

Pastor Ben Libby  
 Sermon  
 5/22/2019

To Jesus Christ, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification, be glory forever Amen.

The Word of the Lord which forms a portion for our sermon text this morning comes to us from John's first letter, chapter 5, starting at verse 5:

**1 John 5:4-12** <sup>4</sup> For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world- our faith. <sup>5</sup> Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> For there are three that testify: <sup>8</sup> the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup> Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

This is the Word of God. Congregation may be seated.

Grace and peace be to you from God our Father and from your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear fellow Redeemed...

A very blessed post-Easter season to each and every one of you! Since we have now moved into the Church year that is the season of Easter, where do we go from here? This season is typically marked by the following appearances of Jesus after His successful Resurrection. While there is much written in the Bible about Holy Week and the Crucifixion and His resurrection, there isn't much written in comparison about the 40 days from the resurrection to the ascension.

But, 40 days is a long time! We saw this to be true during the season of Lent. 40 days on paper doesn't seem like that long period of time, after all, it is only 10 days longer than a typical month. But when you actually go through the season of Lent, you really experience just how long 40 days can be. It is

roughly a ninth of the calendar year. It really makes you appreciate the 40 days and nights of fasting that Jesus undertook in the wilderness to start out His ministry.

What were those 40 days of the life Jesus like after He rose from the dead? Well, as I said, not a lot is written about them in the Bible. Most of what we do get is in these 40 days is appearances to His disciples, showing them that He was indeed risen. It was very important that His disciples understand He rose from the dead. This was so important to know because really everything depends on it. These men were going to soon be on the front lines, preaching Christ Crucified throughout the known world. The Resurrection is the lynch-pin of all of Christianity. It

fully needed to be understood, Jesus Christ rose from the dead!

This is something that is also very important for us to understand. Maybe we were not around to witness these post-Easter events, but our witness about it is also important. What can we point to for testimony about Jesus? Well, John paints out 3 specific things from this text. Not only do we know that the Resurrection happened and that Jesus is the Son of God, we also are called to witness to these facts! And so, we pray **MAY THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH AND THE MEDIATIONS OF OUR HEARTS BE ACCEPTABLE IN YOUR SIGHT O LORD, OUR MAKER AND REDEEMER, AMEN.**

**<sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> For there are three that testify: <sup>8</sup> the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.**

In a courtroom, the case often relies on testimony. But, typically the more testimony you have, the more strong the case will be. If there is only one person who saw what happened, that testimony is simply not as strong. Certainly, a lone witness is important, but the more collaborating witnesses you can get the better.

This is an idea that is even found in the Bible. **Deuteronomy 19:15 <sup>15</sup> " One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.** This was such an iron-clad idea in the Jewish culture, that we even saw this principal come into play in the farce that was Jesus' trial. The people who wanted Jesus convicted had paid people to come forward with false testimony. But no one's story matched up with another's. They finally got 2 witnesses to say that He would destroy the temple in 3 days. Even this story

didn't align, but they finally got 2 false witnesses to say the same thing.

This principle of having a matter be agreed upon by multiple sources makes sense. After all, if you go on the word of just one person, that one person could be motivated to telling a lie to condemn the accused. But, if you can get more than one person to agree that they saw or heard the same thing, that makes a much stronger case.

When it comes to the matter of Jesus Christ being Resurrected from the dead, witnesses are also needed. We have these in the Gospel accounts. Jesus was seen on Easter by multiple people. That is what this post-Easter season is all about. The many different times He showed Himself to His disciples.

Really, the resurrection shows the true power of Jesus. If there was any doubt that this person was the Son of God, it was definitely answered Easter morning. Just like everything in Christianity rests upon Easter Morning, likewise, so does everything on Jesus Himself. If He was not the Son of God, then He was just some guy who got crucified. But, He was more than just an unfortunate soul who was crucified, surely this was the Son of God!

John here in our text says that there are 3 things that testify that Jesus is the Son of God: **the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.**

Let's start with the water. We talked about how 40 days is a long period of time, and how that can make us appreciate the 40 days Jesus went in the wilderness without food. But do you remember what happened right before that event? It was the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan river! **Matthew 3:16 -17 <sup>16</sup> When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. <sup>17</sup> And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."**

Have you ever watched a real-life murder mystery? It is a very popular genre. Personally, my wife and I watch a lot of these programs. We often watch the program *Dateline*. It is a show that sets up a real-life situation where usually someone has been killed. It usually also goes into the trial that gets made to convict the case. But have you ever watched one of these shows and could not come to a conclusion as to who the murder was? Obviously, most murders do not confess to their crimes. Some do, but most killers want to get away with murder. When a show presents a case that is particularly hard to see clearly who did it, it can be quite vexing.

Sometimes, I wish I could just ask God about some of these cases. After all, He is omnipresent and omniscient. There are no murder mysteries to Him, just murders. He knows all!

If we could call God to the witness stand, there would be absolutely no need for criminal detectives. God could just tell us what happened. There would be no need for a criminal justice system in general if this was the case. What God says is real, what God says is the truth. There is no disputing it, His Word is truth! As John says correctly here, God's testimony trumps that of man. Man may give false or wrong testimony. That is never the case with God! **1 John 5:9 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.**

God Himself said that Jesus was THE Son of God. He stated it at the beginning of His ministry when He was baptized in the Jordan by John the Baptist. He also stated it at the end of His ministry on the Mount of Transfiguration. Peter heard the thundering testimony, **Matthew 17:5 "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"** When God says it, who can argue?

The Baptism of Jesus truly authenticates His identity as the Son of God. Ironically, this was the One thing that Jesus addressed during His trial. The Chief Priests put Him under oath and asked Him

directly if He was the Son of God. Jesus said, **"It is as you said."**

And this naturally led to His crucifixion. That is the Blood which also testifies. Blood would not typically be associated with Jesus being the Son of God. After all, God does not bleed. But on the cross, God would bleed. Jesus, both true God and man would bleed and suffer and die. That was the price it took to pay for our sins. Only the atoning sacrifice of Christ' Holy and innocent blood could pay the debt of our sins!

Of course, the blood of Christ provides very strong testimony. But the blood of the disciples also provides a very strong witness for it as well. Men do not die for nothing. We do not have the fates of the Apostles written down in black and white in the Bible, but we do have tradition handed down to us. Tradition states that almost all of the Apostle's would die a martyr's death. The sole exception would be the man who wrote our text before us today, the Apostle John who would die of old age. If the resurrection of Christ was a hoax, why would all these men be willing to die for His sake? There would be no profit in it. These men firmly believed in what they had heard and seen and been taught. They believed it and they were willing to die for it!

And then, there is us. **1 John 5:5,10<sup>5</sup> Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? <sup>10</sup> 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.**

In these murder mysteries, they often go to trial. At the trial, they will use all kinds of scientific and forensic evidence that is available. Often times, this means calling an Expert witness to provide testimony. An expert witness doesn't really have anything to do with the victim or the suspect. This

witness does not have any previous relationship with either party. But the reason they do get called to the witness stand is to provide clarification and explanation to the evidence. It is their job to know certain things, and they are called to provide their expert knowledge of that evidence to the jury.

You can think of the Holy Spirit as this expert witness when it comes to the case of Jesus being the Son of God. He provides all of us with expert explanations for everything. The Word of God is true! It is given to us by the Holy Spirit. **Hebrews 4:12** <sup>12</sup> **For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.**

It is because we have this expert witness on the case that we too are also able to provide our testimony! Obviously, we are not eyewitnesses to the life of Christ nor His resurrection. We were not there thousands of years ago like John was. But that does not mean we can't testify.

And what exactly is the testimony we can contribute to? John makes that clear: <sup>11</sup> **And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.** <sup>12</sup> **Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.**

Yes, we may not have seen Jesus hang on the cross. And yes, we may not have seen Jesus rise from the dead with our own two eyes. But we know these things to be the truth! How can we be so sure? The expert witness, the Holy Spirit, has given us the faith to believe them! The testimony is now inside of you! You know that Jesus is the Son of God and Your savior from your sins. SO... Testify!

You may not be an eye witness of Christ, but you are a character witness. A character witness is a person who attests to another's moral conduct and good reputation in a court of law. Jesus did not have any of these during His trial on Good Friday. There wasn't anyone who was willing to put their necks on

the line for Him, even though He had many followers and disciples.

We are character witnesses for Jesus. We say, "We may not have been there, but we know exactly who and what Jesus is!" That is exactly what a character witness does. They are kind of the opposite of an expert witness. They do have a relationship with either one of the parties. They speak and declare exactly what kind of character this person has.

We have never seen Jesus with our eyes, but we too have a personal relationship with Him. We know exactly who He is, by faith! He is the Son of God. He is my savior who paid for every single sin I have ever committed. He is the Holy Lamb of God who took away the world's sin on the cross and rose triumphant on Easter morning! He is the Name above all other names, to whom one every knee will bow! We know this to be the absolute truth!

The fact that these things are the truth also has implications for us here today. If you don't believe them, you are saying some things. John says here that, **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.** So, if you don't believe that Jesus is the Son of God who rose from the dead, then you're calling God a liar. The One who knows all and is always everywhere, The One who created not only you but also the whole entire universe, that is the one who you are trying to discredit. Calling God a liar is very serious. Why? Well, John once reminds us of the personal implications.

<sup>12</sup> **Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.**

This is essentially what it all boils down to. You either have Jesus or you don't. You either testify of Him and the truth, or you believe in a lie. You either have eternal life in heaven with that same Son of God, or you don't!

Why wouldn't we testify as much as we can! Why wouldn't we die for this testimony?! It is the

only thing that matters, Jesus Christ died and rose again for you!!!

**1 John 5:4-5 <sup>4</sup> For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world- our faith. <sup>5</sup> Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?**

God cannot lie. He tells us clearly that He has loved us and died for us. We believe this to be true. Why do we believe this? Not because we were there, no we believe because the Spirit has given us the faith to believe it! Do you want proof? Look to the water, the blood, and the Spirit! And because the spirit has convinced us that Jesus is the Son of God, we truly have overcome the world! All praise and thanks be to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Savior, by whom we overcome the world! AMEN