

1 John 5:6-12

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[0 : 00] Have you ever heard someone say, don't give me doctrine, just give me Jesus. Thank you very much. Have you ever heard that, or have you maybe said it yourself?

Or maybe it's, you know, I don't need theology, just give me some encouragements from the Bible, some comfort. And maybe someone you've heard said, you know, maybe you've felt in your own heart, figuring out hard passages, hard verses. That's for the scholars. Just bring me some comforting thoughts, a little bit of a devotional thought, and I'll be on my way. When we come to passages like today's passage, especially verses 6 through 8, which are probably the most challenging verses to understand in the letter of 1 John, it might be tempting to think thoughts like that.

Just kind of glaze over them, keep on going, get to the end of the letter, and pick something else to study, right? But we would be forgoing exactly the comfort and exactly the encouragement and exactly the Jesus that people are looking for if we did that.

This passage looks squarely into the heart of God's redemptive work in the world, the gospel. How he did it, the kind of a victory that he won for his people, and what that means for us.

And so I can't give you Jesus unless I show you him, and unless we meet him as he reveals himself in his word.

[1 : 43] And so I can't give you any encouragement except that which he gives by the truths that he has spoken to us. And I can't comfort you aside from the comforts that he has given to us in his ministry.

Those that he gives today, those that he promises to bless us with, and those that he will give us when he fulfills his plan on the last day. So let's look to God's word, to see Jesus Christ revealed for all to see.

To see the majesty of his love, the height of his sacrifice. And to see the deep, unending encouragement and comfort that we find in Jesus Christ himself.

So John says, in 1 John chapter 5, 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.

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.

[2 : 59] 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 of God does not have life. That is God's holy, inerrant, and inspired word. Let's pray. Father, as we come to these difficult words, would you help me to make them clear?

And may we see you, as you have revealed your Son to us. Lord, may we be comforted.

May we be encouraged. But most of all, Father, may we see Jesus. We pray these things in his name. Amen. This passage breaks down roughly into three sections, and we'll treat them each in turn.

[4 : 18] In verses 6 through 8, John makes sure we understand Jesus. That is where we will spend most of our time. We will see Jesus, his person, especially as he showed himself to us in his ministry.

In verses 11 and 12, John gives us comfort and joy in the results of God's ministry. And in between there, in verses 9 and 10, he reminds us to be careful who we listen to.

So we begin in verse 6. Verses 6 through 8, he says, This is he who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is truth, for there are three that testify, the Spirit and the water and the blood.

And these three agree. What's your reaction to those verses? My reaction was confusion.

What on earth is John talking about? What does it mean that Jesus came by water and blood? And why does he care so much that we know that?

[5 : 32] The first thing that we might notice is that John says that Jesus came not by water only, but by the water and the blood.

So there's a temptation here for John's hearers to think of Jesus only coming by water, not by blood, to ignore the blood of Jesus.

And that actually, I think, helps us understand what he's talking about. Because he's already been talking about this theme from the very beginning of the book. Remember that John wrote this to a church that was under siege.

False teachers were trying to draw them away. All the way back in chapter 1, when we met the false teachers, they were giving a false gospel, a false message.

And he wrote the whole letter to remind the congregation that they fixed on Christ and the cross and the message of the apostles, that they were indeed the true Christians, and that these false teachers, they were the ones who had left.

[6 : 38] He reminded them to stand on the pure, simple gospel. Jesus Christ, God the Son, who took on a human nature to bear our sin at Calvary's cross so that we might be reconciled to God.

Now, how are the false teachers twisting that? Well, let's look back to chapter 1. Chapter 1, verse 5 through 10, John says, this is the message that we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. What can we tell there about the error that John is confronting, and how is it related to Jesus coming by the blood?

[7 : 56] Well, if we look, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, he says, and the truth is not in us. If we say we have not sinned, we make him, that is God, a liar, and his word is not in us.

The error is a denial of sin. Either the teachers thought they were special and had somehow achieved moral perfection and could not sin anymore, or, more likely, they thought something a lot like what many people think today.

Maybe they're saying, we're basically good. The good outweighs the bad. God's going to accept us. Doesn't matter how you live. We're basically good. Either way, they deny that they were sinners, and if you're not a sinner, what don't you need?

You don't need a savior. Sure, you might need somebody to help you through some tough times, but you don't need to deal with justice and condemnation and wrath at sin.

And that's why it's important that Jesus came, as John says, not by water only, but by blood. Jesus saves how? By the power of his blood shed for us.

[9 : 07] Chapter 1, verse 7 says, if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and listen to this, and the blood of Jesus, his son, cleanses us from all sin.

As a note, that also helps us understand the beginning of chapter 4. It was critical that Jesus came in the flesh. Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God.

For many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you will know the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God.

Let's see, if Jesus were a spirit and not truly a man, he could never have shed blood for his fellow men. And so, here we see, in John's concern that we recognize that Jesus came by the water and

the blood, and his emphasis here on the blood, the core of the gospel, that Jesus took on flesh and bore our sins on the cross.

And so, all who are found in him by faith, he saves in his grace. That's why in Shoreline's doctrinal statement proposal, which, another reminder, see, I'm slipping these in every week, I don't know if you noticed, another reminder for you to give us feedback on the proposed statement of faith, says this, God is loving.

[10:42] God is loving. Therefore, he is gracious, merciful, and patient. God is also holy. Therefore, he is absolutely righteous, judging all sin.

that seems like a contradiction, doesn't it? How can you be merciful and judging all sin? In his wisdom and power, he fully expresses both his love and justice at the cross, punishing sin in Jesus Christ to show mercy to all who call on the name of the Lord.

And so, we believe that this is what John is talking about when he says that, and he's emphasizing so much that Jesus came by blood. blood. And so, here, in John chapter 5, when he says blood, he's referring to Jesus' ministry on the cross.

What, then, does he mean by water? And here, well-meaning Christians have differed over the years, and so I don't want to, if you have heard other teachers or if you yourself come to a slightly different conclusion on this, I don't want to cast dispersions on you or something like that.

This is a difficult passage. I found no fewer than seven ideas on what this could rightfully mean, but I am convinced and persuaded that if John is using blood to refer to Christ's cross, he's probably talking about another milestone in Christ's ministry when he says water.

[12:23] And since water actually comes first in the sentence, it precedes his, it precedes the blood, it probably refers to something earlier in Christ's ministry.

And, since the blood, the cross, signaled really the end of his earthly ministry, very likely the water signifies the beginning of his earthly ministry.

And so, I believe that when John says water, what he wants us to think about is Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. Now, that doesn't sound very exciting, does it?

We don't think about Jesus' baptism all that much. It's probably not the focus of many gospel, evangelism, sermons, and talks, but Jesus being baptized as a human man opens up a world of encouragement and comfort and joy for us.

And so, let's look at what scripture tells us briefly about Jesus' baptism. You don't have to turn there with me. In Luke chapter 3, we see that baptism, John's baptism, was for a particular purpose.

[13:37] John the Baptist went into all the region around the Jordan proclaiming a baptism of repentance and forgiveness of sins. Remember that as we think about Jesus who had no sins to forgive, no need of repentance.

Why would he need a baptism at all? That's what shocked John the Baptist. In fact, in Matthew chapter 3, he said this, then Jesus came from Galilee into the Jordan to John to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him saying, I need to be baptized by you. And do you come to me? Jesus answered him, let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. Jesus had no sin. He had no need of repentance.

He had no need of a baptism of repentance. John told him he was getting the whole thing backwards, that he needed to be baptized by Jesus.

[14:38] So why did Jesus take a baptism he didn't need? He said, let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.

There's a lot in that little statement. But here's the big takeaway. Jesus was baptized baptized. He was baptized in what the Bible explicitly calls a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And he did so in order to draw alongside people, to associate himself, to bind himself to sinful people like you and me who did need repentance and forgiveness of sins.

And in associating himself with us, coming through water, as John would say, by doing that he took our sin to the cross where he could make an end of it, which John calls coming through blood.

Now, why did we just invest such a huge amount of time in two words in this passage? Well, first, the foundation of the whole passage.

[15:53] They're what he's talking about the whole way through. This idea that Jesus came through water and blood, it's why we can have eternal life in him later in the passage. And second, it might actually be the most encouraging part of the passage, more encouraging, more comforting than the eternal life that he talks about at the end.

See, if Jesus has really drawn near in our humanity and baptized into fellowship with people who need him, he has taken on more than our sins alone.

He's also drawn near and taken on our troubles. Do you know the shame that comes from being mocked or being subjected to cruelty?

Well, Jesus came in the flesh, subjected to the same limitations and troubles as you. So you have a savior who was mocked as well.

He was labeled a bastard. He was from a backwater town. He was not impressive. He was put on public display, jeered by crowds stripped naked, beaten, and he was raised above eye level on the cross where everyone could see his humiliation.

[17 : 27] And that humiliation was for you and for me. but with that humiliation comes an unending exaltation as well.

Philippians 2 says the father has highly exalted Jesus and bestowed on him the name that is above every name so that the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the father.

His shame ended in glory and he draws you to himself. Do you know shame? Do you know loss?

Have you seen life cut short on someone? Have you lost something precious to you? Maybe a thing? Maybe a relationship? Maybe a position?

Have you seen things left undone? Are you worried about the same for yourself? Well, Jesus came through water and that is good because he was baptized in the same water as you in a way and he took on your sins and troubles and hundreds of years before Jesus even came.

[18 : 48] The prophet Isaiah said this about Jesus. Not only did he bear our sins but no one cared that he died without descendants that his life was cut short in midstream and his life was cut short for you.

That loss was for you and for me but death was not the end for our Jesus. He told us I am the resurrection and the life.

He had the authority to lay down his life and to take it back and so he did. Rising to life conquering death and securing everlasting life for you in his kingdom and his family.

We can experience no true loss in Christ. Do you know shame? Do you know loss? Do you know fear? Are you anxious because you do not know the future?

Jesus did know the future. Though it was glorious it was also very hard. So hard that he sweat drops of blood.

[20 : 06] His sorrow over the future was for you and for me but his sorrow did not last. Hebrews chapter 12 tells us to look to Jesus the founder and perfecter of our faith who words I think we often ignore in that passage who for the joy set before him endured the cross despising the shame in is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

his eternal joy he shares with you. He has bought your future. And so when we sing the hymn It Is Well With My Soul there's a verse that says my sin oh the bliss of this glorious thought my sin not in part but the whole is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more praise the Lord praise the Lord oh my soul that's an amazing truth and it's built on the truth of the cross what John would call the blood here the apostle Paul put it this way in Colossians 2 and I think It Is Well With My Soul is drawing directly from this language in Colossians 2 and you who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh God made alive together with him having forgiven us all our trespasses by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands this he set aside nailing it to the cross so our sin is nailed to the cross but that is not all that is left there in Isaiah 53 we read surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows that is not that

Jesus came and was a man and now he's empathetic that he can sympathize with us but he took our griefs he has carried our sorrows to his cross where he has made an end of them and so we can also say my shame oh the bliss of this glorious thought my shame not in part but in whole is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more praise the lord praise the lord oh my soul my fear oh the bliss of this glorious thought my fear not in part but the whole is nailed to his cross and I bear it no more my fear my loss oh the bliss of this glorious thought is my loss not in part but the whole is nailed to the cross I bear it no more praise the lord praise the lord oh my soul friends do your shoulders feel lighter is your heart a little less heavy are your eyes a bit brighter

I hope they are the psalmist said even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil why for you are with me and we see that most fully in Jesus called Emmanuel God with us he was with us to such a degree that he came through water and blood to take our troubles and

our sins to the cross so you too when you walk through the valley of the shadow of death know that your savior is there with you he walked the valley ahead of you and at the end lies victory the victory he won for his people you cry out to God because you're alone because you're suffering because you're afraid because you're wounded the same savior who bore the crushing weight of the righteous wrath of God for your sin for my sin he also took to his cross your current sorrow surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows

Isaiah said that 700 years before Jesus came to do just that that's why scriptures say we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness that's why when the church is persecuted Jesus asks the persecutor why are you persecuting me so John cares that we affirm both the water and the blood why because God cares about our sin the blood and our sorrows our sufferings we see in the water that is why in the last day when the Lord will make all things new we read in Revelation 21 I heard a loud voice from the throne saying behold the dwelling place of God is with man he will dwell with them and they will be his people every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore for the former things have passed away our

[25 : 30] Lord will wipe every tear from our eyes Jesus made an end of our sin on the cross so he will wipe away the tears of guilt and punishment and he also made an end of our sufferings and sorrows on the cross so he will also wipe away the tears of our limitations our anxieties our pain and our suffering back to our passage in 1st John chapter 5 verses 7 and 8 go on to say that there are three that testify the spirit and the water the blood and these three agree Jesus baptism Jesus cross and the holy spirit who indwells every christian testify to this one truth that John is about to unpack verses 11 and 12 that Jesus came by water and blood whoever believes in the son of

God whoever has the son of God God gives eternal life and as he moves to say that he pauses to give us a warning of verses 9 and 10 to remember to pay close attention to the messengers we listen to if we receive the testimony of men he says in verse 9 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 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 born concerning his son well we're on our way from the water and the blood in verses 6-8 to eternal life in verses 11-12 John interjects this reminder it matters who you listen to if you wanted to know the president of the

United States don't go looking to figure out who he is based on what people are posting on Facebook it's a little bit better to read the news maybe or even better to read a biography or maybe even talk to a family member of the president but best of all talk to the president himself and that's what John says if you want to know God who he is what he's done what he plans to do for those who love him seek God and the Lord has spoken he has spoken in his son and he speaks through his word and so we attend to his word where he reveals himself where he confronts us where he comforts us where he directs us and that's where we find him so that's why we are endeavoring to seek him out here in his word so that means being careful about what messages we trust John gave us instructions about that at the beginning of chapter four verses one through six testing the guides that we listen to and if you need a refresher on that I would direct you back to that passage and maybe even to the sermon that we preached on it you can visit Shoreline's website and find that there and so after giving us this reminder about those whose testimony we are to trust John concludes now in verses 11 and 12 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 friends that is such good news I want to point out two things in these verses first I love how he talks about a relationship with Jesus he doesn't say whoever agrees with the son has life he doesn't say whoever has prayed a prayer to the son has life he doesn't say whoever has given a lot to the son has life he says whoever has the son has life when we come to faith in Christ we lay hold of him because he has taken hold of us he's captured our thoughts our hearts we take hold of God and it is not a distant relationship but it is one where he walks with us through the valley of the shadow of death whoever has the son has life and that actually points us to the other thing I would like to point out that's in the present tense look at verse 11 really closely when you hear the words eternal life what do you think about probably think about living forever in heaven after you die and that's not wrong eternal life does entail that but that's not all John is talking about what does verse 11 say it says this is the testimony that God gave us eternal life past tense already complete and this life is in his son eternal life doesn't begin when you die but when you realize that as

[31 : 18] Ephesians chapter 2 says you were already dead in your trespasses and sins and God made you alive by his grace Jesus said I am the way the truth and the life and he also said I've come that they may have life and have it abundantly you see eternal life begins the moment you begin walking with the good shepherd through life even when that takes you through the valley of the shadow of death and that's where all of the blessings that we just talked about that he bore our griefs and our sorrows on his cross that's how all of that fits in you see eternal life means more than living forever it means living with God and that is a true for every Christian today walking step by step with Jesus that transforms your life in ways we've already talked about today and many more and it also points to life after death all those things we saw

Jesus take on himself at his baptism coming by water our sin our guilt our fear our loss our troubles he took them to his cross coming by blood so that we might have eternal life and so on that last day he won't have to walk through the valley with us anymore there will be no valley so if you don't have the son today have the son today today is the day to cry out to him if anyone would come to me Jesus said let him deny himself take up his cross and follow me for whoever would save his life will lose it but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it if you do not have Jesus abandon your sin and follow him cry out to him save me

Lord you will not only have life but you will have Jesus himself if you do have the son every day is the day to walk in the knowledge that he has come by water and by blood he took your sins and your troubles to his cross and walks with you through them because he made an end of them on his cross wake up each morning knowing in your heart that God is for you that he is with you and that you are his whoever has the son has life let's pray father in heaven it is so good to have a savior like

Jesus who was baptized in a baptism like ours even though he didn't need it because he loved us so much that he wanted to take our griefs our sorrows our fears our loss and our troubles to his cross along with our sin father there is so much comfort there is so much encouragement there is so much glory in this passage I don't even know where to begin Lord we trust that through your word and the power of your spirit that you will renew us day by day with these unbelievable truths thank you Lord that we can have Jesus thanks because he's laid hold of us father for anyone who does not have

Jesus pray that you would draw them with the water and the blood to Calvary's hill where they will meet you at his cross so that they might see the joy of the empty tomb and their eyes might behold your glory look forward to the last day when we will see you face to face we pray these things in Christ's matchless name amen