

Testify (Part 1)

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[0 : 00] 1 John chapter 5, verses 6 through 12, if you would stand with me as we honor the reading of God's word together.

! This is He who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not by the water only, but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.

For there are three that testify, the Spirit and the water and the blood, and these three agree. If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God, that He has borne concerning His Son. Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself.

Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning His Son. And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

Whoever has the Son has life. Whoever does not have the Son does not have life. May God add a blessing to the reading of His word. Would you please be seated? Amen.

[1 : 31] Amen. Now, we can grow annoyed with someone who asks a lot of questions. But if you read the Gospels, you'll notice that Jesus asked a lot of questions.

And He asked questions for many different reasons. Sometimes Jesus would ask a question to engage others in conversation. He'd ask His disciples, what do you think? Or what are you talking about?

Sometimes He would ask questions to encourage people's faith in Him. He asked the blind beggar, what do you want me to do for you? He asked the lame man, do you want to be healed?

Sometimes He asked questions to fend off His attackers, using questions to expose their hypocrisy and their illogical points of view. When the Pharisees accused Jesus of casting out demons in Satan's power, Jesus asked, If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself.

How then will His kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Often Jesus asked questions to teach an important truth.

[2 : 49] In Luke 10, a religious authority asked Jesus, And who is my neighbor? And Jesus answered His question with the parable of the good Samaritan.

He concludes that parable, that instruction, by asking a question to His questioner. He says to him, Which of these three proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?

And the questioner's answer was obvious, the one who showed him mercy. Ultimately, all of the questions Jesus asked were intended to people to discover the truth of who He truly was.

In Matthew chapter 16, Jesus asked the most important question of all. Chapter 16, verse 13, Jesus is with His disciples.

When they came to the district of Caesarea Philippi, He asked them, Who do people say that the Son of Man is? Jesus wasn't suffering some kind of identity crisis.

[3 : 56] He didn't have amnesia. He wasn't fishing for compliments, wondering if people were saying nice things about Him behind His back. He knew all things. And His reason for asking this question would soon become clear.

The disciples responded to Him in verses 14 and 15. Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. And Jesus said to them, But who do you say that I am? Jesus' question goes from general to specific. He's saying, in other words, forget about what everybody else says and what everybody else thinks about me.

I want to know what you say. I want to know what you think. And Peter, as he was prone to do, spoke first. Verses 16 through 17, he replied, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And Jesus answered, Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

[5 : 09] See, Peter did not arrive to this conclusion on his own. God had revealed it to him. And in verse 18, Jesus says, And I tell you, you are Peter. And on this rock, I will build my church.

And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. In the Greek, Peter is Petros. It describes a small stone.

While the word Jesus used for rock, Petra referred to a rocky mountain peak or a larger sized boulder. This was a play on words. Jesus is saying that while Peter would be instrumental in building his church, the church would be founded on what he expressed in his confession.

The confession and testimony of the true church of Jesus Christ is that he is the Christ, the Son of God. That confession, that testimony, is the focus of this section of John's epistle.

It's the reason he wrote this letter. To testify to the reality of who Jesus is. We'll get there shortly, but in 1 John 5, 13, he says, I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know, that you may know that you have eternal life.

[6 : 36] And so the key word in this section of our text is the word testify. It appears several times in these verses.

The root of the Greek word translated as testify is martis. Martis is the root word of our English word martyr. A martyr is someone who has refused to recant their testimony.

It's because of their testimony that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, that they ultimately paid for that testimony with their life. The testimony of the Bible, the testimony of the true church, is that Jesus is the Christ.

Jesus is the Son of God. This testimony is the foundation of Jesus' church. And it's the testimony that he's commanded us to proclaim, to testify to.

And so the main idea for this morning's message is this. You must believe the testimony of God that Jesus is his Son to have eternal life.

[7 : 50] You must believe the testimony of God that Jesus is his Son to have eternal life. In the previous section, John wrote about what it means to overcome in Christ.

And I wonder here if he wasn't anticipating that one of his recipients at this point might be thinking, Now, wait a second.

Why should we accept your testimony about Jesus and reject the testimony of all the other people that we've heard about who say different things about him?

You know, in fact, most of the Jews, Jesus' own people, they rejected him. They rejected his testimony. Not only did they reject his claims to be the Messiah and the Son of God, they accused him of being a liar, of being an insurrectionist, of being a sinner, and being demon-possessed.

In fact, they rejected him so intensely that they shouted for his crucifixion. In light of such rejection, why then should we believe you, John?

[9 : 03] Now, I'm a fan of the true crime genre. And what I'm most drawn into, whether it's a book or a show, is the drama in the courtroom.

The defense's job, right, all the evidence has been collected. The defense's job is to discredit the evidence. While the prosecution's job is to give credibility to the evidence.

And so often they'll do that by calling an expert witness to the stand. Whether it's an expert in forensics or DNA or ballistics, the witness is called to evaluate and validate the evidence and what it proves.

Sometimes the expert witness is deemed even more credible because they've written a textbook on the subject that they are giving testimony about.

In other words, this person knows their stuff. They're at the top of their field and thus their testimony is hard to refute. John is doing something similar here.

[10 : 16] He's calling for an expert witness. In this case, the expert witness that John is calling to the witness stand is God.

The one who wrote the book. The author of life. Throughout Jesus's ministry, God the Father gave infallible, unassailable, incontrovertible testimony that Jesus Christ is his only begotten son.

And in this passage, John provides that testimony. He gives evidence. He shares God the Father's testimony that Jesus Christ is his son.

And in doing that, he provides three evidences that validate the testimony of who Jesus is and why he must be believed to have eternal life.

And you might be asking, well, why does this matter? If you're an unbeliever this morning, I am so glad that you're here. This is of extreme importance to you.

[11 : 22] This is of the utmost importance for you. Because hell is a real place. And it's reserved for Satan, for his demons, those angels who fell with him, and all those who reject Jesus Christ as their Savior, Messiah, the Son of God.

Jesus said in John 14, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Jesus is the way, the only way, for sinners to have peace with God. No one gets into heaven apart from faith in him.

You must believe the testimony that Jesus Christ is the Son of God to have eternal life. That's what the Bible says.

If you're a believer this morning, this is important for you because you are commanded by God to give testimony. Testimony.

[12 : 39] You are to give testimony. Both individually. As an individual. At your work. In your home. In your community. Whatever you're posting on the internet.

You are to give testimony to this truth, this reality that you have come to know. And collectively as a church, we gather to worship. We gather to give testimony of God.

That Jesus is his Son. And that it's through him we have eternal life. This is, again, the foundational truth upon which our church is built.

Upon which our church rests. A building without a foundation won't be a building for long. It will crumble. A building with cracks in its foundation will eventually fall apart.

Like the churches that John was writing to. Wolves will try to infiltrate the church dressed in sheep's clothing. And they will try to create cracks in our foundation.

[13 : 44] And so it's important that you must know what you believe. It's important that you must know why you believe it. We are commanded to testify to the truth of the gospel.

And we're also commanded to guard that testimony diligently. So, again, there are three evidences that validate the testimony of Jesus Christ.

And the reality that you must believe in him, the Son of God, to have eternal life. So, let's look at that first evidence. That's the external evidence.

The external evidence. Again, if you look at the beginning of verse 6 with me, John says, This is he. And he is referring to Jesus who came by the water and blood.

He says it, Jesus Christ. Now, some connect the phrase water and blood to the moment on the cross when a soldier pierced Jesus' side and a mixture of blood and water poured out of that wound.

[14 : 53] But that was not a divine testimony to anything other than the fact that Jesus wasn't mostly dead or partially dead.

Jesus was totally dead when they removed his body from the cross. Some connect this phrase to the ordinances of the church, baptism and communion.

And while baptism and the Lord's Supper do serve as testimonies, they are the church's witness to Christ. But John here is dealing with God the Father's testimony to Jesus as his Son to us.

So, it is best and right, I believe, to see water here as a reference to Jesus' baptism and blood as a reference to his crucifixion, his death on the cross.

Both of those events serve as bookends. They serve as brackets for Jesus' earthly ministry. And in each of those events, what we see is God the Father providing external, visible testimony that Jesus Christ is his Son.

[16 : 07] Now, when John says in the middle of verse 6 that Jesus came not by the water only, but by the water and the blood, you could read that and think, well, maybe, you know, it sounds redundant or he's just being repetitive to whatever.

Make some kind of emphatic point. But there's a reason why the Holy Spirit inspired the word that he inspired. Remember that the churches that John wrote to were negatively impacted by false teachers.

And one of the things they were teaching was that Jesus was a man, just a regular man, but that when he was baptized, he received something called the Christ Spirit who stayed with him until his crucifixion when it left.

This was a denial of the true nature of Jesus, who is God incarnate and who died as the God man and whose death as a result was able to atone for our sins.

And there are many other teachings out there today that testify to something different about Jesus than what we read in our Bibles. If asked by Jesus today, who do you say I am?

[17 : 31] Muslims would say a prophet. Buddhists and Hindus would say, you know, a great, wise teacher. And many people who call themselves Christians would be okay with that.

But if you're a true Christian, you cannot be okay with that. Because if Jesus did not have a divine nature, if he was not truly God, his death on the cross could not and did not conquer sin and death for us.

But the testimony of Scripture is clear. And in one place, 2 Corinthians 5.21, we read, For our sake he, God the Father, made him, God the Son, to be sin, who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

This is what Christians believe. This is what Christians testify to. And if your testimony doesn't match the testimony of the Bible, the testimony of God the Father, then you are bearing false witness.

When Jesus began his public ministry, Matthew records in chapter 3, verses 13 through 15, then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John to be baptized by him.

[18 : 57] John would have prevented him saying, I need to be baptized by you. And do you come to me? But Jesus answered him, let it be so now. For thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.

And then he consented. The Bible tells us that John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus. He was called by God.

He was set apart to prepare the nation of Israel for the arrival of Jesus, the Messiah. By preaching a message of repentance to confess, to prepare your hearts for the coming of the Lord.

And so the baptism that John was calling for was a baptism that called for confession and repentance, an external symbol of an internal reality.

Now prior to this, baptism was only for Gentiles who were converting to Judaism. So what was happening here at this point in redemptive history was that in response to John's preaching, many Jews were realizing that though they were physically descendants of Abraham, spiritually they were no better off than the Gentiles.

[20 : 21] They were sinners who needed to repent. And so it's not surprising, understanding that context, that John would at first refuse to baptize Jesus.

Because John knew who Jesus was. When he saw him, he said, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. This is the Messiah. This is the Son of God. And as such, he knew that Jesus had never sinned.

And thus he had nothing to repent of. But Jesus would not exempt himself from what God required of his people. And it was necessary that he obey all of his Father's commands.

Because it would be his sinless, righteous life that he would give to his people in exchange for their sinful lives. So that by faith in him, they could be counted as righteous in God the Father's sight.

He wasn't doing it for himself. But in obedience to the Father, he did it for us. His perfect obedience made him the sinless sacrifice whose death made perfect atonement for our sin.

[21 : 37] As we continue in Matthew 3, here's the Father's testimony. And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water.

And behold, the heavens were open 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.

Now, this gives me an opportunity to address one of my pet peeves. The Holy Spirit is not a bird. He's not a bird.

He's not a dove. Doves are beautiful and precious, I suppose. But he is not a dove. Matthew is using a simile here to describe what the manifestation of the Holy Spirit looked like at Jesus' baptism, which was then accompanied by an audible voice, the voice of God thundering from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased.

The Father's pleasure with the Son and the descending of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus at his baptism pictures the beautiful Trinitarian nature of our God.

[23 : 05] It depicts the work of the Father and the Son and the Spirit in salvation. The Father loves the elect from before the foundation of the world.

Ephesians 1.4, we read that this morning. He sends his Son to seek and to save the lost, Luke 19.10, And the Spirit convicts of sin, John 16.8, and draws believers to the Father through faith in the Son.

Jesus' baptism was an external, visual testimony of the amazing grace of God to send his Son to send his Son to fulfill all righteousness, which he accomplished by living sinlessly and dying sacrificially to save sinners and give them eternal life.

The water, Jesus' baptism, testifies to this truth. The second external evidence that John gives that validates the testimony that Jesus is the Son of God who must be believed for eternal life is the blood, which represents Jesus' death on the cross.

Just as God the Father had testified to Jesus' true identity at his baptism, so he gave convincing testimony to Jesus' true identity as he died on the cross.

[24 : 37] Matthew 27.45-46 says, Now from the sixth hour there was darkness, and this is a time where the sun should have been shining its brightest, but there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.

And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani, that is my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

In the middle of the day, a supernatural darkness engulfed the land, symbolizing the Father's forsaking the Son as a sin-bearing sacrifice, sensing that Jesus, as physically excruciating and torturous as the cross was, as painful as all of the beatings that he endured leading up to this moment were.

This moment was exceedingly more horrific. He who knew no sin was forsaken by the Father as he on the cross became the bearer of sin.

And there, as he endured his Father's wrath, his Father's divine anger and displeasure for our sins.

[26 : 18] The thought of what he endured in this moment caused Jesus such anguish the night before in the garden of Gethsemane that he sweat drops of blood.

Think about that. I know a lot of you. I know what you've had to go through. Some very hard things, stressful things, things that caused you to anguish.

You didn't sweat drops of blood. So how terrifying, how terrifying it must be, it must have been for Jesus the Son and how terrifying, how terrifying it must be to be cast out into the darkness away from God and his grace and his love and his mercy.

No wonder Jesus often described hell as a place where there will be endless weeping and gnashing of teeth. How terrifying. How horrifying.

But the darkness that filled the land that day was not the only evidence Jesus' blood testified to. As we continue in Matthew 27, 51 it says, and behold the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

[27 : 53] In our kitchen at my house we have these lacy semi-transparent dainty curtains over our windows.

And you know as dainty as those curtains are it would take some effort for me to rip them apart. I don't think that I'll try that because my wife would not be happy.

But understand this the curtain in the temple wasn't like that. Wasn't like that. The book of Exodus says the veil was fashioned from blue purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen.

The Jewish historian Josephus said that the veil or the curtain in the temple was four inches thick.

Notice also that it was torn not from the bottom to the top but from the top to the bottom.

Now this was the temple that Herod constructed and it stood 40 cubits high which means that this curtain in the temple was approximately 60 feet tall.

[29 : 12] The temple was the place where animals were sacrificed as prescribed by God in the Old Testament to atone for the people's sins and the curtain separating the holy place from the holiest place or the holy of holies was where the ark of the covenant was kept where the presence of God was said to be and where the high priest was only allowed to enter once a year on the day of atonement to atone for the sins of the nation.

The curtain symbolized God's presence and his holiness which separated him from people's sinfulness. When Jesus died God tore that curtain apart as visible external testimony that he was done with the temple.

He had no more need and the people had no more need for all of these religious sacrifices and festivals. He was done with that because Jesus had come and Jesus had died.

Jesus had sacrificed. He had shed his blood and that was sufficient to atone for sins. His death signified that the way into the holy of holies was open now and it was open for all people for all time through faith in Jesus Christ for those who believe the testimony of God concerning his son.

We don't need to sacrifice animals anymore. We don't need a high priest in this life anymore to make atonement for us because Jesus has made the atonement.

[31 : 01] He has sacrificed. He is our high priest as we read in Hebrews 10 19 through 22.

Therefore brothers since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain that is through his flesh and since we have a great priest over the house of God let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water the testimony of the father to the son through his blood was externally seen in the darkness as Jesus was forsaken on the cross seen in the curtain that was torn in two in the temple and was also seen through an earthquake so we continue in 2751 of Matthew and the earth shook and the rocks split a couple of weeks ago

I experienced the first earthquake that I at least had ever been awake to experience you know the great earthquake of Oklahoma in 2024 and it was odd because my bed just kind of shook a little bit and for a moment I thought does one of my dogs get under the bed that's what it felt!

no rocks were split nothing broke could you imagine being there in this moment seeing all these things supernatural darkness Jesus crying out what he did the earth shaking rocks splitting that wasn't it it gets stranger in verses 52 through 53 the tombs also were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and they appeared to many these people were the first fruits a!

preview of what it will be like when Jesus returns and the dead in Christ will rise in glory so astonishing so amazing was all of this external evidence that a battle hardened tough guy Roman centurion couldn't help but declare I think in terror truly this was the son of God and not only him there was the thief next to Jesus on the cross remember him he witnessed all these things too Jesus today remember me when you come into your kingdom he saw it and he believed so that was a lot to unpack and we're only through the first part of verse six and so obviously I'm going to have to pick up the pace a little bit here and I'll tell you we're not going to get to all the evidence today but let's continue the rest of verse six and the spirit is the one who testifies because the spirit is the spirit of truth the

Holy Spirit is a truth teller he is the spirit of truth he is the revealer of divine throughout Jesus life on earth the spirit was involved in his conception as we saw he was involved in his baptism he was involved in his temptation in the wilderness and throughout Jesus ministry Peter testified to those gathered at Cornelius house in Acts 10 38 about Jesus and how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power and he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil for God was with him the Holy Spirit empowered Jesus for ministry again Jesus opponents didn't deny that he did miraculous things they denied the source of the power for the miraculous things that he did and in doing so they committed the sin in scripture that the [35 : 18] Bible says is unpardonable Mark 3 28 through 30 Jesus said truly I say to you all sins will be forgiven the children of man and whatever blasphemies they utter but whoever blasphemies against the Holy Spirit the Spirit of truth never has forgiveness but is guilty of an eternal sin for they were saying of Jesus that he has an unclean spirit the Holy Spirit continues to serve as God's witness to us he's not a bird he's not a feeling he's the spirit of truth who always testifies to us to the reality of who Jesus is a reality that is seen and revealed over and over again in every place of the Bible that he's inspired in verses seven through eight

John continues for there are three that testify the spirit and the water and the blood and all these three agree in Deuteronomy 19 15 we read a single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connecting with any offense that he has committed only on the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses shall a charge be established see God established this principle in the Old Testament to safeguard against false witnesses!

who might give untruthful testimony and I know that you're going to eat lunch here today so I'm going to add something else that is a pet peeve of mine and that's Matthew chapter 18 verse 20 for where two or three are gathered in my name there I am among them now this verse has been used

so often out of context maybe you've heard someone say to a small group of Christians who have gathered well there's just a few of us here but that's alright because that means Jesus is with us what if it's only one person what if it's just you praying is Jesus not present with you there understand that this this verse is in the context of church discipline when a brother has sinned against a brother or sister and they have been confronted by that person in the hopes of restoring their fellowship and that hasn't worked and they've taken another couple of witnesses! witnesses understands the seriousness of their situation and they'll repent of their sin but again John is using this multiple witnesses!

to prove to verify that look we don't just have one witness we have multiple and all of these witnesses are in agreement they agree they testify to the same truth John's argument at this point is that we have three external witnesses the water Jesus' baptism the blood the cross and the Holy Spirit who is the spirit of truth and they all agree they all agree that Jesus is the Messiah the Son of God the external evidence all points in the same direction so now we we ask why did and why do so many people reject this evidence this testimony why do they reject such convincing evidence [39 : 32] Jesus explained in John chapter 3 19 through 21 and this is the judgment the light has come into the world and this is it and people love the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil for everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light lest his work should be exposed but whoever does what is true comes to the light so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God in John 8 34 through 36 Jesus said truly truly I say to you everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin the slave does not remain in the house forever the son remains forever so if the son sets you free you will be free indeed the apostle Paul says in Romans God is plain to them speaking of unbelievers because

God has shown it to them for his invisible attributes namely his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world and the things that have been made so they are without excuse you see it's not that the evidence is lacking but that people are born with this in nature which they're with his job and he knew the gospel he understood what Christians believe his wife pleaded with him pleaded with him and was patient with him hoping that he would change that he would be saved I pleaded with him and he knew he knew he needed to change and at the end of this meeting we're talking about all of these things all of the ways your life is falling apart how badly you need Jesus this is what he said to me you know what I'll give Jesus another try and that broke my heart you don't you don't try Jesus he's not someone who you try if you've received his testimony you understand who he truly is and you don't treat him as you know just hey all right

Jesus let's try you out see how it works take you on a test drive doesn't work that way if you know what Jesus did for you the testimony of the Bible that the sinless son of God descended added a human nature to his divine nature left all the glories and the blessings of heaven behind to come be one of us who lives sinlessly and who almost everywhere he went was rejected by those whom he came to save they called him names they lied about him he endured it he took the beatings he endured the shame he went to the cross willingly knowing what would happen to him there that he would be forsaken by his father as he bore!

the penalty for our sins and that he would die that by faith in him we would have eternal life and on the third day he rose again as proof that he is who he is he is who he said that he was he was the Christ!

[44 : 21] Messiah Savior Lord Son of God you don't try Jesus you worship Jesus because you understand what he's done to save a sinner like you so now how do we adjust to what we've heard I think as a believer it's this you testify to the truth you've received don't let anybody shut your mouth don't let anybody make you feel silly or foolish you don't be afraid you testify and you do so boldly and joyfully because you know Jesus Christ doesn't matter what people think or say you know Jesus and you testify to that truth in the hopes that they will believe it too and again for you an unbeliever you've heard the testimony and

I hope you've heard it clearly you don't try Jesus you either know him as your Lord and Savior or you don't you either understand why he is the only way the only truth in the life or you don't and you've heard this testimony and it is his desire that you receive it that you believe it that you be changed and transformed by it and that you give testimony to that wonderful reality of what happens to a person when they go from death to life and if that's you today I hope that you'll find me I want to talk to you I want to pray with you right now let's pray together Lord God the testimony that

you have provided concerning your son is clear the evidence is irrefutable Lord there is no one who has had a greater impact in the history of this earth that you have created than your son Jesus Christ God thank you for that testimony that we have received thank you for the salvation that we have received by faith in your son Jesus Christ God I pray that everybody in this room today would know Jesus for who he truly is Savior Lord of Lords King of Kings Son of God who reigns who is risen and who is coming again and God I pray that for all of us who have received that testimony by your grace that we would boldly testify to it that those who are in darkness would come to the light that you would be pleased that you would be glorified with what results from that Lord I pray!

we as your people would give bold testimony I'm I'm I'm I'm I'm