



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

1 John 5:6-12

"Witnesses, Faith Confirmed"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Our Scripture reading for today is 1 John chapter 5, verse 6 through verse 12. We have something very unusual in the passage that we are going to read, and for those of you particularly who have an Authorized Version or a King James Version, it poses a bit of a problem because the 7th verse, as found in the Authorized Version, is not a genuine statement of the Apostle John.

It's not often that you find New Testament scholars agreeing on anything, out of the vast numbers of them, to find them agreeing on something particularly such as this is unusual, but all agree, regardless of their viewpoints that the 7th verse, as found in the Authorized Version was not a statement written by the Apostle John. To give you an example of the background of it, if you'll just remember that no Greek manuscript contains this statement before the 14th Century. Further, in the controversies concerning the person of Christ and the trinity, in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Centuries, this text was never cited by anyone of those who carried on the controversy as proof of the doctrine of the trinity. It is first found about the 5th century in a Latin manuscript. So one can see that there is really no support whatever for the 7th verse. For those of you that have a New American Standard Bible or a New International Version, you do not have it in your text. It reads, "For there are three that bear record in heaven. The Father, the Word and the holy ghost, and these three are one."

Associated with that is the statement in verse 8, "And there are three that bear witness in earth." That expression "in earth" is also not genuine, obviously added by someone who has just seen "There are three that bear record in heaven." So in order to make up for the verse that is entirely missing, it has been necessary for English translations to make some modifications in the numbers attached to the statements.

Now, for example in most of the English translations that you will find, "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by water and blood." As verse 6, and then verse 7 begins, "And it is the spirit that beareth witness because the spirit is truth." The 7th verse drops out, as found in the Authorized Version. The 8th verse begins with a "For" instead of an "And," but "For there are three that bear witness, the spirit, the water and the blood and these three agree in one." The New International Version has a slightly different versification, but if we just remember that 7th verse is not genuine, then most of the remainder of the Authorized Version is genuine with the exception of "in earth" in verse 8, and those of you that have the New American Standard Bible or NIV, you probably have some words of explanation in the margins. So I'm going to read beginning at verse 6, and I will drop out verse 7, and the phrase "in earth," and we'll read from verse 6 through verse 12,

"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness, and the spirit the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

May God bless this reading of his word. Let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Our Heavenly Father, through the Son of God, who has overcome the world, we come to Thee. We thank Thee, and praise Thee for the Lord's day. Reminding us again of the successful completion of his Messianic ministry, his ascension, and session at the right hand of Thy throne. We thank Thee for all that, that embodies, and all that, that means for the Christian church. We thank Thee for the glorious victory that has been won, and for the ways in which down through the centuries, Thou hast been sovereignly doing Thy work.

We thank Thee, Lord, that there is not one individual who has not found his way into the family of God, having been chosen by Thee before the foundation of the world. We thank Thee and praise Thee that Thou art accomplishing all of Thy purposes, no regrets in the great triune God over the past centuries. We thank Thee and praise Thee for the confidence that we therefore have in all the thout art doing.

In the discouraging circumstances in life, and there are many, we thank Thee that above those circumstances we have a sovereign God, who in his perfect peace, carries out his ministry, and we thank Thee Lord, especially that in his marvelous grace, Thou hast included us, unworthy, sinful, rebellious. We thank Thee that Thou hast touched our hearts, moved us by grace to rest ourselves upon Jesus Christ for time and eternity. What a wonderful thing it is to know and possess eternal life.

We pray for the whole church of Jesus Christ today. O God, bless the entire body, wherever they may be, in whatever local assembly they may find themselves. We bring them before Thee. We pray that the work of sanctification may continue. We look forward to the day when we shall be one in Christ in every way. We pray for this local body, and, Lord, bless our elders, our deacons who labor, the members and the friends and especially the visitors who are here with us today, may the sweet savor of our Lord and his sacrifice be known by each of us.

We pray for the sick. We ask Thy blessing upon them. We pray for the troubled. For those who are distressed, for those who have the problems of life that are difficult and hard, O God, sustain, build up in the faith, strengthen and give relief and healing, as it should please Thee.

We pray for our country, for our President, for the President-elect, and for others, Lord, associated in our governments, we pray for them. We ask that this great country may be preserved for the ministry of God's word. As we look at the fabric of our society, and see that it seems to be falling apart, disintegrating, the corruptions of human kind manifesting themselves, O God, if it please Thee, cause us to return to a trust in the word of God.

Now, be with us through this service, through the days of this week in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] The subject for today, as we continue our exposition of John's first epistle, is The Three Witnesses the Faith, Confirmed. The Apostle John, as the other apostles, such as the Apostle Paul, had to deal with heresy, and he had to deal with apostasy. In chapter 4 in the 3rd verse, we have read, "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God, and this is that spirit of antichrist where of ye have heard the he should come and even now already is it in the world." He had to deal with apostasy, and as he states in chapter 2, verse 19, "They went out from us, for they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would have no doubt continued with us, but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

The views of the Cerinthian Gnostics were probably the views that the Apostle John particularly sought to refute. Cerinthus and the Gnostics who followed his particularly approach believed that Jesus was simply a man, that at his baptism, the divine Christ came upon him. He carried out his ministry in the power of the divine Christ up to the time of the crucifixion, shortly before that crucifixion, the divine Christ departed from him, and consequently he died simply as a man. In fact, some went on to say, he died as a man who was a sinner just like other men.

Now, obviously, if that is true, then of course we do not have any divine Son. We do not have any atonement for he was only a man, and the other doctrines of the Christian faith are largely not true at all. Consequently, what he did has been emptied of value of entirely.

Now, those were the views that John had to contend with. In the 20th century, we have our own brand of heresy. Just to give you one simple illustration, about ten years ago, a group of British

scholars from the Universities of Cambridge, Oxford, and several from the University of Birmingham, as well as from another institution, wrote a book called *The Myth of God Incarnate*. It evoked such a response that a few evangelicals later on wrote a much smaller book called *The Truth of God Incarnate*. The kinds of things that the men who wrote the first book believed are these, and they are very common in our Christian world, and you must remember that we are not talking about outsiders. We are talking about insiders. We are talking about men who are professors of Christian theology in British institutions with high respect. Such men believe that Christianity must continually refine and reshape the doctrines that are found in, what we call, the Scriptures in order to make them believable to the modern scientific mind, and acceptable to the moral sensibilities of modern men.

As a result, of the personal encounter of 1st century men with the man Jesus, the 1st century people sought to categorize and invent names and titles to account for their experience, and so they largely invented the terms Son of God, Son of man, Messiah, teacher, *et cetera*. To them, Jesus was a mere man born of both Mary and Joseph in the normal sense to be understood as divine not in nature, not in essence as the divine Son, but only in function. That is he functions as a divine person, but is not really a divine person. He is not different in kind from you and me. His uniqueness is his capacity to inspire men to love God. From their religious transformation, by encounter with the man Jesus, the earlier Christians deified him. So Jesus was destined to revitalize a society by a revolution in that sense, and as such his death is simply the death of a martyr, and it was necessary in that sense.

It was in no sense an atonement for sin. He did not arise from the dead, but the hysterical faith of his followers that he did launched belief in his deity and the beginning of the church. Presupposed is the fact that dead men do not rise, and that includes Elvis, incidentally. [Laughter] Jesus is not only the way to God and to salvation, he is but one among many. I should have said he's not the only way, but he is one among many. Among others, Buddha, Martin Luther King, and still others, so the incarnation, the fact that God came to us as a God-man, that is an untruth. It is a myth. It is a religious Aesop's fable. Poetic or metaphorical way of expressing an idea that in the man Jesus, we may learn of God and draw closer to him. So what is the result of this? Well, there is

not word from God, so far as we know. God is unknown because he who revealed the Father did not reveal him. He was not able to reveal God, with certainty.

We have no atonement, for we have no human substitute. There is therefore no salvation. There is no hope. There is no Holy Spirit who is to be likened to indigestion or heartburn. If that's the Holy Spirit, many of them have had Holy Spirits or gas upon the stomach. There is therefore no gospel, and in fact there are no believers, and there is no Christianity. The apostle did not know about this of course, but you can see that the denial of modern men is essentially the same as the Cerinthian Gnostics, so when we read in First John of heresy and apostasy, we are not [to] think of this as something in the past. This is something that is with us today. The words are slightly different, but the doctrines and the beliefs and the actions of men are still with us.

The Cerinthians in John's day could only offer empty speculations, the product of human reason. John offered. He contented the truths of divine revelation confirmed by the Holy Spirit in his heart and life. In the final analysis, the great passion of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the trinity is to testify. That is his great passion, if I can speak in those terms. Jesus said that he would send the Holy Spirit, and that the Holy Spirit would testify. For example, in John chapter 14, in verse 26, we read, "But the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring you all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

And then in chapter 15, in verse 26, more specifically, the Lord Jesus told the apostles, "When the comforters come whom I will send unto you from the Father even the spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." So the one whom the Lord calls the spirit of truth, is the one who will testify of him.

Now, it's clear that the one who wrote that Gospel of John, is the author of the first epistle, and speaks in much the same language. The passage that we are looking at begins with a statement of the indispensability of Jesus' divine sonship. In the 6th through the 8th verses, he states this.

Now, we ask ourselves as we look at this passage, after waiting a few days perhaps to study First John, to what does this pronoun "this" refer to? Well, he has just stated, "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God." So this pronoun "this" refers to the Son of God, Jesus who is the Son of God. "This is he that came by water and by blood." So what John will tell us is that faith, in his Sonship, and Messianic mission as the coming one overcomes the world, and he is going to spell out the details of that. He begins by a statement concerning the manner of his coming. "This is he that came by water and by blood."

Now, it would be nice if we were all so interested in the things of the Lord that we could now devote two or three hours to the study of the expression, "came by water and blood." Much discussion has taken place over these phrases, but then you would miss the football games this afternoon, and they are of great moment to you, I'm sure. I can see the smiles on your faces. Some of you are smiling as you think about the games. The others of you are smiling at those who are thinking about looking at the game. We don't have time to do that, and as a matter of fact, it probably would not be profitable except in an academic kind of way.

There is a consensus of viewpoint, and personally I think it's, in this case, the consensus is correct, and the consensus is simply this. That when John says, "He came by water and blood," he means he has come through his baptism at the River Jordan where he was anointed as the Messiah, and through his baptism in blood at the cross of Calvary, and there he accomplished a propitiatory offering for sinners.

Now, he has just stated in chapter 4, in verse 10, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us. And sent his Son to be propitiation for our sins. He came by water. He came by blood." Let me elaborate just a little bit on that. He came by water in the baptism by John the Baptist at the River Jordan, and by that act, which has the significance of Old Testament prophecy, Isaiah prophesied that the Holy Spirit would come upon the Messiah, there at the River Jordan as our Lord was baptized by John the Baptist. "The Holy Spirit came upon him in the form of a dove, and the Father from heaven spoke and said, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Now, if you are to analyze the statement of the Father in heaven, which is a kind of coronation formula. "This is my Son," is a reference to the second Psalm, and the statement there is related specifically to the Messianic ministry of the one who would be the Son of God. He would ultimately overcome, and all of the authority of the earth would find its way into his hands. The last clause or so of the Father's statement, "In whom I am well pleased" is derived from Isaiah chapter 42, and verse 1, where the prophet Isaiah begins a treatment of the work that the suffering servant of Jehovah would do, in other words, the Messiah's ministry. So the statement from heaven, "This is my Son." The Messianic sovereign Lord of the earth, "in whom I am well pleased," the work of the Messiah, had finally reaching it's climax in Isaiah 53 and his atoning death, is the Father's way of saying at the baptism, this is the Son who is the king of the earth, and he will perform the work of the Messianic suffering servant of Jehovah. It was just as much as if he were to say, this is the Son of God, and he will do the Messianic work. "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," So it was there that Jesus was inaugurated as the Messiah to being his ministry of atonement and the other things associated with it.

Now, John himself has written concerning this quite well in verse 29 through verse 34 of John chapter 1. I'll just read it for you. This is what he wrote,

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God."

Now, John also says he "came by blood." We remember that the Lord Jesus himself referred to his death on Calvary's cross as a "baptism in blood." In Luke chapter 12, in verse 49 and verse 50, we read these words, "I tell thee that thoult shalt not depart thence til thou has paid the very last."

Well, I am reading from Luke chapter 12. Well, I think I am. Well, that's very interesting. I just wasn't reading verse 49 and verse 50, and what was puzzling to me was I read it in the first hour, and I didn't goof up like this in the first hour, and so verse 49, there is a difference, says, "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" So to put together what John has said, "this is he that came by water and blood," it's plain that what John means is first of all, historically this is the one who came through John's baptism, and through the baptism in blood on Calvary's cross. He came as the Messiah. He came inaugurated into his ministry, and then completed the atoning part of it with his death on Calvary's cross. So that the expression, "He came by water and blood," mark the two great stages of the Messianic ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's all very simple. I can understand why John did this.

Now, of course there is another stage that is to come in the future. John will devote a book toward that the visions that were given him by the Lord and contained in the book of Revelation, but when he says, "This is he that came by water and blood" he sums up his ministry of Messiah of Israel, and ultimately a ruler over the earth.

Now, the reasons why this is John's sense can be explained simply by the order of words. He does not say he came by blood and water, but by "water and blood." The prepositions that he uses, "by water," and then "in water," looking at the original text, these prepositions are harmonious with the sense, and especially the next clause enables us to understand more clearly what John is speaking about. He says, "Not by water only, but by water and the blood."

Now, that's very important "Not by water only, but by water and the blood" because you can see that the Cerinthians would have said, "He came by water only, not by the blood." For the

Messianic divine power left him before the shedding of the blood. They would have to say, "He came by water. He went away by blood." But John says, "He came through water and through blood." The death is part of his Messianic ministry, "Not in water only." John the Baptist came in water only, but John is no Savior. John is a man, such as you and I are, to carry out a particular task. He was the ambassador of the king, but only a man. He came in water. John therefore could not fulfill what John the Apostle is speaking about. "He came by water and blood," for he must offer the satisfaction for sin. He is no Cain. He does not have a bloodless kind of offering of his life, but the offering that our Lord offers is an offering of his blood. Without shedding of blood there is not remission of sins. Jesus came through water and blood, so the two great historical stages, of the Messianic ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ are summarized here.

Now, I've not said anything about the name that is given to him because the name tells the same story. "This is he that came by water in blood, even Jesus Christ," or to put it in harmony with what I have been saying, "Jesus Messiah." So Jesus is the Messiah that's one of the things that John is anxious to show. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ or the Messiah," he states in the first verse of this chapter, is born of God. So he's very concerned to show that he's the Messiah, and he came to do two great tasks. They're historically referred to. He was inaugurated into his ministry according to the Old Testament prophetic word. He carried out his ministry also according to the Old Testament prophetic word.

Listen, my Christian friend, the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ was a supernatural ministry, and anyone who has as his fundamental presupposition, there is no such thing as the supernatural, is thereby unable to comprehend the word of God. That's why the apostle says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit their foolishness to him, neither can he know them, they are discerned spiritually."

Now, John continues, and he says, "And it is the spirit that beareth witness because the spirit is truth." There is a third witness. In fact if we can speak of baptism there is a third baptism. There is the baptism in water administered by John the Baptist. There is the baptism in blood, which our

Lord alone carried out successfully. And then on the day of Pentecost, there came the baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit. The church united to one another and to the Lord. Every single believer in the Christian church indwelt permanently by the Holy Spirit.

Never in that sense had that taken place until that great day of Pentecost. That's why Pentecost is such a significant point in the unfolding ministry of the word of God. It was then that the Holy Spirit came in that special sense. The gift from the Son and the Father to the whole church, all believers bound together to our Lord in spiritual union and to one another. And the spirit is the witness. The gift of the spirit unites the church, and also the spirit continues his ministry through his abiding presence.

What does the spirit do? He certifies the victory of the Son of God. He insures that the water and blood do not become mere voices of past history, as might have transpired. We might have looked back upon the days of our Lord's earthly ministry, his baptism, his death on the cross as something that happened in the past, and only in the past, and the significance of it related to the past.

Now, that's important, of course, the historical fact of the coming of the Son of God, the historical ministry, extremely important. We don't deny that. We affirm that with the greatest fervor. It did happen in history, but what John is saying is, though it happened in history, at the very moment the Holy Spirit, the third person of the trinity is active in testifying to that in the hearts of all of the believing men and women. The ministry continues. He certifies the victory of the Son of God, and ensures us that the water and the blood are not mere facts of ancient history, but they are living facts with what we must contend today, in this very meeting, as a matter of fact. So the spirit is the one who bears witness. Notice the present tense. He bears witness, not bore witness though he did bear witness in the past. He bears witness today in the hearts of men, and he will bear witness in the future as well. So he continues to bear witness.

As a matter of fact, he is the ultimate attester of spiritual truth. Whatever is stated in Christian matters, if it does not have his attestation is something less or other than the truth. Every

spiritual claim must satisfy the ministry, the attesting ministry of the Holy Spirit. When men make claims, some of them outrageous being made today, we are not only justified, we are required to bring them to the testimony of the word of God. Do they meet the testimony of the word of God? Because if they do not, then it's something other than the truth, less than the truth.

Now, the spirit then continues his ministry. John kind of sums it up in the 8th verse by saying, "There are three that bear witness, the spirit, the water and the blood." So the spirit testifies to the Messianic ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, testifies that atonement has been accomplished, and further that men who respond in grace, God's grace, to the atoning work of our Lord may enter into the benefits of what he has accomplished. Forgiveness of sins, justification of life, Sonship of God, priesthood before God, all of the many blessings of Christian salvation stand upon the solid rock of the ministry of the second person of the Godhead, testified to by the third person who is in the Lord's words and in the apostle's words, "the spirit of truth." Let us remember that.

Further he says, "These three agree in one." That is they converge on the single point. One gets the impression as one hears John that what he is trying to do is to forestall what you in the 20th century might say. Well, it's easy to talk about believing in Christ on the part of the apostles because they were present with him, and they saw him, and they felt him. Well, as a matter of fact, John does say something like that as [he] begins, when he says, "That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you." So he had seen, heard, and handled the Son of God, so you say, in a kind of an excuse, "Well, the apostles had an experience we don't have. If we just had had that experience, we would have believed." Nothing could be more diametrically opposed to the word of Scripture.

You see what John is doing, it seems, is he is trying to say, you people who say that secondhand evidence, you don't have a leg to stand on. The reason you don't have a leg to stand on is that the Holy Spirit is alive and testifying today. This very moment incidentally, if you are listening to me, at this very moment the Holy Spirit is alive and testifying to the Son of God. We don't believe on second evidence except in the sense that the apostles have given us the record. Of course in that sense, we read it, but our faith ultimately is not simply by the secondhand evidence. It's by

the firsthand work of the Holy Spirit in bringing us to the conviction of sin to faith in the Son of God, and he lives, and he brings men to faith today. So they agree in one, the spirit, the water and the blood.

We have firsthand evidence. We have a Holy Spirit who dwells within the heart of each one of us. The apostles didn't have that. If the Lord Jesus was on Beersheba Street, and they were on Dan Street, they weren't with the Lord, but it doesn't make any difference to us whether we're on Beersheba Street or Dan Street or Main Street or whatever it may be, the Lord Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, is with us. The apostles would surely have rejoiced to have had the permanent presence of the Lord Jesus as their possession. Listen, Christians. We are blessed infinitely in the presence of the Lord Jesus in our lives.

Now, having said that and time is fleeting, for two verses the 9th and 10th he says a word about the crucial importance of belief in the Son. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. For this is the witness of God that he hath testified of his Son." If you can believe he said men, well, surely you can believe God. The psalmist said, "In my haste, I said all men are liars." Well, as a matter of fact he was almost right. One man was no liar, our Lord, but practically everyone else is a liar. The psalmist said, "In my haste, I said all men are liars." He was more right than wrong, and we have modern indications of that, and we have had this last week some illustrations of it with the Libyan ambassador, who has said that our representative is lying, our representative had made it necessary for him to say that. He would say be accusing the Libyan ambassador of lying.

As a matter of fact, diplomacy is, in one sense, the science of prevarication, so everyone is probably lying a little bit. The Libyans just do a little better job at the present time. As a matter of fact, they are good drawers too because they can really draw pictures of engagements of F-14s and migs that no one would believe except little children, but at any rate, what John says is if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater, and this is the witness of which he has witness of his Son.

He says further, that this brings an internal certitude. "He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself. He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son." So when a person believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, what follows is that there is a certitude produced by the internal testimony of the Lord God. Faith, when present, attests its own divine origin. Let us please remember this. That in the final analysis to attest divine truth, there is only one thing that ultimately counts. It is not the testimony of men. It is the testimony of God. It is not our arguments in apologetics. It is the testimony of God. This is why a Christian who has been brought to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus and has the conviction that Jesus is the Son of God, and his life is his, cannot be shaken, cannot be shaken in his faith because he has the testimony of God.

Now, one of the greatest statements, I think, ever made along this line for its clarity was made by a southern theologian of the last century. James Henely Thornwell said this in context. He said, "After saying that human reason is unreliable that there are certain things it can do. It can discern the obligations, which naturally arise from the acts of the divine will, but it's limited. It can discern the things that are beautiful and noble, in the new circumstances in which we are placed it can collect, compare and elaborate, into scientific unity the truths, which are brought within its reach." But then Mr. Thornwell said, "But in no case is reason the ultimate rule of faith. No authority can be higher than the direct testimony of God, and no certainty can be greater than that imparted by the spirit shining on the word. If we want authority, and if we want certainty, we have it in the spirit shining on the word." And then he added this statement, "An accredited revelation." That's a revelation accredited by the Holy Spirit. "An accredited revelation like an oath among men should put an end to controversy."

Look, my Christian friend, that's why Paul said when he preached at Corinth, he didn't preach in words of man's wisdom. What did he preach? He preached in demonstration and power of the Holy Spirit. He said that your faith should not rest in men, but in the power of God. In other words, we are talking about something internal. We're talking about the Holy Spirit giving certainty,

and accrediting a revelation. That he does. So I listen to lots of lectures and read lots of things about unbelieving men. I look at the things they write. I puzzle. I puzzle. I try to find the flaw in it, but deep down within my heart, the Holy Spirit says that is untruth. I do not accredit that. I do not justify that, and well, a week or two later, I may find something that explains the whole thing simply for me, and I pass that off as something else that an unbelieving man has sought to offer to disturb the faithful. It may take me a year or two or three, but nevertheless, fundamentally the faith that we have is a faith that God has implanted within us. He's given us that sense of certainty within ourselves.

You say, "That's mighty subjective." No, it's not subjective. It's objective. It's the presence of the Holy spirit who has come into my life. It's internal. That's true, but it is the only certain kind of testimony, God's testimony. It's an accredited revelation that we have in the word of God accredited by the Holy Spirit.

Now, he says, "When a man rejects this, he dishonors God." He says, "He that believeth not hath made him a liar." It's as if he were to say to God, to God's face, "You have lied. You have uttered blasphemy. You have dishonored the truth." And further, John says, "It's the rejection of a testimony that continues. He believeth not the record that God." (The Greek text uses the perfect tense.) "Has testified of his Son." Has testified, that is in the past, and it's the results continue to the very moment God has testified of his Son. It's there. It's there Christians. It's there unbelievers. It's right there in the inspired word of God.

And finally, the last two verses, he speaks of the eternal benefits of possessing the Son. He says, "This is the record. This is the testimony. The Holy Spirit gives that God hath given us eternal life." That is, not offered, not promised, but has given us eternal life, and if he has given us eternal life, we haven't earned it. It's not a prize that we earn. It's not something that we are able by doing something to acquire. Further he says, "It's in the Son." And so in giving us eternal life, since eternal life is in the Son, we must have the Son too. So he has given us the Son, and the life that is within

him, and further he not only says that, but he says, "He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son at the present time." We have it as a possession, and we have it forever.

You know what that means? Well, that means things like this. You desire peace. Peace is in Christ, and so when you have Christ, you have serenity. Power is in our Lord, and since power is in our Lord, and you have our Lord, then you have the means by which you may defeat frustration. And not only is peace and power in our Lord, but divine love is there, and so you have all that means tenderness of heart and love that comes from him. And finally you have in him life, and therefore you have the defeat of death in your own life, and as you face the future, as you draw near to the physical death that each of us shall experience, if the Lord does not come, you have the means by which you not only survive, my Christian friend, but you are victorious in our Lord and savior Jesus Christ.

That means something to us old folks, and remember this, you young people, we never know when we do die. I taught in theological seminary for over thirty years, about forty to be exact. Many of the kids that I taught are with the Lord now. It's amazing. Almost from the beginning, men who were taught in seminary are with the Lord. They know more theology than I do now. They just cannot give me a lecture. I would like for them to do that, but nevertheless they are probably saying among themselves, "He has some things right, but he sure has lots of things wrong." [Laughter] The 12th verse, he says, "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life."

Now, I know you've heard me say this before, it's been said to have been Charles Haddon Spurgeon's statement. Perhaps it was Rowland Hills, who lived a little bit before him, but Rowland Hill said, "He that hath the Son hath life." Hath, h-a-t-h that spells got it. That's what we have. We have eternal life. Well, John has said this is the faith that overcomes the world, and it is. The divine-human Messiah, who has completed his work, and by the spirit continually testifies to it, so that the simple choice phases us to believe, is to walk in the light in harmony with the ultimate unanswerable truth to bask in the divine love, to receive the divine life. Deliver us in our worldliness today from

the preservaty of Bunyan's Man with the Muck Rake. Do you remember him? He had a muck rake, and he spent all of his time with his muck rake looking down, and all the time over his head there was golden crown that was his, if he would just look up. He spent his whole life looking down. That's a worldly man, a worldly man who doesn't realize that the real possessions of life are that way.

May God help us to be delivered from our worldliness. It will not save me to know that Christ is a Savior, but it will save me to trust him to be my Savior. Thomas Brooks once said, "He that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved. Be his sins never so many, but he that believeth not on the Lord Jesus must be damned be his sins never so few." So I invite you by virtue of what Christ has done, testified to by the Holy Spirit, come. Lay hold of Christ. Lean upon his word. Trust in him by trusting in his atonement. Touch the hem of his garment, and you shall be saved through faith. May God in his grace bring you to the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

If you are here today, and you've never believed in him, I've got two things I want to say to you. First of all, I apologize for going over time. Secondly, trust Christ. No better time than now to bow your head. When a person prays, he trusts the atonement. Pray, "O God. Atonement is in Christ. I want the forgiveness of my sins, in grace give me life." You're pleading the atonement as you pray. May God help you to do that. Let's stand for the benediction. Bow our heads.

[Prayer] Father we are so grateful to Thee for the word of God, and for the testimony of the great apostle, as he neared the end of his life so positive, so forthright, so blessed a testimony to our Lord Jesus Christ who's we are and whom we serve. Lord, if there shall be someone in this auditorium who does not know him, give them no rest nor peace until they rest in Christ.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.