

We Have the Son 1 John 5:9-13

As some of you know March, April and May were jury duty months for me. The summons for Federal court was for 30 days and the County court summons was one day or one trial. Fortunately for me I only had to call in and report, but never was called to sit on a jury...not that I didn't want to do my civic duty, but you know how busy I am with bi-vocational responsibilities, family and grand-mothering! However on one occasion I did serve on a jury and what I remember was the witnesses had to establish credibility by being believable. In our scripture today the writer of 1 John is reminding us of the witnesses that assure us that we have the Son. From last week we remember that John tells us to place our trust Jesus Christ. A person who trusts Christ is born of God and is able to overcome the world. To believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is basic to our Christian experience.

Why would John find it necessary to have such a conversation with first century Christians? You may remember from the Gospels that some of Jesus' contemporaries called Him a liar and a deceiver (Matt. 27:63). Through the ages others have suggested He was a religious fanatic, a madman, or perhaps a Jewish patriot who was sincere but sadly mistaken. The people to whom John was writing were even exposed to a popular false teaching that Jesus was merely a man on whom "the Christ" had come when Jesus was baptized. But on the cross, "the Christ" left Jesus and so He died like any other human being. Otherwise why would he have said "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

John's epistle refutes this false teaching. He presents three infallible witnesses to prove that Jesus is God. The first witness is the water. The water refers to Jesus' baptism in Jordan, when the Father spoke from heaven and said, "This is My

beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:13–17). This was the Father’s testimony of His Son at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. The second witness is the blood. The Father gave witness as the time drew near for Jesus to die. God said from heaven, “I have both glorified [My name], and will glorify it again” (John 12:28). Also the Father witnessed in miracle power when Jesus was on the cross: the supernatural darkness, the earthquake, and the tearing of the temple veil (Matt. 27:45, 50–53). No wonder the centurion cried out, “Truly this was the Son of God!” (Matt. 27:54) The third witness is the Spirit. The Spirit was given to bear witness to Christ (John 15:26; 16:14). We can trust the Spirit’s witness because “the Spirit is truth.” We were not present at the baptism of Christ or at His death, but the Holy Spirit was present. The Holy Spirit is the only Person of the Trinity active on earth today who was present when Christ was ministering here. The Spirit also witnesses to us through the Word. As we read God’s Word, the Holy Spirit speaks to us and teaches us because we believe in Christ.

The Old Testament Law had requirements of what was an adequate witness: “A single witness shall not prevail against a man for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offence that he has committed; only on the evidence of two witnesses, or of three witnesses, shall a charge be sustained” (Deuteronomy 19:15; 17:6). A triple human witness is enough to establish any fact. The Father witnessed at the baptism and at the cross, and the Spirit witnesses today within the believer. The Spirit, the water, and the blood settle the matter: Jesus is God.

Back to my jury duty where we receive the witness of men and women, so why should we reject the witness of God? People often say, “I wish I could have faith!” But everybody lives by faith! All day long, we trust one another. We trust the doctor and the pharmacist; we trust the cook in the restaurant; we even trust the fellow driving in the other lane on the highway. If we can trust men and women,

why can we not trust God? Jesus is God: this is the first Christian certainty, and it is foundational to everything else.

The key to our passage is whether we will accept the witness that God gave to His Son. But God has also given witness to His sons and daughters, you and me. We know that we have eternal life! Not only is there the witness of the Spirit within us; but there is the witness of the Word of God. “These things have I written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life” (1 John 5:13, NASB).

Eternal life is a gift; it is not something that we earn (John 10:27–29; Eph. 2:8–9). But this gift is a Person—Jesus Christ. We receive eternal life not only from Christ, but in Christ. “He who has the Son has the life” (1 John 5:12, NASB).

This gift of Jesus Christ is received by faith. God has gone on record in God’s Word as offering eternal life to those who will believe on Jesus Christ; and God wants His children to know that we belong to Him. John was inspired by the Spirit to write his Gospel to assure us that “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” (John 20:31). He wrote this epistle so that we might be sure and confident that we are the children of God (1 John 5:13). But, Brenda, you ask: how do we know? We know when we have the characteristics of God’s children:

- “Everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him” (1 John 2:29, NASB).

- “No one who is born of God practices sin” (1 John 3:9, NASB).

- “We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren” (1 John 3:14, NASB).

- “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God” (1 John 4:7, NASB).

- “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world” (1 John 5:4).

If we bear these “birthmarks,” we can say with confidence that we are children of God and we have the Son.^{1 2}

When John assures us of eternal life because we have the Son he is saying in God and in Christ there is peace and, therefore, eternal life means serenity. It means to have the Son gives us life liberated from the fears which haunt the human situation. In God and in Christ there is power and, therefore, eternal life means the defeat of frustration. To have the Son means a life filled with the power of God and, therefore, victorious over circumstance. In God and in Christ there is holiness and, therefore, eternal life in the Son means the defeat of sin. To have the Son means a life clothed with the purity of God and armed against the soiling infections of the world. In God and in Christ there is love and, therefore, eternal life and having the Son means the end of bitterness and hatred. To have the Son means a life which has the love of God in its heart and the undefeatable love of humans in all its feelings and in all its action. The song says: “They will know we are Christians by our love.” In God and in Christ there is life and, therefore, to have the Son and eternal life means the defeat of death. It means a life which is indestructible because it has in it the indestructibility of God himself.³

There was an NPR article about a Florida minister who has declared herself an atheist. It appears that she cannot and does not accept the witness of God about Jesus. John teaches us that we only have to accept the testimony of God to have the Son and eternal life. Won't you accept God testimony and receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior today?

¹Wiersbe, Warren W.: *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S. 1 Jn 5:6

²Walvoord, John F. ; Zuck, Roy B. ; Dallas Theological Seminary: *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL : Victor Books, 1983-c1985, S. 2:901

³ Barclay, William, lecturer in the University of Glasgow (Hrsg.): *The Letters of John and Jude*. Philadelphia : The Westminster Press, 2000, c1976, S. 111