

1 John – God is Love: Week Five

What it Means to Have Faith

Day Three: What is Our Testimony?

Read 1 John 5:6-11

Welcome to our final day of study! You have shown yourself to be faithful to the end and not a “mere man or woman”. Today we are going to look into what a testimony is and what our own testimony looks like. Did you know that John used the word testimony (or testify) eight times in those six verses we just read?

The Greek word for testify is “martureo”, and it means to bear witness, to witness, to testify. (Vine’s Greek Dictionary). The primary or root word is “martus” or “martur” which means witness. This is where we get the English word “martyr”, which literally means “one who bears witness by his death”.

John was all about sharing the many different witnesses in his gospel and we will look at some of those today but first let’s go through the passage in 1 John together.

These Three Testify

Who are the three that testify according to verses 6-8?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Depending on which version of the Bible you are using, you may have seen some extra words in verse 7. There is a bit of confusion over this verse, because the King James Version has the added words but most of the more current versions do not. Here is why:

These words, “*in heaven the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth,*” were not found in the early manuscripts of the Scriptures. Bible scholars today believe that these words were originally in the margin of the manuscript as notes but a 14th century copyist added them into the Scriptures by accident. They are not found in any manuscript until the 14th century, so therefore they believe they should be left out of our Bible versions.

So, assuming the scholars are correct, we will leave the words out. Of course, the words don't change our understanding, and we believe that the Father, the Word (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit make up the Holy Trinity.

Jesus came by water and blood.

Being able to say for certain what John meant by this passage has been a challenge for Bible students. It seems clear that John is returning to the beginning of his letter and reminding us that he is speaking about what he had witnessed as Jesus – the Word of Life – but here in the flesh. Jesus was born of both water and blood. He had been born as a human being on earth. But what does it mean that Jesus CAME by water and blood?

Here are a few opinions by scholars:

- Some believe that water speaks of our own baptism and blood speaks of receiving communion, yet John seems to be writing about something that happened in the past not something that is ongoing. (enduringword.com)
- Some believe the water and blood describe the water and blood which flowed from Jesus' side when He was stabbed with a spear on the cross. *“But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear and immediately blood and water came out.” John 19:34* But it is unclear how it can be said Jesus “came by” water and blood with this interpretation.
- Some think John is speaking of Jesus' birth in the “water of the womb” and blood speaks of His death. Meaning essentially that Jesus came into the world as a man and died as a man. (enduringword.com)
- Probably the best explanation (in my humble opinion) is the one first recorded by the ancient Christian writer Tertullian around AD200. Tertullian believed John was speaking of the waters of baptism and the blood of the crucifixion.

Let's first focus on what happened at the baptism of our Lord Jesus.

Read Matthew 3:13-17 and John 1:26-34

This Water Baptism event marked the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry and there were many eye witnesses who heard God the Father speak from heaven and saw the Spirit descend like a dove.

The purpose of baptism is to declare publicly our identification with God through Christ. We understand it to mean that we die to our own sin nature (symbolically) when we go

under the water and we rise to a new life (symbolically looking ahead to our own resurrection) when we come out of the water. Jesus had no need to die to a sin nature, but He wanted to set an example for His followers.

Read Romans 6:3-7

(v.5) For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His _____, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His _____.

1 John says that Jesus came by water and blood. If the water he is referring to is the water from His baptism then John is telling us that this baptism event was a major witness or testimony for Jesus. And – based on the accounts we read, I think we can agree it was. Anyone who witnessed the baptism of Jesus would believe that Jesus was – if not God’s Son – then at least someone very unique and special!

As for coming by blood – if by blood, John means Jesus’ bloody death on the cross – we all know that the cross is still the major event for followers of Christ. No other event in all human history has had such an impact. Think of those who have given their lives as martyrs because they believed Jesus had died and bled on the cross for all mankind. The blood shed on the cross was a testimony, and proof of God’s love for mankind. God proved His love for us by offering His Son as a perfect sacrificial Lamb.

We read in verses 6-8 that the Holy Spirit is the third One who testifies and that the Spirit is the truth. How did the Holy Spirit testify to the truth?

At the baptism – He descended on Jesus, declaring to all the world that He was united with Jesus and wanted everyone to listen to the words Jesus spoke and to believe in Him.

At the Cross/ Resurrection – It was the Holy Spirit who raised Christ from the dead.

“If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.” Romans 8:11

Witnesses to the Death and Resurrection of Jesus

Read John 18:37 and 19:6, 14-15, 19-22

Pontius Pilate was a witness to Jesus’ death and resurrection. What does Jesus tell Pilate about who He is? _____

What was Pilate’s testimony? What did he believe about Jesus?

Read Matthew 28:5-10 and Luke 24:8-10

What was Mary Magdalene and the other Mary's (John's mother) testimony?

Now back to 1 John chapter 5. In verse 8 we read that the Spirit, the water and the blood are all in agreement. Then in verse 9 John explains that this testimony that we have from God is greater than any testimony we may hear from men and women. He asks, if we can believe the things that people tell us, why can't we believe what God tells us? John is saying that we ought to believe God because His testimony is far greater than man's.

And finally, in verses 10 and 11, John gives us the point of this whole passage. We must **believe** the testimony – and the testimony is just this: God has given us eternal life (or a chance to have eternal life), and the way to that life is through His Son. We must believe that.

Life is found in Jesus Christ – period. If you have the Son, you have life. It's simple.

Look up the following verses and record **whose testimony it is**.

John 5:37 _____

John 5:39 _____

John 8:14,17-18 _____

John 15:26 _____

John 15:27 _____

John 21:24 _____

Revelation 12:11,17 _____

Revelation 20:4 _____

Revelation 22:16,18,20 _____

We are also called to Be Witnesses!

Look up the following verses and fill in the blanks.

- Acts 1:8 *“But you will receive power when the _____ has come upon you; and _____ both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”*
- Acts 22:14-15 *“And he said, ‘The God of our fathers has appointed you (Paul) to know His will and to see the Righteous One and to hear an utterance from His mouth. For you will be _____ for Him to all men of what you have _____.”*
- 1 John 4:14 *“We have seen and _____ that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.”*

Those of us who were not alive to witness Jesus walking in the flesh can still be witnesses, just like Paul and the many converts in the years following Jesus’ Ascension. Jesus expects His followers to share the good news of His Resurrection with others. This is our hope for eternal life! The Apostles understood that they were there to testify.

“Peter raised his voice and declared to them...’This Jesus God raised up again to which we are all witnesses.” Acts 2:14, 32

Sometimes when we speak the Truth it is not believed.

Look up the following verses and record **who does not believe the testimony**.

John 3:11 _____

John 3:31-32_____

Acts 22:14-18_____

When we share our testimony with people, we should not be surprised that they won’t always accept it. Only God knows who will believe and who will not. We still need to tell them. We should not be afraid to share our testimony because some may refuse to listen. What if Peter had been too afraid? What if Paul and the other disciples had not shared the gospel because they were afraid of being persecuted?

When we are afraid to tell people about our faith in Jesus, they may miss their only opportunity to hear about the Way to eternal life. We may be their only link to the Truth. What if we shared with ten people and only one person listened and accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior - wouldn't it be worth it, even if we were persecuted? Let's be willing to be uncomfortable for the sake of Christ. In fact, let's be willing to suffer for His sake. He conquered death for us! Any trouble you go through for the Lord Jesus, will not go unnoticed or unrewarded. Like Queen Esther, we were called for "such a time as this"!

So, let's consider what our testimony is. Answer these personal questions about your own experience.

For those of you who were raised in a Christian home and feel like you have always known the Lord, was there ever a time when your relationship with Jesus became more important to you, and when you began to take your faith in Jesus more seriously? Then start your story there.

1. Who did you first hear the Gospel from?

2. Where were you when you heard it and how old were you?

3. Did you believe it right away? If not, when did you believe? What happened?

4. After you believed, who did you tell? What was their reaction?

5. What evidence was there that something had happened to you after you believed?

6. What has taken place since then because of your new identity in Christ? How have you changed?

7. Who have you shared this amazing story with?

8. What hinders you from telling people your faith story?

9. Who are the people closest to you that need to hear your story?

As part of completing this study of 1 John, find someone who has never heard your story and ask them if they would let you share it. Tell them that you need a volunteer to help you complete this study. Then using the answers to the questions, you just gave, tell them your story. After you have finished, ask them if they have any questions.

Finally, notice if he or she is really listening carefully and shows interest. If they don't, say, "thank you for listening!" and be done. If, however, he or she is interested and has questions, then follow up by sharing these three things:

1. Jesus died for your friend. He said, "Everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord shall be saved." Acts 2:21 Your friend is included in "Everyone". Salvation is by faith alone.
2. Jesus tells us to repent of our sins and He will forgive us. If we truly are sorry for our sins, no matter what we have done, His grace is enough. Jesus has paid the punishment for our sins when He died on the cross. His blood cleanses us from all sin.
3. Your friend needs to simply ask Jesus to be the Lord of his or her life. *"If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead; you will be saved. For with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."* Romans 10:9-10

Don't be surprised if - instead of rejection – your friend asks you to pray with him or her to accept Jesus! God is pouring out His Spirit in these last days. We need to do our part – and expect that God is doing His part by preparing the hearts of people. If your friend rejects your offer, just continue to show him or her God's love. Maybe over time he will be drawn to the Truth by your quiet and gentle spirit! Remember, we walk by faith. Keep your eyes on your Savior! He will be there to help you, to give you the words, to show you what to do. Our confidence is not in our own ability, but rather in His!

Time to wrap up this study!

I hope this study of 1 John has been a blessing in your life and that you have taken away some wonderful truths that will encourage you in your spiritual journey with Jesus.

Please remember that you are precious in His sight. (Isaiah 43:4a) He loves you with His amazing agape love. Everything He does is out of love for you. God is love. And because He has shown us such amazing love, we can love others. We love because He first loved us. May our God bless you and keep you!

“I will tell of Your Name to my brethren, in the midst of the assembly I will praise Him.”

Psalm 22:22

“Examine me, O Lord, and try me; test my mind and my heart. For Your loving kindness is before my eyes, and I have walked in Your truth”. Psalm 26:2-3

“Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?...But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:35, 37-39

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God...In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us....”

1 John 4:7,10a