

The Why and What of Belief

#14

1 John 5:6-15

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. For those who have been following our study through 1 John, you probably noticed how many times the phrase “we know” occurs. In this section, the Apostle John says that we know we have eternal life and we know that we can have prayer answered.
- B. Christianity rings with a note of positive assurance and is in contrast to the spirit of the age in which we live. The spirit of our age is that nothing is certain, everything is relative and tentative. We are told that we cannot know anything for sure. Unfortunately this spirit has permeated the Christian church and we find men standing in pulpits and declaring such nonsense all over our land and the world; and they do it in the name of Christ. One person said that we Americans are becoming a “nothing” people, “a generation of zeros”, because we do not believe anything. We do not think anything can be believed.
- C. Christians do not know everything, and if we give the impression we do know everything we are distorting the faith. But there are some things we know with certainty, essential facts of faith. Christians are to be dogmatic about certain fundamental things because they have found Christ who is the truth. The person who knows Christ is to speak the things of Christ forthrightly, unabashedly, without any sense of shame and hesitation.
- D. The Christian Faith is not an emotional thing but is anchored in historical facts. God has acted in history through the life, death and resurrection of Christ, and these things cannot be dismissed or explained by a mere wave of the hand. A careful survey of these acts of God in history actually serves to compel belief; so that it is not belief that is unreasonable, it is unbelief. These facts of history are witnesses to God and this is what John tells us in 1 John 5:6-15.

II. WHY WE BELIEVE IN CHRIST 5:6-12

- A. ***“This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ.”*** – The meaning of the “water” and “blood” has long been discussed by Bible scholars. These terms were apparently common and known by the readers of this epistle; therefore they must have a historical basis. The best interpretation is to refer this to the beginning and ending of Christ’s public ministry.
 - 1. The Water: The water refers to Christ’s baptism when the power of the Holy Spirit came upon him and the Father said, ***“This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”*** Jesus was also baptized to ***“fulfill all righteousness”***

(*Matt. 3:15*). This, no matter what else it may mean, does indicate that Christ was sinless; qualifying Him to be the master teacher, perfect example and sinless sacrifice for sin.

2. The Blood: This refers to Christ's death for sin. The liberal may say that He is willing to accept Christ's perfect example, but refuse to accept his perfect atonement for sin.
- B. ***"He did not come by water only, but by water and blood."*** – Christ is not just a good example; He is also Savior! A sinless life is insufficient for faith. To look at the spotless, stainless life of the Son of God is the most condemning thing I know. Faith requires something else. It requires the atoning death for sin. Men need forgiveness and only Christ forgives.

Bill Graham said that, when he was in London, one of the heads of a mental hospital said to him that half of our patients could be immediately dismissed if they could somehow get the forgiveness of sins.

- C. ***"And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth."*** – This refers to the internal witness of the Holy Spirit in every Christian's heart that Christ is the sinless-Savior. The external witnesses of God are the life and death of Christ and the internal witness of God is the Holy Spirit, telling every true child of God that the sinless-Savior died for his sins **cf Rom. 8:16** ***"The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children."*** The internal witness of the Spirit makes the historical facts of Christ personal. As Paul said, ***"Christ died for our sins"*** and ***"he loved me and gave himself for me."*** This witness of the Spirit is mysterious, subjective and intangible but it is a real force saying that we are true children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. This alone explains to me how two people can hear the message of Christ, one responding, the other rejecting. One has had the internal witness of the Spirit; the other has not had it.
- D. ***"_____"*** – This whole verse is not in the better manuscripts. In fact it does not occur in any Greek manuscript version or quotation before the fifteenth century. While there is plenty of evidence for the Trinity in the Bible, this verse was probably put into the text by an over-zealous scribe for the Trinity.
- E. ***"For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son."*** --

1. The words, ***"For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement (one),"*** are not in the better manuscripts. In fact, it does not occur in any Greek manuscript version or quotation before the fifteenth century. While there is plenty of evidence for the Trinity in the Bible, this verse was probably put into the text by an over-zealous scribe to support the Trinity.

2. We receive the testimony of men all the time but God has given testimony proof-positive about His Son. He is the Divine-Savior, who died for sin, rose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the Father. All of Christianity is wrapped up in the historical person of Christ.

- F. ***“Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son.”*** – God has made a witness to the world of His mighty act in history – the sending of the sinless-Savior. To fail to believe this witness of God is to make God a liar.
- G. ***“And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”*** – Eternal life is found only in a person, Jesus Christ, and apart from Christ there is no eternal life. God has sovereignly given eternal life to all those who have received Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior. Eternal life is not just to be thought of in terms of quantity, for eternal life is endless, but also in terms of quality; it is life abundant, life exciting, and life adventurous, which is full, meaningful and relevant. This is God’s gift to all who have the Son. The Apostle John was very narrow and dogmatic in his thinking. He would never have approved of modern day thinking which says, “It does not make much difference what you believe as long as you are sincere.” John says there is no eternal life apart from having Christ personally in the life. The issue boils down to this point: Do we believe Christ, the Apostle John and all the other Apostles or do we believe the moderns? If the Apostles have deceived us at this point, they have no basis to be trusted at any other point!

III. WHAT RESULTS FROM BELIEF IN CHRIST 5:13-17

- A. ***“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.”*** – The first result of believing in Christ is an assurance that we really are children of God. The Christian can know as a fact, know intuitively, that he has been born of God. The Lord Jesus taught that whoever came to Him He would in no way cast out. “These things” refers to the whole book of 1 John. The reason the Apostle wrote this book was so that men could know they have eternal life.

I recall the story where H. A. Ironside was dealing with a man over whether he was a Christian or not. The man was troubled over whether he was one of God’s elect, for if he were not, he could never believe.

Of course, the man had completely forgotten about man’s responsibility to believe. One day he got down on his knees and said, “Now, Father, I want to settle this question. Show me whether I have eternal life or not.” Opening his Bible his eyes fell on 1 John 5:10-12. He read that a person can make God a

liar if he does not believe God's witness about His Son. He said in prayer, "Father, I don't want to make you a liar. What is this testimony? And he read the next part, "This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. "The testimony is in Christ", he said, "for life is in Christ." He went on praying, "Father, I don't want to make you a liar and your testimony is obviously in Christ, so now whatever the next verse says should tell me how I can know I am among God's elect and saved." He had his thumb on 1 John 5:12, then he removed his thumb and read, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." He believed God's testimony, received Christ into his life, and came to know he had eternal life and was numbered among God's elect.

- B. ***"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him."*** – The second positive result of believing in Christ is boldness in prayer. John believed in prayer, worked at prayer and knew how prayer worked. According to John, whenever a prayer is made within God's sovereign, secret will, there will be a positive answer. NOTE: This immediately demolishes all those concepts of prayer which imply that prayer is a means of getting God to do our will. There are many people who regard prayer as some kind of mysterious device by which human beings can get God to do what they want Him to do, a kind of Aladdin's lamp, which if they rub it in the right way, will cause the great Genie of heaven to appear and give us our requests. Prayer is a means for obtaining the will of God and is limited always by the will and purpose of God. If we pray outside God's will, there is no assurance that God will answer. This verse explains the reason for most of the unanswered prayers in the world. What is God's will? His secret will we can never completely know until it happens, but his revealed will in the Bible tells us that God desires to save men; therefore we can pray for others, trusting God to do His will. We know God desires to make us more holy; therefore we can pray for this; we also know He desires to meet our needs. We have the right to make any petition to the Father. This does not mean that we will get everything we ask for, for we ask many things in selfish desires. There are hundreds of things we can pray about, knowing that He hears us when we ask according to His will. God always hears every prayer and answers every prayer that is voiced within the boundaries of his will. God never says no except to that which lies outside His will.

IV. CONCLUSION

- A. Do you know you have eternal life? If you were to die this moment, do you know that you would be in the presence of Christ forever? You can know for sure if you will trust the Lord Jesus Christ to deliver you from sin.

- B. Do you have the certainty of answered prayer and boldness in prayer? You may have this if you will trust in the sinless-Savior, who died for sinners and rose from the dead to declare men righteous before God.
- C. What is the issue? ***“He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life.”***