

## Will You Believe God?

1 John 5:9-13

Many of you have been following the JUCO baseball games this week. And even though Shawn Argo's favorite team, San Jac lost the final to Iowa Western last night I thought I would start today's message with a baseball story.

In 1994, the Texas Rangers baseball team called up a young infielder by the name of Benji Gil. The Rangers needed a shortstop and they promoted Gil from their AA team directly to the major league—something rarely done. But Gil had a hard time—especially at bat. So he was sent back down. The next year Gil was invited back to the major league for spring training camp where he performed superbly. The manager of the Rangers—Johnny Oates—didn't want Gil to worry about being sent back down to the minors so he assured him that the shortstop position was his for the rest of the season. Well, Gil had an excellent year. But the next season—in 1996—Kevin Elster had a fantastic spring training and a tremendous year. So Elster replaced Gil in the starting lineup.

Getting and keeping a spot on a MLB team is not always a sure thing. Many people view their relationship to God like Benji Gil's baseball career. They think that if they play well, then God will keep them on the team and they'll go to heaven. But if they experience a slump, then God will kick them off the team and they'll go to hell. But what does the Word of God say about the matter? How does a person get called up to God's team? And once you're on God's team, can you get kicked off? Can you know for certain that you have eternal life? The answer to those questions is found in 1 John chapter 5. This morning we want to look at 1 John 5:9-13. There John tells us how a person receives and keeps eternal life.

In the Old Testament, the Mosaic Law required 2 or 3 witnesses to establish the truth of a testimony. Two weeks ago we saw from verses 6-8 that there are 3 that testify that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. And those three witnesses are the water—the baptism of Jesus, the blood—the death of Jesus, and the Spirit—the Holy Spirit of God at work in the life of the believer.

Today we are going to see two more witnesses that will confirm not only that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, but will also confirm that we have eternal life with Him.

### I. The Testimony of the Father (vv.9-12).

#### A. God's witness is greater than the testimony of men (1 John 5:9).

John says, "**If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.**" We all rely on the word or testimony of other people, even total strangers. How many of you trust a pharmacist that you don't know from Adam to give you the right prescription? How many trust an unknown mechanic to make your car safe?

We all accept reports of the evening news and the newspaper every day. If we accept them, how much more should we accept the witness of God? Men spin the facts; they sometimes exaggerate and twist the facts. We are never completely free of personal opinion and bias. And some men even lie and deceive us. But not God. God never exaggerates or twists the facts; He never lies or deceives. The real "No-spin zone" is not on Fox

News or with Bill O'Reilly. It is with God, the Father. What God says is always true. God writes with a pen that never blots, speaks with a tongue that never slips, and acts with a hand that never fails. Therefore, God's record about His Son should be believed.

**B. God's witness lives within the believer** (1 John 5:10).

John says in verse 10, **"He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself."** When you believe in Jesus Christ, trusting in Him as your Savior and Lord, God implants His witness in you. What is that witness? He is the Holy Spirit of God Himself. God's Holy Spirit seals the believer and guarantees our eternal life.

Paul speaks about the witness of the Spirit within us in Ephesians 1:13-14, **"In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory."**

And John has already said back in 1 John 4:13, **"By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit."**

**C. God's witness is rejected by unbelievers** (1 John 5:10b).

How would you feel if I said to you, **"I'm trying to believe you"** or **"I wish I could trust you?"** You'd probably be upset with me because in effect to question your honesty means I believe you may be a liar.

In v.10, John says **"He who does not believe God has made Him a liar."** God has given **"the testimony"** of His Son and if we do not believe, we insult God and call Him **"a liar."**

How could this be? Look at the rest of the verse: **"because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son."** God has given witness after witness that Jesus Christ is His Son:

- the witness of the life of Christ, His works and words.
- the witness of the baptism of Christ.
- the witness of the blood, the cross and death, of Jesus Christ.
- the witness of the resurrection.
- the witness of the Scriptures.
- the witness of the Holy Spirit that convicts the human heart.
- the witness of believers who have experienced the power of Christ in their lives.

If a person does not believe the witness of God—all the testimony that God has given—if a person does not believe that God has sent His Son into the world to save man, then that person is in effect saying that the testimony of God is a lie.

John the Baptist said this about God's testimony, **"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."** (John 3:36).

**D. God's witness is clearly stated.** (1 John 5:11-12)

What is the Father's **"testimony?"** V.11 says, **"And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son."**

If I asked you, "What is eternal life?" many would say, "I will go to heaven when I die." That's only part of it.

Jesus said in Jn.17:3, **"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."** Eternal life is knowing God through His Son Jesus Christ. Eternal life is not just believing a fact, but knowing a person! Eternal life is not something you will get then, it is something you have now.

Look at v.12, **"He who has the Son HAS [not 'will have someday'] life."** If you are saved, you ALREADY have eternal life.

This is the testimony. God has given us something, and it is wrapped up in a person, the Son of God. If you have received the Son, you have his life - - manifested, of course, by the things John has been talking about in this letter: righteousness, truth, and love.

If you have not received the Son of God, no matter how earnest you are, no matter how devoted you have been, no matter how religiously intent you have been, seeking to do everything you could think of to please God, if you do not have the Son, you do not have life. That is the issue, is it not? Either you have him, or you do not have him; either you know Jesus Christ, or you do not know him. There is no middle ground, it is one or the other.

I love the dairy producers' commercial of the guy in the body cast whose hospital roommate gives him a hot chocolate chip cookie. He sees the glass of ice cold milk but is in terrible torment because he can't get to it. Talk about torture! The slogan simply says, **"Got milk?"** V.12 can be summed up with the question, **"Got Jesus?"**

Kathy and I were married over 25 years ago in Colorado Springs. On that day I forgot to bring something very important to the ceremony, the marriage license. So we did not get it signed 'til the next day. Even though we had taken the vows and wore each other's rings Kathy's dad almost didn't let me take her with me. Thank God it all worked out okay.

Somewhere in our records we have a copy of that Marriage certificate, although I have not been able to find it for the last few years (is there a trend here?). But we have more proof than a piece of paper that we are married, that proof is found in our relationship. Many Christians doubt their salvation because all they have is a record. "I was baptized on this day;" or "I joined the church on this day." But they don't have a close personal relationship with Jesus that they live out every day. So they have no assurance.

I know for sure that I am married because I have a record at the El Paso County courthouse. However, if the only thing your marriage consists of is a certificate, you have a pretty miserable marriage. The relationship gives life to the record. **"He who has the Son has life."**

## II. The Testimony of the Word (v.13).

John says that he has **"written to you who believe"** that is he has written to Christians so that **"you may know that you have eternal life."**

If you have believed on Jesus and are applying eternal life in your fellowship with Him, you will **"know that you have eternal life"** and you will **"continue to believe."**

Years ago Harry Ironside was pastor of Moody Church in Chicago. An elderly man once came to him and said, "I will not go on unless I know I'm saved, or else know it's hopeless to seek to be sure of it. I want a definite witness, something I can't be mistaken about!"

Ironside replied, "Suppose you had a vision of an angel who told you your sins were forgiven. Would that be enough to rest on?"

The man replied, "Yes, I think it would. An angel should be right."

Ironside continued, "But suppose on your deathbed Satan came and said, 'I was that angel, transformed to deceive you.' What would you say?" The man was speechless. Ironside then told him that God has given us something more dependable than the voice of an angel. He has given us own Word that if we trust in Christ all our sins are gone.

Ironside read 1 John 5:13 to the man: **"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."** Then Ironside asked the man, "Is that not enough to rest on? It is a letter from heaven expressly to you."

We have the assurance of eternal life because of God's testimony through His word in the Bible. We know that we have eternal life because of the testimony of God.

Charles Fuller was a radio Bible teacher years ago. He once announced that he would be speaking the following Sunday on the topic of "Heaven." During that week, he received a letter from an elderly gentleman who was very ill—on his deathbed.

The man wrote: "Next Sunday you are to talk about Heaven. I am interested in that land, because I have held a clear title to a bit of property there for over fifty-five years. I did not buy it. It was given to me without money and without price. But the donor purchased it for me at a tremendous sacrifice. I am not holding it for speculation since the title is not transferable. It is not a vacant lot. For more than half a century I have been sending materials out of which the greatest architect and builder of the universe has been building a home for me which will never need to be remodeled or repaired because it will suit me perfectly, individually, and will never grow old. Termites can never undermine its foundations for they rest on the rock of ages. Fire cannot

destroy it. Floods cannot wash it away. No locks or bolts will ever be placed upon its doors, for no vicious person can ever enter that land where my dwelling stands. It is now almost completed and ready for me to enter in and abide in peace eternally, without fear of ever being rejected. I hope to hear your sermon on heaven next Sunday from my home in Los Angeles, but I have no guarantee that I shall be able to do so. My ticket to heaven has no date marked for the journey—no return coupon—and no permit for baggage. Yes, I am all ready to go and I may not be here while you are talking next Sunday, but I shall meet you there some day.”

Do you have that kind of assurance? Is that God’s testimony in your heart?

Is God calling you to His team today? It doesn’t matter how well you play. It doesn’t matter how many strike outs, errors and bad pitches you’ve had. God wants you on His team. He wants you because He loves you. He proved His love for you in sending His only Son, Jesus Christ to take the punishment for your sin. Jesus has already won the game. He has secured the victory over sin, death and hell. And if you have Jesus, you have life—eternal life, victorious life, abundant life.