

I John 5:6-13 ▪ That You May Know

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Holy Spirit; Eternal Life; Assurance

Intro: There is something about the courtroom that seems to captivate and draw us in.

Some of us can remember the Trial of the Century-- OJ Simpson.

There are other famous trials in our nation that have fascinated many: Scopes Monkey Trial, Salem Witch Trials

Best-selling American fiction has courtroom drama: To Kill a Mockingbird. Josh Grisham sells titles by the millions.

It's not just fiction or history, it's in our own lives.

The small town we came from in Iowa there was a young woman who ran an in-home daycare; a child tragically died in her care one day and it turned into a homicide trial—pretty much the entire town was unsettled till we found out what the verdict was.

--*We are captivated by courts, trials, and verdicts.*

- As Christians, trials and courts are important to our faith as well.
- Our Lord and Savior spent his last earthly hours on trial before going to the cross.
- At the close of this age is a courtroom setting. All humanity gathered before the Lord, the Judge.

This text has aroma of a courtroom—due to a key word that occurs over and over: testimony.

We will look at:

- 1) Testimony from Three Witnesses
- 2) Testimony that assures us of eternal life

Testimony from Three Witnesses (6-9)

Testimony exists for one purpose: to determine Truth.

Determine truth in order to reach a verdict.

- But, it goes without saying that the witnesses need to be good witnesses.

A few years back, Pastor Rob Andrews—the former Senior Pastor, in the middle of the sermon asked one of our elders what type of attorney he was: He was quick on his feet and replied “a good one”.

You want a good attorney, but you also need good witnesses.

- The threat of bad witnesses has always been around; in fact, God imbedded a specific command in his Law (9th Commandment).

Exodus 20:16 ESV

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

- So we want good witnesses—3 are “brought in”.

(7-8): Spirit, water, and blood

1)Water and Blood witness

- This is tricky and seems to be somewhat obscure symbolism

Different interpretations have been suggested.

1. Water and blood refer to Jesus’s baptism and crucifixion
2. Water and blood are Jewish symbols of a complete person
3. Water and blood symbols of baptism and communion (Reformers)
4. Water and blood are a reference to Jn 19:34-36—when Jesus’s side was pierced, and blood and water came out (Augustine)

I think the first option makes more sense and is more convincing.

- It may help to know that there was a heretic floating around at the time of this writing named Cerinthus. He advocated that there was a human Jesus, then the Divine Christ came on him at baptism, but then left at his crucifixion. Weird and strange. But it may help shed some light on why this language was used.

Water (baptism)—beginning of his earthly ministry

Blood—his atoning death

*It was a blood drenched body that Jesus cried out:

John 19:30 ESV

When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

**This was Jesus; the Divine Christ, the Son of God who died on the cross.

**Water and blood—what happened at Jordan River and Calvary—historical truth about Jesus.

We also have a reminder: the cross is at the heart of our faith.

What Jesus did on the cross is what’s most important.

No Cross...No Savior, no hope!

› *For the believer...the cross is everything!*

1 Corinthians 1:18 ESV

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

- Note, an important factor: all three agree (8b); they all bear witness to the truth of Jesus
- In scripture—both OT & NT, two or more witness are required (Dt 17:6; Mt 18:16)

This is not just appropriate for legal matters; it’s also wisdom for ordinary living.

How often are you put in a situation—even in the church, where someone comes with juicy “news”.

“Did you hear...?” What do you do with that since it can *quickly* turn into full blown gossip?

Andrew told the youth last week: what would it look like if we crushed gossip in 2021?

Making sure we are always check info with multiple witnesses is one step.

2) God, the Holy Spirit’s Witness

- John’s Gospel has a thick emphasis on the role of the Spirit as a witness to the truth.

John 15:26 ESV

“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.

*We could spend a whole message—multiple messages on the Holy Spirit (time very well spent).

1. The Spirit is truth (6b) —the Spirit of Truth
2. The Spirit is God
3. The Spirit puts the spotlight on Jesus (Jn 16:14)

John 16:14 ESV

He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

I came to Christ in a church that was mildly charismatic. That was the environment of my early days of discipleship.

What it meant was that when I heard statements like: the Spirit is moving, the Spirit is powerfully at work...it often meant that something esoteric happened; the more esoteric, the more it was attributed to the Spirit.

It also made me think that unless something very extraordinary or esoteric was happening, the Spirit was not working.

- › This single verse (Jn 16:14) really helped me out!

—The way to know if the Spirit is at work—is not to look for the unusual, mystical, esoteric experience....

The Spirit is at work when the Spotlight is put on Jesus—and we understand, embrace, delight in more truth about him.

That’s the way to know if the preaching and teaching is “Spirit-directed”.

Do you *understand* truth about Jesus?

Do you *delight* in truth about Jesus?

Does truth about Jesus *drive you into joyful obedience*?

If yes, the Spirit is working!!

KJV/NKJV addition

- If you own, use a KJV, or even NKJV vs 7 reads differently—really differently

1 John 5:7 NKJV

For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.

That’s such a great, strong statement of the Trinity!

Why would most modern translations read differently?

—First, it's only in a handful of Greek manuscripts, *none that date before 1400AD*.

—The words first appeared in a 5th century Latin Translation.

—None of the early church Fathers used it. If it was in the original text that John wrote, then this text would have been dropped in the early church councils that were hashing out Trinitarian doctrine.

*So it's very unlikely.

If anything, this strengthens my confidence in our modern translations. So much work goes into them to get a very accurate —modern Bible translations are not keeping things in the text for tradition but want people to have an accurate copy of God's Word.

Takeaway: You can trust your Bible.

Why? Because it's God's testimony (v9)—testimony from God the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1:20–21 ESV

knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Christians—if someone asks you the “why” question, what is your answer? Why do you believe?

I was taught as an early Christian to share my testimony. I still do that, especially when talking to someone of the RC faith. But, that can be the more subjective approach—that lacks the power.

We can trust the testimony of the Spirit-inspired Bible. It is powerful and enough.

Testimony that assures us of eternal life (10-13)

- In a court setting, there are only two ways to receive a witness: you believe them or not (v1)

Both responses—belief and unbelief-- carry real and radically different consequences!

They are both concerned with the eternal verdict that hangs over our life.

Every single person faced the reality of an eternal verdict.

- › The verdict boils down to this: what have you done with Jesus Christ?

I ask that this morning. Some have had many years in the church—great exposure.

Yet what have you done with Jesus? What have you to do with Jesus?

Do you believe?

—That’s what it all hinges on (v10).

Many know John 3:16 well—but I wish that just as many knew Jn 3:36 just as well.

John 3:36 ESV

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

We also see the results of the two diametrically opposed verdicts, similarly in 2 Thess.

2 Thessalonians 1:9–10 ESV

They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

Notice the two radically different responses: eternal destruction and marveling.

The Lord uses different means—even very different scriptures to draw people to faith.

Eternal destruction—those words come with a serious weight.

It’s one thing to be in distress, agony for a day, or a season. But eternally!? It’s one thing to fall under the discipline of God for a season, but forever!?

Consider that if you are taking the Lord Jesus casually.

--Consider finally, that eternal life comes as a gift (v11).

We all deserve eternal damnation.

Yet the merciful God gives eternal life to all who believe and receive Christ Jesus as Lord.

A gift is not something we pay for or earn. A gift is the fruit of someone else’s labor. It’s simply given to be received.

John 1:12 ESV

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,

Conclusion

Courtrooms are places where truth must prevail. A verdict must be reached.

We turn now to our last verse (v13)— a word about *assurance* (v13)—it's the main purpose statement for the entire letter.

John does the same thing in his gospel, but with a different focus at the end:

John 20:31 ESV

but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

—This is written so that you may know you have eternal life.

Or another way to see it:

Your Christian *faith* is on solid ground. It rests on solid ground.

--Not a shot in the dark.

--Not the shifting of sand of popular opinion.

--Or the fickleness of our emotions and feelings.

But the Solid Ground of the Historic Reality of Jesus, the testimony of the Holy Spirit.

1–3 John—Fellowship in God's Family - Closing Argument: Eternal Life in the Son Alone (vv. 11, 12)

“Many go to heaven with very little comfort on the road. I do not commend them for their want [lack] of comfort; but I do advise you, instead of looking to singular experiences as a ground of confidence, look to the bleeding Saviour, and rest alone in Him, for if you have Him you have eternal life.

(Spurgeon quoted in David Allen's commentary)

Look to the bleeding Savior, and rest alone in Him.

I recently found a phrase in reading Calvin - “faith that rests safely on Christ.”

Is your faith *resting safely* on Christ today?

The state of assurance is that our souls may rest safely on Christ.

So friends, come to Jesus and rest safely.