

All Disciples Know (Part 2)

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Preacher: Brett Sanders

[0:00] Amen, amen. Children, we are ready for Children's Church at this time. You may make your way over here to the side and follow Miss Savannah out. It is a joy to be worshiping with you all today. I'm so thankful for all that God is doing. Many things that we have going on coming up. I'm thankful for Thailand and his desire to join the church. And he's been running around already continuing to work.

And my girls will be excited to know that he's joining the church as well. In the first service, we just announced, you know, giving him this, thanking him for his time. And they said, he's not leaving, is he? And I know, no, no, he's not leaving. And so we're thankful that he is going to be with us for quite some time. But I'm so thankful to be worshiping here with each and every one of you today. And I just want to reiterate the fact that we want to see as many people come out tonight as possible.

Tonight is going to be a night where we focus on discipleship, where we focus on the importance of growing in our relationship with the Lord. And a good, dear friend of mine is going to share as we think about this.

Ken Jones, as you've already heard, was my campus minister. He was Josh's campus minister for a little while. And we just, he has a special place in our heart. Once you meet Ken, you won't forget him. He has a lot of energy.

And you, it will be, you'll be hard pressed to find someone who is as passionate about discipleship as Ken Jones is. So please come out tonight. It is a potluck.

[1:39] But if you get a busy afternoon and it's getting close to time, you're thinking, oh my goodness, well, I don't have anything to bring. I guess I can't come. No, please come. We'd rather have you than your food. And so please come and enjoy this wonderful evening of fellowship as we talk about discipleship and the importance of that.

This week, we're going to spend one more week understanding that disciples know some things. There are some things that are evident in the life of all disciples. Last week, we talked about this. We started as we talked about who God is and then who we are in light of that and then finished with understanding who Jesus is and that Jesus makes a way.

Jesus is the difference in our life. He is more important than anything else. And so we ended with Jesus last week. We're going to begin with him this week. And it's important that we know that Jesus, it's important that we know Jesus because knowing him changes everything about us. Knowing who Jesus is changes all areas of our life. If Jesus was just another good man, if he was just another good teacher that lived and died 2,000 years ago, this church wouldn't exist. The ministries of the church wouldn't exist. And if for some chance they did exist, it would all be pointless. It wouldn't be for anything. But if Jesus really is who he says he is, then that changes everything.

[3:15] It changes everything. If he really is the Son of God, the creator, the savior, sustainer, the hope of our lives, the one that we sing about, the one that we read about in Scripture, then it not only changes how we live and how we operate as a church, but it changes how we live and operate our lives, our families, our finances, our jobs, our hobbies.

It changes everything because Jesus changes everything. Charles Spurgeon once said, he says, Now, to justify such claims, such high claims, the gospel ought to produce strong evidence. Spurgeon says, and it does. It does not lack for external evidences. These are abundant. And today we're going to begin looking at some of these evidences, some of these testimonies that we see in Scripture.

And our passage today builds on our understanding of knowing Jesus. And so if you have a copy of God's Word, I want to invite you to open with me to 1 John chapter 5.

You'll note that last week we started in 1 John chapter 1, and now we're moving to the final chapter, chapter 5 here. And we're kind of looking at some bookends of this book today.

[5:17] Last week, again, we finished with understanding who Jesus is. And today is going to be all about Jesus as well. And so as we look at this passage, I want you to follow along as we read 1 John chapter 5, starting in verse 6 and working our way to verse 15.

This is what the Word of the Lord says. It says, This is He who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ. Not by the water only, but by 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 man, the testimony of God is greater. For this is the testimony of God that He has born concerning His Son.

Whoever believes in the Son 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 born concerning His Son.

[6:30] 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 of God does not have life. It says, I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know we have the request that we have asked of Him.

As we look at this today, I believe John is trying to communicate to us very clearly that the evidence that Jesus really is who He says He is.

He's showing us very clearly as we work through this passage just who Jesus Christ is. And it is my hope and prayer this morning as we look at this passage, as we dive into it a little bit deeper this morning, that we'll also begin to see Jesus clearly.

[7:41] But we will clearly see the hope that only He can provide as well. And what this means for us each and every day. Now I'm not sure if you noticed or not as we were reading through this passage, there's a word that keeps getting repeated.

There's a word that keeps coming up as we read through this passage a number of times. And the word is testify or testimony. You will see it over and over again.

And so what the author is trying to communicate for us is there's some testimonies that disciples know. There's some things, there's some evidences, there's some evidence and witnesses to who Christ is.

And these are things that all disciples who claim to be followers of Christ should know in their life.

And so to begin with, we see that disciples know the testimony of God.

Disciples know the testimony of God. It says, starting in verse 6, This is He who came by water and blood. Jesus Christ, not by the water only, but by the water and the blood.

[8:50] 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. You see, John brings our attention to three testimonies before showing us how they all fit underneath the testimony of God.

He brings forth these three testimonies. And to begin with, we see the testimony of water. The testimony of water. From these verses, we see water being referenced several times.

There have been cases made as to what this water is referencing. Some will say that it is referencing the actual physical birth of Jesus. Showing His humanity.

Understanding that. Others will talk about the water that flowed from Jesus' side when He was pierced on the cross. But I believe, from the context of this passage, that I agree with most scholars that this is actually referencing the baptism of Jesus.

[10:01] Given the context, it seems this to be the case. You see, the baptism of Jesus played such a significant role in the life of the disciples that we see the baptism being described in all the gospel accounts.

Some have noted that Jesus had no need for a baptism of repentance since He had no sin in His life. Well, that's true. That's absolutely true.

He had no more belongings at a baptism for repentance than He does on a cross for sinners. But in both events, Jesus identifies Himself with sinners He came to save.

At His baptism, we are reminded of who Jesus is. John the Baptist declares, he says, Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

And so, at the testimony of water, at His baptism, we see a picture of who Jesus is. Next, we see the testimony of blood. Now, there's many that will try to argue the difference in the water there, but very few scholars will argue the difference in the blood here.

[11:12] The blood is referencing His crucifixion. There's this testimony of the crucifixion of who Jesus is on the cross. And He says, when you look at the accounts, when you look at all of the events surrounding it, it testifies, it shows very clearly who Jesus is.

So, as we look to the cross, it declares His divinity. It declares that He is the Son of God. You look at the evidence surrounding it. At the time of the crucifixion, from noon until 3 o'clock, it says that everything went dark.

Everything went as night. I don't know if you remember, it hasn't been too, too long ago, but Tekoa was fortunate enough to be right in the path of the total eclipse.

And so, several years ago, we got to experience, in the middle of the day, everything go dark. Now, it was just for a few moments, but it was pretty neat. It was pretty neat to experience that.

But what we're talking about here is that everything went dark in the middle of the day for three hours. In addition to this, there was an earthquake that happened that shows who Jesus is.

[12:22] There's this earthquake. There was a number of Old Testament saints who were raised and appeared to many as the first fruits of the resurrection of life for all who trust in Jesus.

These events surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus led one of the Roman centurions. So, it led one of the people who was tasked to make sure that this execution took place, that Jesus went to the cross.

It led one of these Roman centurions to say, this man really is God's son. There was significant evidence the day of the crucifixion that says Jesus really was and is God's son.

When John points to the blood as proof of who Jesus is, he surely has all of this in mind, not to even mention the most convincing evidence of all, the resurrection.

And so, as we see the testimony of the water, the testimony of the blood, we also see, finally, in this lineup of three, the testimony of the Spirit. The last evidence in these first three verses is the proof that the Holy Spirit provides.

[13:32] Now, it's important to know that this is a three-fold witness that John is showing us. He's not just showing us, saying that, hey, the testimony of the water shows who Jesus is, and leaving it to that.

No, he says, it's the testimony of the water. It's the testimony of the blood. It's the testimony of the Spirit. And I believe what John has in mind here is the importance of having multiple testimonies. You see, in Deuteronomy 19, it says, You see, all three are in agreement that Jesus is the Messiah. And I really appreciate how Pastor James Merritt addresses the ministry of the Holy Spirit by saying this. He says, The witness of the Spirit is God's witness to us, in us, and through us.

Just as the arrow of a compass always points north, the Spirit of God always points to Jesus. We know this to be true. Primarily, we know this to be true because Jesus himself testifies to this and summarizes the work of the Holy Spirit by saying this in John 16.

[14:52] He says, He will glorify me. And so this testimony of the Spirit is declaring who Jesus is. So you have the testimony of the blood.

You have the testimony of the water. The testimony of the Spirit. And if this were not enough, then John removes any doubt whatsoever in our minds and says, Then you have the testimony of God the Father.

God the Father is declaring this. If the evidence is not clear enough yet, then he removes all uncertainty by declaring that God the Father himself declares this.

See, John is showing us how all of this evidence is ultimately from God himself. Who gave the proof of water? Who gave the proof of blood? Who gives the proof of the Spirit?

God the Father Spurgeon, who was as gifted as anybody to show us and to point out and to articulate the beauty of Scripture. He says this, talking about God's authority.

[15:53] He says, God is to be believed if all men contradict him. Let God be true and every man a liar. One word of God ought to sweep away 10,000 words of men.

Whether it be the philosophers of today or the sages of antiquity, God's word is against them all for he knows infallibly. Of his own Son, he knows as no one else can.

Of our condition before him, he knows. Of the way to pardon us, he knows. There is nothing in God that could lead him to err or make a mistake.

And it were blasphemy to suppose that he would mislead us. What he is saying, the greatest evidence of all, is that this is God the Father testifying to this.

God the Father has put the full weight of his authority behind the fact that Jesus is the Messiah and he is our only hope of salvation.

[16:56] So this is the testimony of God. But next, the testimony that we must be aware of is our own. And so we see that disciples know their own testimony.

It's important that we understand that disciples know the testimony of God, but it's also important that disciples know their own testimony. It says, 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. So what is your testimony?

I want you to think about that question this morning. What is your testimony? Do you have the Son? Because if you don't have the Son, you don't have a testimony.

[18:03] The internal witness of God's Spirit is in the heart. It confirms to the child of God that he or she is right to believe that Jesus is the Son of God who alone gives the gift of eternal life.

I know for me personally, when I received Christ, when I understood what it meant, there was this weight that's lifted off of this testimony that I have. Part of my testimony is that I grew up in church and came down at a very young age, seeing my friends do this, but I didn't really understand what it was that I was committing to.

But at 16, all of a sudden, I realized that I've got sin. And because I've got sin, that means I have a problem. And the problem is I can't do anything about my sin.

And so at 16, God stirred in my heart. He troubled my heart to help me see my sin as something that has separated me from him. But also at that moment, realize that he made a way.

And that I can give my life to Jesus, give my life to him and say, Lord, forgive me. I'm placing my trust in you. And in doing so, he takes that sin and shame and gives me his righteousness.

[19:19] And so there's this moment where you feel the weight of that sin, but also at the same time, feeling the release of that weight and experiencing the peace of God that goes beyond our comprehension.

And so we see that we have this testimony. I've often heard sometimes people say, well, I'm not sure I have a testimony. I'm not sure I have a testimony.

And the truth of the matter is, if you're a child of God, you have a testimony. Now, I know what people are saying when they say that. A lot of times what they mean is they're saying, well, I don't have this crazy testimony.

I don't have this time in my life where I was in prison on death row or doing any of these number of things. And then all of a sudden God saved me out of that.

I don't have this dramatic testimony that a lot of times people want to hear about. And those things are wonderful. Those things are a way of showing how God can work and move in people's lives.

[20:22] Those are wonderful and powerful testimonies. But you know what is also an incredibly powerful testimony? The young man or woman who has spent their life being raised in church and all of a sudden realizing that they have sin that needs to be dealt with.

All of a sudden realizing they have an issue that needs to be dealt with. Last week we saw the Bible makes it very clear that we all have sin. Because we all have sin, we all have a great need.

So a beautiful and powerful testimony is also one that starts with someone who has grown up in church, was there every time the doors were open.

On the outside everyone else looks like they really have their life together. Everybody else is looking at them and thinking, wow, this person just really understands it.

But yet on the inside realizes that they don't, that they have sin. So a really powerful testimony is one who has grown up in church, realizes the need they have, and gives their life to Christ.

[21 : 29] This is a beautiful and powerful testimony. Our testimony isn't what we have done or what we've been through, but it is what Jesus has done in our place.

Our testimony is Jesus. And so I want to ask you, have you given your life to him? Have you trusted in him as your Lord and Savior? Have you said, Lord, I'm not holding anything back, I'm going all in?

I want you to think about it like this with me for just a moment. About 10 years ago, the preschool was getting rid of all kinds of furniture that they had, and they were trying to get some new furniture. And one of the pieces that they were getting rid of was this little blue chair. It's about this tall, just a child's chair. And we had a small table at home, and we had a couple of chairs, but we wanted another chair to go with it.

And the reason they were giving this chair away was because it had a large crack that went down one of the legs. Now, for a 40-pound child, it's no big deal.

[22 : 31] It was still plenty strong to hold them up. They didn't want anybody to get pinched with it or anything else, and it was just time at the church for us to get rid of it. But I thought, you know what, this will be great for me to take home.

So I took it home, put it with our little table there at the house, and it worked great for our kids. They were able to sit in it, and it didn't affect them whatsoever. But there was a problem, and the problem was they wanted us to come and sit at the table with them.

They wanted me to come and pretend to have a meal with them, pretend to have tea, all of those things. And so a lot of times they would want me to sit in this chair. Now, I knew that the chair had a problem with it, but I wanted to be there for my kids.

I wanted to enjoy and play with them. And so I would go over to the chair, and I would do just like this. And I would just kind of stay there. I can't stay there long, but just imagine me doing that.

But I would go over there, and I would pretend to sit in the chair. I would just barely touch the chair, but I wasn't letting the chair support me. I was still supporting myself. Now, if anybody else came in and looked at it, all my kids thought I was sitting right there at the table with them.

[23 : 39] They thought that I was just trusting that chair and just being right there with them, but I hadn't fully transferred that weight to the chair. In reality, I was doing my very best to support myself.

You see, all of you right now sitting in these pews, you're sitting in them, and you're trusting them. You've transferred your weight to them. You're not sitting there trying to hover over. You've fully committed, and you have transferred your weight onto that pew.

Many times, and I'm not going to say Christians, but I want to say many times churchgoers say that we trust Jesus. After all, we prayed a sinner's prayer one time, and we were baptized.

But like me in that little blue chair, we have not fully transferred everything over to Jesus. You see, we like the idea of Jesus, just not the idea of giving our lives completely over to him.

We certainly don't want hell. We don't want that to be a part of the equation, and so we want to trust Jesus so that we can remove that out of the equation, but we haven't fully transferred our lives over to him.

[24 : 47] If this is you today, and I hesitate to say this, but if this is you today, then I hope and pray that this message is troublesome.

I pray that this message is unsettling. I pray that the words of John in 1 John 5, 12, where it says, whoever has the Son has life.

Whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I pray that those words are hard to hear. If you're not really believing in Jesus, then the most loving thing that God can do is to trouble your spirit.

But I've got good news for you. Even if you have come to church your entire life, even if you've been here and gone through every Sunday school class we offer, been baptized, prayed a prayer, all of those things, even if you've done all of those things, you can be saved.

You can give your life to Jesus. And just like if you've never even thought about following Jesus until this point, then you can be saved as well.

[25 : 57] This message of hope is for all of us. And this message of hope is asking us, do we have a testimony? In other words, do we have Jesus?

Finally, what is the conclusion that we can draw from these testimonies? What's the conclusion that we can draw from the testimony of God, the testimony of our own life, our own personal testimony? Then if we can understand those things, if we can wrap our mind around this, then we understand something else that disciples know. And we can clearly see that disciples know assurance.

We have assurance. Listen to what it says here in verse 13. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

Clearly, the point that John is trying to make for us as we look through the first John is that he's trying to give us this confidence, this assurance of our salvation, that if we truly believe God, that we truly see the testimony of him, that Jesus is the only way, that we all have sinned, and that Jesus is the only way to fix that problem, if we have this as our testimony, then we have this assurance of our salvation.

[27 : 20] I think this is something that many church members struggle with today, all over the world. As a pastor, sometimes I struggle preaching texts like this.

I want to be very clear that our confidence confidence is in Christ and is only found in Christ, not in church attendance, membership, or baptism, or anything like that. But at the same time, I firmly believe that the Lord wants us to have this assurance of our salvation, because it's not until we understand this assurance of our salvation that we can truly experience the joy that only Christ provides.

It's not until we have this assurance of our salvation that we can truly feel the weight of God's love for us and live lives that are obedient to him.

You see, verse 13 says, I write these things to you that you may know that you have eternal life.

Clearly, the point that John is writing is he wants us to understand that we have eternal life, that we know God, that we know this assurance of our salvation.

You know, people have made the argument before that if God gives us assurance of salvation, then we will just cause us to live our lives however we want. We'll give them over to God and say, you know what?

[28 : 41] Now that I have that box checked, I'll go and live however I want. They'll make the argument. It'll be like telling an employee he can't be fired. If he can't be fired, then what is there to motivate him to do a good job?

Well, the first problem with that argument is comparing your walk with Christ to a job. You see, in a job, you do something in order to gain something. You work hard all week in order to gain this paycheck at the end of it.

Nobody, in the history of all the employees that have ever been employed by somebody, nobody has worked hard all week, gotten their paycheck, and gone back to the boss and said, my goodness, you are so gracious to me.

I don't deserve this, but thank you for just giving this to me. No, we understand that we get that because of what we have done. In fact, if you got to the end of the week and the boss didn't have a check for you, you'd probably be like, whoa, whoa, whoa, you owe me something here.

There's something you need to give me here. You haven't given me what I deserve here. You see, the gospel is completely different. God changes us differently.

[29 : 49] He wants you to have an assurance of his love so much that he made a way for Jesus, made a way for us to have that relationship because of Jesus.

You know, it's much the same way that I want my children to have assurance in the love that I have for them. I would never want my kids to question my love for them.

Will they do things that I don't want them to do or fail to do things that I've asked them to do?

Absolutely. Daily, sometimes hourly, they do this, but I would never want them to question my love for them.

We're still at a stage where we're dropping all of our kids off at school. And so we, a lot of times as we pull up to the school, we'll have a prayer together and pray for the day.

And then I'll just encourage them and say, hey, make sure that you do what you're supposed to do today. You know, I love you. I hope you have a wonderful day. Hope you have fun today, but make sure you listen to your teachers.

[30 : 50] Make sure you do what they ask you to do. Set a good example for others. All of that's good, but imagine at that point I said, and if you do this, then I'll be here after school for you.

But if you don't do this, you'll never see me again. Can you imagine that that being the way that I send them off? All right, have a good day. Hope I'll see you this afternoon. No, they want to, we, we understand the importance of having this assurance of our salvation.

That may curve their obedience somewhat to do what I'm asking them to do. But think about the resentment it would cause in their life. If they were constantly trying to work for that approval, constantly trying to work for that love.

God absolutely wants you to have a certainty about your salvation. He changes, encourages, and motivates us not by the uncertainty of fear, but by the security of love.

This is what makes the gospel and Christianity different than any other religion. You see, every other religion says, if you do this and this, make sure you check all of these boxes, make sure you try hard enough, and do enough good to outweigh all those bad things, and then hopefully, you'll get to a point one day in your life where you've done enough good to outweigh the bad.

[32 : 11] Christianity understands you can't. It understands there's nothing you can do to save yourself. We've all sinned, and that sin separates us from God, and we can't do anything to earn that.

In fact, if there was a way that we could earn it, then there would be no need for Jesus to come. But the fact is, there's nothing we can do, only Jesus. And the beauty of this is what changes us.

See, J.D. Greer said it in one of his books this way so powerfully. He says, I'll be so bold as to say that your spiritual life will never really take off until you have the assurance of salvation.

Until you know that you are his and he is yours, your obedience will be limited. Your love will be stifled, your confidence will be shaky, and your courage will be minimal.

It is only by the confident assurance of our Heavenly Father's love for us that we can love in a way that God desires, that we can endure this life when we experience trouble and difficulties, when we have those doubts.

[33 : 19] It is assurance that gives us the boldness to go. It's the assurance that gives us the boldness and courage to go to our neighbor across the street and share the good news of the gospel with him. It is this assurance of salvation that gives us the boldness to go wherever God has called us to go, to raise our family in a way that glorifies him, to love our spouse in a way.

It is this assurance that motivates our obedience to him like nothing else can. So let us clearly see the testimony of God today.

The testimony which states that Jesus is the only way, that he truly is who he says he is, and because of that it changes everything. But then I want you to ask yourself, what is my testimony? Do you have a testimony? Do you have trouble figuring out your testimony? Are you placing your hope in Jesus or something else? But finally, I want to encourage you, if we understand the testimony of God, if we understand our testimony, I want to encourage you to live in the joy and serve out of the abundance of love we experiencing, knowing that Jesus provides assurance like nothing else can.

I encourage you to consider these things today, to look to the testimony of God, to look at your own testimony, and then finally, know the assurance that only Jesus provides.

[34 : 50] Father, we thank you so very much for everything that you give us each and every day. Lord, we thank you for the hope that we have in you, the hope that only Jesus provides.

And so, Lord, we thank you for that. And I pray that if there's someone here today that hasn't given their life to you, that can't say that they have a testimony, that can't say that they've placed their faith and their trust in you, Lord, I pray that you give them the boldness and courage to do so today, to respond to you in a way that leads to salvation.

Lord, we pray that for them. But also, Lord, I pray that you be with the rest of us who have given our life to you. Lord, that we would live lives out of the assurance we have in you, out of the assurance of knowing that there is absolutely nothing we can do to add to what you have already done for us and nothing we can do to take away from it.

And so, Lord, help us to live in that bold assurance each and every day of our lives. And we ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. I'm going to invite you to take your Baptist hymnal out and turn to hymn number 582, Thank You, Lord.

And let that be our prayer this morning as we respond to this message of thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord.