

From Uncertainty to Confidence

1 John 5:6-12

January 22nd, 2023

1. Three _____ about Jesus (5:6-8)

2. Two _____ to the testimonies about Jesus (5:9-10)

3. Two _____ from our responses to the testimonies about Jesus (5:11-12)

4. Applying the Word
 - a. Do you “_____ the Son”?

 - b. Are you still _____ if you “have the Son”?

Questions for Discussion/Reflection on 1 John 5:6-12

1. Have you ever gone through a period of doubt about your faith in Jesus? Did you have questions about the truthfulness of Christianity? Did you doubt your own commitment to Christ? What led to those doubts? How did they resolve (if they are resolved)?
2. The sermon argued that the water and blood in vv. 6-8 refer to Jesus’ baptism and death. Can you think of other possible interpretations? What are strengths or weaknesses of these various options? (See John 19:34-35 for one common reference)
3. How does our ongoing practice of baptism and communion point back to those key events? (1 Cor. 11:23-26; Rom. 6:3-4) In what sense do they provide ongoing “testimony”?
4. How is the word “testify” or “testimony” used outside of Biblical or Christian settings? How is that usage similar in this passage? What makes testimony valid or reliable?
5. What is it that gives testimony in John 5:33-36? How does that compare to 1 John 5:6-9?
6. How does believer’s personal, experiential testimony “in himself” fit with the external, objective, historical testimony about Jesus? (1 John 5:10; Rom. 8:16) What is the danger of elevating personal experience above objective revelation about Jesus in the Bible? (i.e. Why should we prioritize what the Bible says about Jesus over what we feel to be true about Jesus?)

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Big idea: God testifies about His Son so we may know we have eternal life if we have the Son.

Intro

Doubts are common in the final days leading up to a wedding.

They might be doubts about the relationship itself. *Will this really last?*

Maybe the bride-to-be or husband-to-be haven't seen stable relationships around them, but have seen many divorces. So they wonder, will ours last?

They might be doubts about the person they are marrying. *Is this really the right one?*

In every marriage, a sinner marries a sinner. Flaws are real and only become more apparent. But they might be wondering about compatibility, suitability.

They might have doubts about themselves. *Am I really committed?*

They see their own heart bouncing around and so they wonder about their commitment.

I think it's common to have similar doubts about Jesus.

Am I really committed? Is what I'm believing true? Is this a lasting faith or something more spurious?

Doubts stepping into marriage are common but we want to see them resolved as a person settles into a deep, lasting commitment. If those doubts continued to plague them, their marriage would suffer.

Doubts as a new believer are common, but we want to see them resolved so a person can settle into a deep, solid, secure relationship with Jesus.

As we've seen many times, 1 John was written for that purpose – to move us from uncertainty to confidence about where we stand with Jesus.

While the whole letter of 1 John is written for that purpose, this section as we move into the conclusion of the book, puts a finger on the issue with clarity.

If you've had those questions and doubts, lean in to what we see here.

If you are discipling new believers, if you have teens, lean in to what we see here because you might not have those doubts, but they likely do.

1. Three **testimonies** about Jesus (5:6-8)
 - a. Several commentaries describe this section as the most confusing, difficult, or perplexing of the letter. You never want to see that when you're preparing to teach! So you're not alone if you scratch your head at what it means by water and blood here.
 - i. I think we can wrap our minds around it when we consider what John was likely teaching against in this section.
 - ii. We know that some of the people who had broken away from the church ("they went out from us..." 2:19) were teaching different ideas about Jesus. So John is clarifying over and over again that Jesus is the Son of God (22 references), the Christ (2:22), who came in the flesh (4:2).
 - iii. One idea about Jesus that was present in the early days of the church was that Jesus was only a man but the divine Spirit of Christ came upon him at his baptism and then left before his death.
 1. They argued that God was too pure to really be born and live as a human and certainly could never really die.

2. If that was the argument John was addressing, then we can make sense of “water and the blood.”

b. What is testimony?

- i. A form of the word is used 9 times in this section? If you write in your Bibles, that would be a good word to circle in this passage every time it is used, because it’s clearly a key word.
- ii. We usually use the word in court settings – someone “testifies” – they give verbal witness about the truth of something.
- iii. What makes testimony reliable or not?
 1. The character and knowledge of the witness.
 2. An opposing lawyer might try to show that the testimony is inaccurate (what they say happened didn’t really happen) or that the witness is unreliable.

c. The water refers to his baptism.

- i. **Matthew 3:16-17** After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove *and* lighting on Him, ¹⁷ and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."
- ii. It was the beginning of his earthly ministry.
- iii. The Father and the Spirit confirmed His identity – they “testified” to His identity.
- iv. In His baptism, Jesus identified with the people He came to save.
 1. It was not a baptism of repentance. It wasn’t a baptism to wash anything away – He was sinless.
 2. **Matthew 3:13-15** Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan *coming* to John, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" ¹⁵ But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit *it* at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him.
 3. It was necessary to fulfill all righteousness – but not His righteousness. Our righteousness.
 - a. He was already perfectly righteous
 - b. The plan – come, identify with sinners, but not Himself sin.
 - c. **Matthew 20:28** just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."
 4. In His baptism He identified Himself with sinners as the one who would obey in their place and die as their substitute.
 - a. **Isaiah 53:12** Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, ***And was numbered with the transgressors***; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.

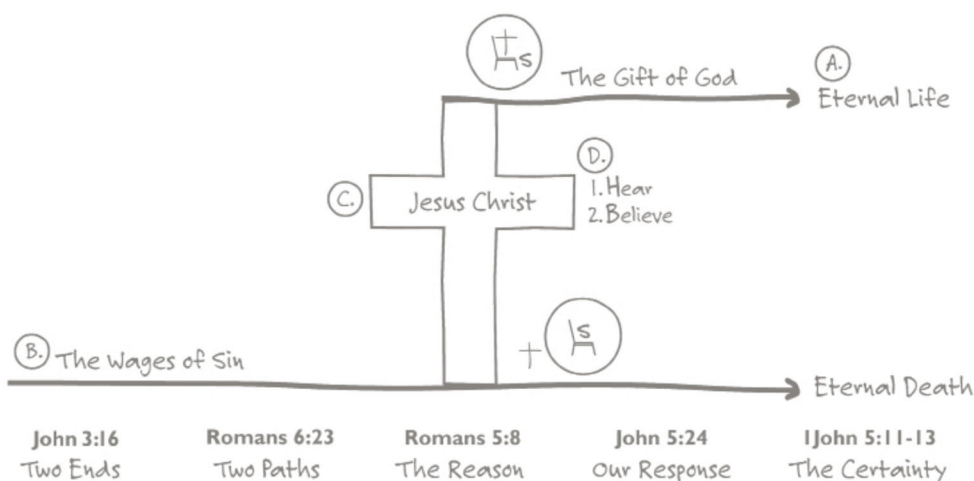
d. The blood refers to His atoning death on the cross.

- i. **Acts 20:28** "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

- ii. **1 Peter 1:18-19** knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, ¹⁹ but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood of Christ*.
 - iii. **1 John 1:7** but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.
 - 1. He shed literal blood, His blood, in His actual death – not the appearance of death. It was not that His blood has some magical element, but it's a way of referring to His death.
 - 2. His precious blood symbolic of His death applied to us. The priests in the OT would take the blood of sacrifices and sprinkle it upon the people – literally, physically – to picture and anticipate the blood of Jesus that would be applied to those who believe in Him.
 - 3. And that blood cleanses us from “all sin” – not some, not the ones you committed before you became a Christian, not the ones you confess – all.
 - iv. The false teachers may have acknowledged the baptism but not the death, which is why the emphasis on “not with water only but water and with blood.”
 - v. John Stott: “This is no trivial error ... If the Son of God did not take to Himself our nature in His birth and our sins in His death, He cannot reconcile us to God.”
 - e. The Spirit testifies as well.
 - i. The Spirit confirmed Jesus' identity at His baptism.
 - 1. **John 1:32-34** ³² John testified saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. ³³ "I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴ "I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God."
 - ii. The Spirit confirms the reality of the good news about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection to us.
 - 1. **Romans 8:16** The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,
 - 2. Not apart from objective, external evidence but in addition to it. Not in a way that closes our eyes and ears to what is logical but in a way that allows us to accept what is true. Jesus is both historical AND experiential.
 - a. “the three are in agreement” (v. 8b)
2. Two responses to the testimonies about Jesus (5:9-10)
- a. The Father testifies – bears witness, confirms – about the Son through the Spirit, and His testimony is greater.
 - i. **John 5:33-36** "You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth. ³⁴ "But the testimony which I receive is not from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved. ³⁵ "He was the lamp that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. ³⁶ "But the testimony which I have is greater than *the testimony of John*; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish-- the very works that I do-- testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me.
 - ii. His testimony is greater, meaning it should carry more weight.
 - b. What are the possible responses to God's testimony about His Son – believe or don't believe.
 - i. Believe God

1. Spurgeon: "Now the Lord, having given His Son, has revealed this great fact in His Word. Here it is in this Inspired Book – the full statement of it – to this effect, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and that whoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ has everlasting life. This is God's testimony! All we have to do in order to realize the result of Christ's passion is simply to *believe* the testimony of God concerning it and rest upon it!
2. The one who believes has this testimony in Himself.
 - a. Meaning, you're a living testimony of one who has been forgiven and changed. That's why we sometimes have people share how they came to Christ, maybe at their baptism or just at a service or gather. What do we call those stories? Their "testimonies."
 - ii. Not believe God
 1. Makes God a liar.
 2. Classic line about Jesus from CS Lewis that He is either Lord, liar, or lunatic. We don't have the luxury of saying He was a nice guy or a good teacher but not God. Someone who says what He said about Himself is either lying, crazy, or He is Lord.
3. Two **results** from our responses to the testimonies about Jesus (5:11-12)
 - a. The results:
 - i. He who has the Son has the life.
 - ii. He who does not have the Son, does not have the life.
 - b. Eternal life is real life in real relationship with God that begins now and continues.
 - i. **John 10:10** "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly.
 - ii. **John 17:3** "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.
 - c. Is it possible to have the Son but not have eternal life?
 - i. No! They go together.
 - d. Is it possible to have eternal life without having the Son?
 - i. No – if you don't have the son, you don't have the life.
 - e. Is it possible to think you have eternal life (that you have the Son) but don't?
 - i. Yes, many people think they have eternal life or a vague sense of all good people going to heaven, but are unaware that eternal life is only in the Son.
 - f. Is it possible to have the life but not be sure?
 - i. Yes! That's exactly why John is writing this letter and it's why I wanted to do this series in this book. The word we would use for that is assurance – they lack assurance of salvation or you can say that lack confidence and are uncertain.
 - ii. See v. 13
 - g. How confident are you that you have eternal life?

- i. Walk through a sketch that was shared with me 23 years ago that helped give me confidence – assurance. I was already a Christian having trusted Christ a few years earlier, but I had doubts that popped up about whether I really knew Christ.



- ii.
 - iii. **John 3:16** "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.
 - iv. **Romans 6:23** For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 - v. **Romans 5:8** But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
 - vi. **John 5:24** "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.
4. Applying the Word
- a. Do you "**have**" the Son"?
 - i. If you're still uncertain about Jesus, John wrote another book in the Bible that we call The Gospel of John. Maybe your doubts are like the engaged person wondering if their soon to be husband or wife is really a good choice. Maybe you just need to get to know Jesus better.
 - ii. **John 20:30-31** Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.
 - iii. Let's put a Bible in your hand and you can start reading the gospel of John. Look for descriptions of who Jesus is. Look for evidence that He gives about His identity. Watch for our response to Him.
 - b. Are you still "**uncertain**" if you "have the Son"?
 - i. Continue to read through 1 John.
 - ii. Sit down and talk with a more mature believer – one of our pastors or elders, a youth leader, a small group leader, your parents.



1. Three testimonies about Jesus (5:6-8)

Matthew 3:16-17 After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove *and* lighting on Him, ¹⁷ and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

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Romans 8:16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,

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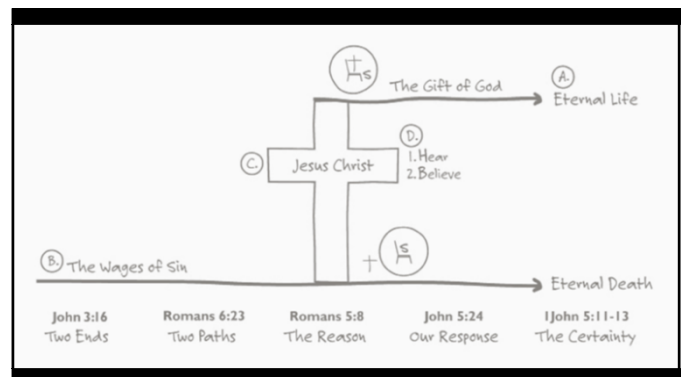
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