to do that. I wouldn't even want to do that, would you?

Now, that's the content of the testimony—the baptism, the crucifixion, the Spirit. Let's look briefly at the consequences of the testimony.

2. The Consequences of God's Testimony to Christ

What does it mean? What are the implications of the fact that God has testified in this manner to the reality of His Son? The fact that this is God's testimony has very important consequences and there are three quick sub points here as well.

First of all, speaking to you as Christians, those of you that know Christ, those of you that share in the common life of the Spirit, that believe in Christ and trusting Him alone for your salvation, those of you that have repented of sin and submitted your life to Christ and embraced Him as your only righteousness before God, denying all merit of your own that will give you any standing before God, you say "No, my righteousness is in Christ alone and Him alone I trust." To you, what does this mean?

A. Your salvation rests on certain testimony

First of all, it means that your salvation rests on certain testimony. As Peter said elsewhere, you have not believed cleverly devised tales, you haven't believed fables that men have spun up, or old women have put together in their excess time. The salvation that you have received as a Christian is based on, is premised on, it rests on the absolutely certain testimony of God Himself. It is not what some man told you, this is what God has said and you have believed God Himself and that means that your salvation is indestructible and can never go wrong, it can never fall away because it is based on the truth of God itself. Look at what John says in verses 9-10 here:

If 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. The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself.

What John is saying here is that if you can believe a man about matters of daily life which we all do—"Can you give me the directions to the gas station? Two streets down, turn to the right." "I believe you, I'll act on that." If you can believe a man who speaks to you about matters of daily life, how much more should we, do we, believe and receive the testimony of God when He says that Jesus Christ is the true and only savior of mankind. It is an argument from the lesser to the greater. Unless you have reasons to question the credibility of the man, you believe what he tells you. What time is it? It is 9:45, actually it's 9:55 (laughter). I say, I'm in a little tension there, I want the extra 10 minutes. But I corrected myself, it's 9:55. You say, okay, I believe that. I'm glad you have a watch, I believe what you say. If you believe a man on earthly matters, how much more to believe the eternal God about the eternal matters. He has testified. If you received

the testimony of men, you receive the testimony of God and when you believe in Christ, that testimony is in you, it belongs to you, it is your possession if God has given it to you. He has made that which He has testified a matter of personal possession to you by faith. What a wonderful thing salvation is. Now, he goes on and states the negative side of this.

B. Denying Christ is a great sin

The first consequence of the testimony was that your salvation rests on certain testimony. The second consequence of this is that denying Christ is a great sin. This deserves far more treatment than I am going to give to it. But just understand that as an objective matter, God has testified concerning His Son. God has given testimony, God has spoken in a threefold way that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. This is what God has said, this is what is preserved for us in scripture.

For someone to say I don't believe that, understand what is going on there according to what John says in verse 10. Look at the middle of verse 10 with me:

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.

Listen, rejecting Christ, not being a Christian, the ambiguity of postmodern thought is not a matter of bad choices or bad philosophy, it is that, but at the heart of that there is moral culpability of great consequence, there is the moral culpability of blasphemy. To say that you don't believe him when God is testifying to it through the ages is to call God a liar. You say "I hear what you say, I hear about Christ at the cross and at His baptism, I hear the scriptures, but I don't believe it. God, you are a liar, I don't believe you."

Listen, the consequences of that will be great and they will be eternal. The writer of Hebrews says:

How much severer punishment will they deserve who have trampled on the Son of God.

It is an eternal sin, unbelief is an eternal, culpable sin. It is not the matter of someone having struggles. Unbelief is an eternal sin.

John Stott put it this way and you need to hear his words carefully, he says: "Unbelief is not a misfortune to be pitied, it is a sin to be deplored. Its sinfulness lies in the fact that it contradicts the word of the one true God and thus attributes falsehood to Him."

If you are here and you have been spurning Christ, rejecting Christ, oh, I trust that this will bear weight on your conscience because to reject Christ is to call the one true God a liar. And believe the word of God when it says that it would not go well for you on Judgment Day if you have that sin, the blood of that sin on your hands, God would not treat that lightly. For now, He has given you a window to repent. For now, the gospel goes forth to you one more time, repent and receive Christ, turn to Christ and be saved, believe in Christ and have the forgiveness of your

sins. But your continued stubborn unbelief is an eternal sin of blasphemy against the one true God.

And for those that say this kind of certainty is not tolerated in today's world, those within the church and say we need to be a little more humble about our convictions on central matters, James Boice addresses that, he says "No, the real presumption, the real arrogance is in questioning the assurance and thus casting doubt on God's word." Who are we to question the certainty and clarity of God's word—that's shameful. And it is a false humility, it is a false modesty that cloaks itself and says "Maybe these things about salvation are not so clear." And the arrogance is not in the preacher who declares with certainty the things that God has revealed in His word, the arrogance is with those that question God's word and make it less clear and less certain than it is and those men should be condemned.

C. Salvation is God's gift in Christ alone

Now, final consequence of this testimony is this, we have seen that the consequences of this testimony is that your salvation rests on certain testimony, we are saying that denying Christ is a great sin, it is the sin of calling God a liar since it is God's testimony that certifies Christ. Finally, just in a summary form here, salvation is God's gift in Christ alone. The life that God gives is available only through His Son. Jesus is in fact the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and only those who believe in Christ have eternal life. Look at verses 11-12 with me, John says:

The testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life, He who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

Jesus Christ is the dividing line between humanity, those who have Him have eternal life and have believed God, those who do not have Him are condemned, under judgment and are calling God a liar. The consequences of these things fast, the implications of these things are enormous. Eternal life is a gift in Christ which promises a reward yet to come. God has certified salvation to us. You should cling to Christ and proclaim Him no matter what the opposition or your family or the world at large brings to you. You cling to these things because you are clinging to the truth of the word of God.

Unbeliever in this room, His Spirit is calling you, God is certifying His truth to you this very moment. Repent and receive this gift of eternal life that God has made known, that God has certified. Jesus said "The one who comes to me, I will certainly not cast out.

Let's pray. *Father, we thank you for your testimony. You have not left us with an unattested philosophy and told us to believe in it. You have certified with your own character, with your own voice and with your own words that Jesus Christ is your beloved Son in whom you are well pleased. You, yourself have certified to us that He is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. You have certified to us that you sent Him in to the world so that we might live through Him. You have certified to us that He is the propitiation for our sins. Father, we thank you for your testimony. We could receive it on no higher word, there is no higher authority to*

appeal to when you have spoken, the matter is settled. We receive that and we rest in that here this morning.

Those of us that know Christ rest in Him with absolute assurance of truth because we receive your testimony.

Father, those who have not believed in Christ, those who question the gospel, father, we realize that they are calling you a liar. Your word is just so plain and clear and direct on that. I pray father that the startling reality of an eternal blasphemy is one that would strike their conscience and cause them to repent and come to Christ. We thank you for the glory of the gospel and we thank you Father in particular today for the glorious way in which you have testified and certified it to us. You have certified our faith to our hearts and we love you for it. In Jesus' name. Amen.