

Spirit filled life.  
1<sup>st</sup> John 5:5-13

Responsive Reading. John 7:37-38, 14:16-20, 26- 27

John 3:1-21

2 Corinthians 5:11-21

Normally I like to start off by doing a bit of refresher from the previous week. I am not going to spend a lot of time doing so this week because what we went through last week is one of the main themes of this book that we have actually gone over before, so I hope that it has been drilled into every ones brain by now. But there are a few points and things that I do want to draw out because this week we will be building on a few of these concepts that are mentioned here in the first 5 verses of chapter 5.

First and foremost, is what we see in verse 1. “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him.” Last week we focused on the fact that everyone who is truly a follower of God, who loves God will also love others who love God. If you love the Father, then you will also love all of his children. This isn't an option, it is actually a sign of true faith.

A few weeks ago we talked about how John here isn't actually just calling for us to test our own faith, but to test the faith of others. If a person is claiming to love God, but does not love his children then John says that person is a liar. So what we are really seeing here is just the other side, a parallelism, if liar's who claim to love God, hate the brethren, then it is true that those who love the brethren are not liars and truly do also love God. So, this isn't an option, this isn't a choice that we make, this is a sign of true faith.

Loving our brethren is not always an easy thing to do because our flesh gets in the way, but ultimately it is God's love in us working through us that makes us love those who we normally would not because we don't see them just in the flesh, but we see them in light of the spirit and God's love working in them also.

But that is not really what I want to focus on here today. What I want to focus on here in verse 1 is something that John has said a couple of times, but I just wanted to make note here, because what is central to saving faith, that this perfected love is proof of, is that one believes that Jesus is the Christ. He wasn't just a good teacher, or a prophet, but he was the messiah that God sent to save his children from sin and destruction.

This simple truth will be important to remember and hopefully help us to understand the verses that we will be looking at today. This section in chapter 5 starts out here in verse 6 with a statement about Jesus, saying “This is He who came by water and Blood-Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood.

There seems to be a few different ways that this verse can be understood, and I want to take a few minutes to look at them, but keep in mind no matter how you want to try to understand what John is talking about here the end result I think really is the same. So there is 3 predominate views here, one view understands this verse to be referring to the baptism of Jesus, and his death. The other view understands this as being the birth, and death of Jesus, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> view believes this is referring to the blood and water that flowed from Christs side at the cross.

So, let us look at the first view, of being born of water, and blood as being understood as Jesus' baptism and death. We saw an account of this terminology being used by Jesus in what we read this morning in the Gospel of John and the discourse between Jesus, and Nicodemus.

Jesus told Nicodemus that unless some one is born of water and the spirit he can not enter the kingdom of God. It would seem that Jesus was using the physical natural event of child birth to teach a spiritual lesson and truth about spiritual birth. Just as a baby does not contribute to it's own birth, but rather the work is done by the mother, so it is the same with spiritual birth. We who are born of spirit, are not born of ourselves, of our own labor or will, but rather by the will and work of God,

The other view we have here, is that John is referring to Christ's baptism which very well may have been the case. Turn with me to Matthew chapter 3:13. which is the account of Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist. "Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and are you coming to me?" But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed him. 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. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

So looking at verse 6 again, we can see how this could be taken to mean either way. "This is he who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not only by water but by water and blood. John through out his writing here is refuting the belief that was growing within the church that we now know as Gnosticism which denied that the messiah would come in the flesh, therefor denying that Jesus is the messiah. So with that in mind, we can see how this could be understood to mean Christ's physical birth.

Then the 3<sup>rd</sup> view that some hold is that this is a reference to the water, and blood that Jesus shed on the cross when his side was pierced by the Roman soldier. But in the context of this letter, I don't that this is actually the clearest and best explanation of this verse because it is kind of an obscure reference just matching the words water and blood which is found else where and really does not have anything to do with the context of what John is writing about. He was refuting the Gnostic, so understanding this as his birth or his baptism makes a lot more sense.

It also would make sense in context that it could also mean baptism. One teacher of this Gnostic view, taught that that the divine Christ descended upon Jesus at the baptism, and left before his death. But John says that Christ came by water, and blood. If we are to understand this as his baptism and death, then unlike this Gnostic Teacher was teaching, Christ the messiah experienced baptism and death himself.

. So, I don't think there really is a way to know exactly what John meant here, whether he is referring to Jesus' birth, or his baptism, but either way the outcome is really the same. The intent is to emphasize the humanity of Jesus. Most scholars seem to believe that John is talking about Jesus' baptism here, these are more then likely to be understood as referencing historical events that have been witnessed in the life and ministry of Jesus. Personally I think the idea that John is referring to Christ's baptism probably makes the most sense because he is talking about the water, and the blood being a witness who who Christ is. Multitudes of people witnessed Jesus' baptism, and multitudes of people witnessed his death,

The 2<sup>nd</sup> half of verse 6 here, says that it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. So one interesting little side note to take from this, is notice it says that the spirit bears witness. It testifies, this is an action that persons do. The holy spirit is a person, and is not just a force, or power like what we see representative of the force in star wars. It is the spirit of truth, who bears witness, and testifies of the truth of Christ, and of scripture.

We know that the Holy Spirit speaks true because Christ himself tells us where his authority comes from. John 16:13, ok lets go back to verse 7, just seems weird to jump in mid thought, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send him to you. And when he has come, he will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they do not believe in me, of righteousness, because I go to my father and you see me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when he, the spirit of truth has come, he will guide you into all truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will tell you things to come. He will glorify me, for he will take of what is mine and declare it to you. All things that the father has are mine, therefore I said that he will take of mine and declare it to you.

The Holy Spirit, the spirit of truth does not speak on it's own authority, but speaks that which God tells it to speak. The spirit can not, and will not lie because he is the messenger, the helper sent from God, who does not tell us things on his own authority but only that which God tells him to tell us.

I was talking to Aaron this week and he brought up this very same thing. If we go back to chapter 4, verse 1 John says that we are not to believe every spirit, but to test them whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone into the world. It is important to remember that the Holy Spirit is the spirit of truth, and can not, and will not lie, because he is the helper from God. So when we see these pastors, or these self proclaimed prophets making claims which eventually prove out false then we can know that this is not of the holy spirit but of some other for the holy spirit is the spirit of truth sent from the sovereign all powerful God. We can easily determine that these people are false prophets who have come to deceive, and lead people astray.

Looking at verse 7, John says that there are three that bear witness in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these 3 are one. So before you think, ah, there is a reference to the trinity, there is a problem here with this last part. The phrase, and these three are one, is something that is not found in any of the early Greek text's, and actually has been added later. The earliest appearance of this phrase didn't appear until the 16<sup>th</sup> century. And in fact, many of the newer translations do not include this section. While those who hold to the idea that the King James is a superior translation because all the new ones eliminate parts of verses, really are looking at it wrong. The newer translations are not removing parts of the bible, they are only including that which can be confirmed as part of the original text and not adding their own. The new translations have not removed text, the King James versions actually added text.

So keep that in mind that this is not really the best verse to turn to as a proof text of the existence of the trinity. That doesn't mean that this statement that the three are one is a false statement, it just is not included in any of the early manuscripts, or quoted by any of the early church writers.

So the Father, the word, and the spirit are 3 witness that Jesus is the Christ, verse 8 says that there are 3 witness on earth, which is the Spirit, the water, and the blood. I find it interesting that the Spirit is mentioned both as the witness in heaven, and the witness here on earth.

So how does the Holy Spirit bear witness to Christ, on earth, and in heaven? Well first off, the Holy Spirit was involved in the earthly life of Jesus. Quickly I will just read some mentions throughout the book of Matthew where the Spirit was present and bore witness to Christ.

First, we see in his Conception. Matthew 1:19 “Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream saying, Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take you Mary your wife,, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

Second we see the Holy Spirit's witness at Jesus' baptism. Matthew 3:16. “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, and suddenly a voice came from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

3<sup>Rd</sup>, we see the temptation of Christ in Luke 4:1 Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being tempted for forty days by the devil.

And lastly the holy spirit's witness to Christ's ministry. Luke 4:16 “ So He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as his custom was, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day and stood up to read. And he was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah and when he had opened the book he found the place where it was written. The spirit of the lord is upon me, because he has annointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty all those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the lord. T/hen he closed the book and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them. Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.

The Holy Spirit testifies that Jesus is the messiah, bears witness to his birth, baptism, temptation, and ministry, and this same Holy Spirit inspired the Apostles to write the bible that we have today, so that we may learn and grow in this truth through the ministry of the holy spirit in our own lives, bearing witness in us to the truth, and the gospel of Jesus Christ. We see that in the last few verses we will look at today.

Starting in verse 9, of 1<sup>st</sup> John 5, If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. For this is the witness of God which He has testified of his Son. He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself. He who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of his Son, and this is the testimony, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

Here in verse 11, we see that the eternal life that God has given us is a testimony to us. verse 2 in chapter 1 is key to understanding this. It says, “The life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the father and was manifested to us.”

Jesus Christ Himself is the eternal life, he is the embodied revelation of God, he is God's testimony, he is the word of God made flesh and this testimony was witnessed by, and passed down to us by the writing of the Apostles. . As John has said many times already, Rejecting Jesus, is rejecting God.

In verse 12 here, we see a continuation of this, Jesus is the eternal life, the testimony of God, and “He who has the Son has life, he who does not have the Son of God does not of life. So John has said this before, many times but the interesting thing to note is that this is written in the present tense. I is not he who had the son, or he who will have the son, but he who currently has the son, also has life.

It seems that when John uses the phrase eternal life, he almost always uses it in this present tense. We had talked about this a few weeks ago, that having eternal life does not just mean that one day when this physical body dies you will live on in the presence of God in heaven, it also means that we experience it now, it is a part of who we are. We who have the Son, live as those who have eternal life. Our focus, our thoughts, our thinking is not just on the day to day, but also on the day to come. The day that we will finally see our savior, a day of great joy, and release from this body, and world of sin.

John writes this to encourage us, looking at the next verse he tells us that he writes so that we may know that we have eternal life. In the present, already, living in and through us. Verse 13, “ These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”

Up until this point, John has given many reasons he has written this letter, He has written so that our Joy may be full, he writes to us so that we may not sin, He writes to us because we have known the truth. But this last reason here would seem to be the main purpose and reason. He wrote something very similar in his Gospel writing, John 20:30 he says, “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have live in His name. “

In his gospel he writes with evangelism in mind, “these are written that you may believe.” but in 1<sup>st</sup> John he writes to those who believe to remind, and encourage. “ I have written to you who believe, that you may know you have eternal life.” I think this is the main purpose and reason for his writing this letter, to encourage those who believe to stand for what they already know to be true and to not be deceived and lead astray by the false teachers.

The holy spirit that indwells in us, testifies to us that eternal life that we have. Those who believe, have eternal life now, and those who have eternal life, have the spirit. The outward sign of eternal and spirit filled life is not one of speaking a so called heavenly language, or experiencing holy laughter or being slain in the spirit. The outward sign of one who is living a life eternal, in the spirit is those who keeps God's commandments. Verse 2, of chapter 5 “ By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments and his commandments are not burdensome.

Once again it circles around to how we conduct ourselves proves what we truly are. Being able to have experiences like the charismatics claim is not a measure to our holiness, our faithfulness, or the spirit working in us. The spirit, bears witness of Christ, it comforts our souls, it brings scripture to our heart and mind. Being spirit filled is not a special occasion causing you to act out in crazy ways, it is plainly the state of every believer, all the time, convicting, encouraging, and testifying to Christ, and the eternal life that we hold.