

Life in the Son

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[0 : 0 0] So this morning, we are going to take a break from Judges, and as promised, we're going to continue through 1 John, which hopefully there are no groans about that.

I have to admit, I was talking with another gentleman in our church, and I felt like I'm ready for this series to be over, even though I see you all infrequently.

I have been living in this. For quite a while. But with that, I think there is a fresh word that God has for us in 1 John.

If you have your Bibles, turn with me to 1 John 5, and we're going to be looking at verses 1 through 12. 1 John 5, 1 through 12. Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of Him.

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not burdensome.

[1 : 1 6] For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world, and this is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

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 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. 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. And whoever has the Son has life. Whoever does not have the Son does not have life.

[2 : 2 8] Let's pray. Lord, we are reminded this morning from Your Word that we need it. Father, may You use it in our lives. May You convince hearts of the testimony concerning Your Son.

And may they have life. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. The Weather Girls. Lou Bega. Sinead O'Connor.

Billy Ray Cyrus. Sir Mix-a-Lot. Chumbawumba. I promise at this point I'm not making up words. There is a connection here. Some of these names might be familiar to some of us.

And some of them sound a little bit like I'm making up just words and spewing them out. But the collection doesn't end there. In fact, if we recognize those names, we might recognize a pattern. But even when we, especially when we pair them with their work, we might recognize the connection. Like Vanilla Ice. An Ice Ice Baby. Or Bobby Farron and Don't Worry, Be Happy.

[3 : 3 0] Or what about one of a yesteryear, Bobby Day and Rockin' Robin. Or Carl Douglas and Kung Fu Fighting. Even if we don't see the connection yet, we might remember names like the Blue Man Group or Crash Test Dummies.

And even if we can't remember their names at all, we might remember their works. Things like the Macarena or Cotton Eye Joe. Whether we remember their names or their songs, such is the life of a one-hit wonder.

You probably don't remember much more about them, where they're from, or what else they've done in their musical career. It's not even a modern phenomenon if we think about it. Now, somebody's going to argue, yes, these songs have withstood the test of time.

But things like, when you go to a wedding, what do you hear? Canaan and Dee. Or what do we sing at Christmas? Silent Night. For many musical artists, they have one shot at fame.

One glorious moment in the sun. And then they fade into obscurity. One seminal work that represents maybe their life of musical pursuit.

[4 : 40] Or they have that one song that they can't escape. And it defines the rest of their life and even after their death. One-hit wonders.

Are they really that bad? They're not. John's no one-hit wonder. But in the book of John, we might think he's a one-hit wonder. Because he returns again and again to one, one single theme.

Even though he's responsible for a lot of the New Testament canon, in this book, he's got one overarching theme, one one-hit wonder that he keeps coming back to.

But thankfully, it's something that we need to hear. We need to return to again and again as Christians. And it's that we should be assured of our faith, not because of us, but because of the gospel.

That we should be confident as we walk. Even as we face these newfangled ideas, or new challenges, or new problems, or new enemies, that we should be assured of Christ and what he has done.

[5 : 46] And John's writing to Christians just like us, that they're facing new challenges and new ideas. And that one theme is driving this whole letter, as we've seen over the last weeks and months, maybe even a year.

But that's nothing new to Christians. You see, the disciples struggled with this. They weren't these bastions of faith and strength when Jesus left them.

What about the reformers? They struggled to give words to this problem, to be assured of their faith. What about us today? This section we find ourselves in today explores that theme, that one-hit wonder, except it's maybe a little bit retuned.

It's a new tune to the song. Maybe it's got auto-tuned voices for those that are younger. But it's that same message that John's been trying to communicate over and over again and again.

So let's listen closely. It's explanation of life in the sun. Not the S-U-N, but the son of God in Jesus. And we're gonna look at that in two parts.

[6 : 56] First is the marks or evidences of life in the sun. And then the content of life in the sun or beliefs. First, let's look at the marks.

John begins his chapter by defining the marks or the attributes of someone who follows after Christ. Throughout this section, really this whole book, John has done that time and time again.

But here he uses an interesting phrase, one that we might not be familiar with, really, we really are familiar with, if you read your New Testament, or if you even read this letter more than once.

In the couple of verses at the beginning of chapter five, he uses this familiar concept, even maybe this concept that's grown old to us, of being born again.

But it's so important, he revisits it. Look back with me at verse one. Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God.

[7 : 53] Being born of God or being reborn is an important idea in John's work, not just here in 1 John, but in the Gospels. John's very own Gospel says this, at the very beginning, after he's defined kind of who Jesus is, he says, he came to his own, talking about Jesus, and his own people did not receive him.

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor the will of man, but of God.

John connects this idea that belief in Jesus is actually tied to something that they couldn't do themselves. They couldn't will it into existence, but it had to come from an alien source from outside them.

God had to remake them. They had to be born again. It had to be new. God has wrought faith in them, setting upon them the Spirit.

And we see this example, just a few chapters later, in this great teacher of Israel. Who? Nicodemus. What does Jesus say to him? Very pointedly. It's not, hey, dive deeper into God's word, and you'll have faith.

[9 : 05] No, he doesn't say, try harder and you will have faith. He says this to him. Truly I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Belief flows from this change. Him being reborn creates faith in him. But it's not simple belief just in the existence of Jesus.

Many people do that, and they have no faith in him. But it's belief that he is the Christ. He is the Messiah. He is the one who delivers his people.

That's the first exhibit. That's the first mark. Belief is evidence of life in the Son. The second one is this. Life in the Son demonstrates or creates love.

It has a couple of dimensions. Looking back with us, or looking back with me at the first few verses, there's love for who first? Love for the Father. John ties regeneration or being born again, not simply to belief in Jesus as the Christ, but love for God, love for the Trinity, love for the Father.

[10:18] One has love for God when we're born again, but not simply love of God. Here's the third mark, or the third piece of evidence. It's love for God's people.

John's reiterated this so many times throughout this letter, that love is an essential mark of the Christian, of one who has life in the Son. He says this in verse 2, By this we know that we love the children of God when we love God.

John is uniting together what those seceders or those separatists who were influencing the church were trying to rip apart. They were saying, Hey, it's okay if we have all these new ideas.

It doesn't matter how we act. It doesn't matter how we treat other people. John's saying no. In fact, this is the biggest indicator of how we know if you're a Christian.

The opponents that were influencing this church were introducing those new ideas, and John is pointing back to love of God's people as that seminal mark. He's saying if you love God, we will know by how you love his children.

[11:27] That's not a new problem for them, or for us, or even for the church. Think about Paul's letter that he writes to a pretty dysfunctional church in 1 Corinthians. They're not the pinnacle of holiness, but he says, What?

Knowledge puffs up. He's more concerned, not at their growth in this head knowledge, but their love for other people. That's what Paul is saying to that church, full of problems.

But the love of God's children is kind of derivative. Love for God kind of comes first and then flows out to love of children. And this structure, how John writes it here, is kind of wonky.

We're used to saying something like this. Hey, if you love God, then you'll love his people. Instead, John does what he's always done, and he circles around, and he changes things up just to add a fresh new dimension.

It's just like with my kids. If I say, Hey, put your shoes on. I can only say that so many times. I might say something like, If you're going to go outside, don't go outside without your shoes.

[12:32] The intent is still the same. Don't go outside without shoes. Put them on before you go outside. It communicates the same message, but I'm changing the words. John is doing the same thing.

He's reminding his people, he's reminding God's people, that they must love one another because of their love for God. That's the third mark. The fourth mark is evidence of life in the sun, is love or relationship to commandments.

John introduces that in two, and again in three, where he ties loving God to loving his commandments, to keeping them. And faith in Christ changes that dynamic, changes that relationship from the Christian of maybe not desiring God's word or loving his commandments and delighting in them.

So now that the Christian, by the Spirit, can keep them, and they're no longer burdensome, but they're joyful. Someone who has new life, the commands of Scripture become something they should desire to do and delight in them, not toilsome, but joyful obedience.

The problem with evidence of Christian faith is that we approach it like many other things in our lives. We think that if we say it's true, then it must be so.

[14:00] I will play in the NBA. I'm gonna suit up against the Lakers. Even though I'm not as tall as Jokic, I've never played organized basketball beyond elementary school, but I'm saying it so, so it must be so.

And you would say, I'm crazy for saying that. However, we act like that when it comes to our Christian faith, when everything that is true points to the contrary.

I was thinking about this recently when I was skiing with a group of friends. I'm a relatively good skier. At least my route selection while skiing says that I'm pretty stinking good, okay?

Now, there's a couple of marks of being a good skier. But, the first run, my friend, who, he will return to be my friend when I'm recovered, chose a route that I was unfamiliar with at a place that I was

unfamiliar with on the first run of the day, and I don't like to ski like he does.

And I hurt my knee. So if I fall down, that's why. Um, but, I was really frustrated. I was so frustrated at something that I love and enjoy, and if you spend any amount of time with me, you know that I talk about this, um, because I love it so much.

[15:20] It's, I enjoy God's creation. It's a fun activity I do with my family. But, because of that event, it caused me to question if I really was a good skier. And then I had to go through all the essential marks of what a good skier is.

And they go something like this. First, I've spent a good amount of time skiing. They say that if you spend 10,000 hours on anything, you're pretty stinking good. You're an expert.

Now, if I started at two, I think I'm pretty close to 10,000 hours. Before I could really even run, I was skiing. So, that's a check mark right there.

I have a lot of time under my belt. And though equipment, which is the second mark, doesn't make the skier, it doesn't give you talent or a place regular practice.

It does help you ski really well. I have the right tools to ski well. Now, mind you, I was trying to be cheap, and I was trying to stretch out the season so I don't have to pay to get my skis tuned, which backfired on me.

[16:23] I have the right equipment. So, half a check mark. This might seem obvious, but to be a good skier, you'll have to have snow, right?

I have to have a place to go because I can't ski in Kansas, and I can't ski on a basketball court. It's too flat. I must have access to terrain, to even train or even go execute.

I must have the physicality to ski. That's the one that tripped me up. That was the fourth one. In order to be good, you have to have coordination. You have to have muscular capacity to turn and do all the things, shift my weight, and do all those technical moves.

That's where I failed. Now, if I took that component away, right, my physicality or the tools, would I be a good skier?

If I hurt my knee on the first run, would I be a good skier that day? Absolutely not. The physical ability is gone. I don't have the tools.

[17:29] If I didn't have skis, period, I can't be a skier. If I didn't have snow, I lived in a desert. I can't ski. Now, I know somebody in here is thinking, oh, I have the sand dunes, I can sand ski.

I'm talking about snow skiing. The marks of being a good skier, the essential components work together and testify to that fact.

Why is it any different when it comes to our Christian faith? We think we can do anything that we want, and we have Christian faith. We can assure ourselves of anything.

We can deceive ourselves that whenever we remove one of those components, we're no longer skiing, we're just strolling at wintertime, we're standing in the middle of a desert.

Why do we think it's different when it comes to the Christian life? The Christian life or having life in the sun has telltale signs, and John points them out to us.

[18:30] If they're missing, we have a problem, but how often do we charge right ahead as if it doesn't matter at all? We should be asking ourselves, do I believe Jesus is the Christ?

Do I love God? Do I love his people? Do I love what he loves? Do I delight in his commandments? Do I find them burdensome?

Or are they sweet to me? Am I growing in my obedience to them? John is saying, here's the litmus test of faith in Christ. Now, are you going to do these perfectly?

Absolutely not. But if you've been reborn, you still have those vestiges of the old man. You're still going to struggle with sin, and parts of that old man remain until you're called home.

But is the arc of my life, am I growing more and more in holiness year after year? Or am I going backwards year after year?

[19:33] Or am I stagnant? Am I growing in love for God's people? Do I kind of put my money where my mouth is? I say I love God's people, but do I delight in spending time with them, in fellowship with them?

Or do I come to worship for the day to download? Yes, there is truth and goodness in learning from God's word. Absolutely. Do I delight in loving him or knowing him more because I see him as lovely and I see his people as I spend time with them as lovely.

Do we do that here at our church? Can we grow in that? Can you grow in that? I'm not saying it's easy, but let us all grow in love.

That's part of our vision here. Thick community. Yes, robust teaching as well. John's talking about both of those. Growing in our love for God's word and who he is and growing in our love for each other.

Are we availing ourselves of the opportunities to spend it with God's people, whether it's Sunday school, men's ministry, women's stuff, community groups, or just that brief or not so brief moment that we have in worship where we greet one another?

[20 : 56] Are we growing in our love for God and the things that he loves? Those are the marks of life in the sun. But what? Those are the things that evidence life in the sun.

But what is it that a Christian actually believes? That's our second heading this morning. John pivots from things that mark out a Christian in those first few verses from love of God, love of God's people, and love of his commandments to the absolute substance of what the Christian believes. But he does it a little bit before most Bibles have a break. He starts it in verse four. For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world.

And this is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes Jesus is the Son of God? John doesn't start with ideas or doctrines or propositions.

He kind of reverse engineers this. He goes first to those marks to cause us to question those things because of the challenges that were presented by all these voices in that church.

[22 : 06] And then he goes to their faith. He talks about the effects of the faith first, the overcoming the world. Now he could be talking about something like the believer's triumph at death.

But instead, he's actually talking about overcoming the challenges that were present in that day.

These people that were introducing new ideas, the opponents, they're casting doubt on the theology that had been delivered to them by the apostles, those that walked with Christ.

And John is reminding them of the faithfulness to the message of the gospel is what gives them deliverance from their present condition. It's a word for us as well.

And we see the substance of that error as he poses it in verse five. This whole book has that one-hit wonder theme, returning again and again to assurance.

But assurance is being challenged by this idea that Jesus is somehow not fully God. but John says no. Instead, Jesus is the Son of God. He's reminding them of that.

[23 : 16] And as they challenged his status as the Son of God, the thing that was so crucial, so essential to the Christian faith, John is pointing them right back to that very simple idea.

And he expounds on it in that section six through almost the end. He begins that argument with kind of some weird stuff. You know, oftentimes in seminary, you're told, as you're a young preacher, you never mention certain things, but John didn't get that lesson.

He mentions them straight away. Blood. He says, the water and the blood. This is he who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ. Not by the water only, but by water and blood.

And then he'll introduce a third thing. Some have associated this with the sacraments, right? Baptism, as we've seen, and blood and communion. I'm not sure that's what he's talking about here.

Some have pointed to the idea that when Jesus was on the cross, his side was pierced and blood and water flowed from that. I'm not sure that's what he's talking about here.

[24 : 24] He is talking about baptism, and he is talking about another event in Jesus' life. The baptism of Jesus, but also his death. Those two events where we see most clearly in the Gospels that Jesus is God.

He's fully God. How do we see it in his baptism? He didn't become God in his baptism as some of these opponents challenged, but we see the three working together and affirming that Jesus is fully God.

He is the Son of God. And then in his death, we see the Father and the Son and the Spirit working together.

We see Christ giving up his place, not becoming less God, but being fully God and paying for the punishment of sin.

As John's explaining this, he starts to talk about the witnesses that operate here. That's why we read that section in Deuteronomy.

[25 : 32] There's three witnesses, the water and the blood and the Spirit. Back in verse 6, he says, the Spirit is the one who testifies because the Spirit is truth. We see that in his baptism.

The Spirit is testifying to who Jesus is. We see that in the death on his death on the cross. We also see the operation of the Spirit.

What is he doing? He's testifying in agreement and that gives weight to what is going on. The descending of the Spirit as a dove validates Jesus' status.

And there's nothing left to say in that. It's almost as if, like in modern parlance, there's a mic drop here. But John goes on. As if that testimony wasn't enough, he says, the truthfulness of this testimony is in the substance of the witnesses.

It's not just man. Look at verse 9. If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater. For this is the testimony of God that he is born concerning his Son. Whoever believes in the Son of God has a testimony in himself.

[26 : 46] And 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. That testimony is born through the Spirit.

It's true because of God's nature. He himself is communicating. And if we're going to pit that against man, of course he wins. He is greater.

It's tricky here, though, because John is not saying, don't believe the apostles. Don't believe those people who walked with Jesus. No, that's not what he's saying. He's saying, how much more should we believe God?

How much more should we believe this testimony because he is God and is saying these things? On the scale of witnesses, when God speaks, it is true.

And when we don't believe it, we make God out to be a liar. Who he is and his status confirms this testimony.

[27 : 48] Recently, I was at Colorado Springs Airport to pick up a visitor. And as I was doing it, I do what I always do. And some of you are going to be really frustrated at what I'm about to say, especially if you come from a major metropolitan area.

Because as you pull up to the sidewalk at the Colorado Springs Airport, there's a reason why I ask my guests to fly into Colorado Springs and not Denver. And I will often offer to pay the extra money. It's because it's so easy. There's nobody ever there, right? I can pull up to the side and I can hop out of my car and go inside. Now, before you get all rule follower on me, there is a section that does not have the sign that says you cannot park here.

In fact, on the sign, it does not say you can't park here. So, next time, I'm not going to tell you where it is because you might steal my spot. But, after all, that's the reason why I ask people to fly in the Springs and not Denver.

Because you can do that. Now, as I walked into the baggage claim, as I always do, this lady approached me, no badge, no uniform, no credentials, and said, hey, you should move your car.

[29 : 10] And I said to myself, thanks. Okay, I hear you. But I'll just be right back out because I'm going to pick up somebody and come back in. I said this all in my head. And then, so, I dismissed this lady.

I have no idea who she is. She's not wearing a uniform. She's not wearing a badge. She has no authority. But then, a few minutes later, as I'm waiting around, what happens?

The big, bad voice that comes over the airport intercom that tells you you're about to miss your flight comes and gives out a description of my car and says, you need to move your vehicle.

So, what do I do? I immediately run out and I go and I stand by my car because, you know, I don't want my car to get towed. But, that dreaded alert prompted me to action because it spoke with authority.

The lady who is not uniformed, who didn't have a name badge, who didn't have any credentials, I didn't believe her. But when that airport voice came on, man, I was hustling.

[30 : 14] The authority of an unmarked, unbadged, ununiformed airport worker is not what's in question here. But it's really similar.

Authority is what God represents. God is giving the testimony through his spirit and he is saying, this is true. Jesus is the son of God. Way more authority than the airport voice.

The airport intercom. And when he says, these are the marks of a Christian, when John says these things, why do we blindly go forward or bebop along like it doesn't matter?

Or why do we deny that truth? Because when we do that, we make God out to be a liar, as John says. Christian, do you live in a way that confesses this truth?

Do you bear these marks? Do you love God? Do you love his people? Do you love what he loves? Do you love his commandments, his word?

[31 : 24] Do you love him yourself? Yes, moment by moment, that is really difficult. And you're not going to do that perfectly, as we've said. But are there areas or arenas that we're holding so closely that we don't want to let him invade?

Because I can do this on my own. Because I believe that I can start for the Denver Nuggets. Are we blindly walking?

Turn to him for forgiveness for that unbelief. Christian, the gospel is for you too. It's not something that we leave aside after we've made right with God, and then we go on about our way.

It's moment by moment. I think this is sometimes when we look at missionaries and it seems crazy what they do. I think of John Payton, spelled almost like Patton, but Payton.

He goes to an island in the South Pacific where there are cannibals, and everybody says he's crazy. Maybe he is a little bit crazy. He loses his wife, he loses his children, and we look at that life and say, oh my goodness, that is crazy.

[32 : 35] But God used him so much because he was so sure of this. But instead, often in our own lives, we're almost hedging our bets a little bit. That's why when we go to the cubicle or we're sharing with a friend over coffee or at work, we almost don't want them to know we're Christians.

But what would that boldness look like in our daily lives as we parent and interact with that neighbor who thinks you're crazy because you showed up here to listen to me?

What would it look like in that boldness to share the gospel with that person? What would it look like to not hedge your bets, to not be ashamed of that?

Man, that life of John Payton and my life on a Monday or a Wednesday look a lot more similar. maybe it's why instead of in persisting in faithfulness to share the gospel, we remain silent because we're scared.

Because by our actions, we might in some small part be saying, I'm not sure about your testimony. I'm not sure about what you say.

[33 : 54] if you've never considered the testimony of God and his son, this kind of sounds a little bit crazy and you'd be right. But I invite you this morning to consider the testimony that John is giving.

Consider the testimony that the Spirit has given that God has said about his own son that he's fully man, fully God and he died on the cross for your sin so that he might have life.

Life to the full. John points us in these last few verses to this very fact. This is the testimony that God gave us, eternal life.

And this is life in his son. Whoever has the son has life. Whoever does not have the son does not have life. John's given us these words so that we might remember that those who believe have eternal life and have it to the full as he says in the gospel.

Whoever has the son has life. Christian, someone who's not a follower of Christ, come to Christ for in the son there is life.

[35 : 15] Let's pray. Lord, we're reminded this morning of wherever this finds us. Believing in your word, believing in your testimony, or struggling through it, that you have offered us a life, eternal life in your son.

May we find this testimony to be true and Father, may we delight in it. And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.