

THE EPISTLES OF JOHN

Message Eleven

The Testimony of God and the Ministering of Life

Scripture Reading: 1 John 5:6-17

I. The testimony of God is the testimony by the water, the blood, and the Spirit that Jesus is the Son of God—1 John 5:6-10:

- A. In order to know the significance of the mystery of the water, the blood, and the Spirit, we need to understand the central thought of 1 John:
 - 1. First John's central thought is that God in His Son as the Spirit has come into us as our life; this life brings us into a corporate fellowship with the Triune God and the believers, and this fellowship is the church life—1:1-7.
 - 2. This central thought is focused on the Son of God—3:8; 4:9, 15; 5:5:
 - a. The title *the Son of God* involves the imparting of the divine life—vv. 11-12.
 - b. The Son of God was manifested for the purpose of imparting the divine life—4:9.
 - c. By the water, the blood, and the Spirit testimony was given as to His true identity—that He is the Son of God—5:5-9.
- B. Jesus, the man of Nazareth, was attested to be the Son of God by the water He went through in His baptism (Matt. 3:16-17; John 1:31), by the blood He shed on the cross (19:31-35; Matt. 27:50-54), and also by the Spirit He gave not by measure (John 1:32-34; 3:34); by these three God has testified that Jesus is His Son given to us (1 John 5:7-10), that in Him we may receive His eternal life by believing into His name (vv. 11-13; John 3:16, 36; 20:31):
 - 1. The water refers to the baptism of the Lord Jesus—1 John 5:6, 8; Matt. 3:16-17:
 - a. The first manifestation of Jesus as the Son of God was His baptism by John—John 1:31-34.
 - b. After He was baptized and came up from the death waters, the Spirit of God descended upon Him as a dove, and John testified that He was the Son of God—vv. 32, 34.

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- c. A voice out of the heavens bore witness that this One was the beloved Son—Matt. 3:17.
 2. The blood refers to the blood the Lord Jesus shed on the cross for our redemption—1 John 5:6, 8:
 - a. Some very special features were present at the crucifixion of Christ—Matt. 27:51-53.
 - b. The centurion and those with him guarding Jesus were frightened and said, “Truly this was the Son of God”—v. 54.
 3. The Spirit, who is the truth, the reality, testifies that Jesus is the Son of God, in whom is the eternal life; by thus testifying, He imparts the Son of God into us to be our life—1 John 5:6, 8; John 14:16-17; 15:26; Col. 3:4.
 4. Jesus was manifested as the Son of God in an open way by the water of baptism, by the blood He shed on the cross, and by the Spirit; by these three means God introduced His Son to mankind so that they might believe and have eternal life—John 3:15-16; 20:31; 1 John 5:9-13.
- C. The water is for termination, the blood is for redemption, and the Spirit is for germination; we, the believers, have been terminated, redeemed, and germinated, and we are now in the proper church life, which is a life of termination, redemption, and germination—Acts 2:38, 42; 1 Cor. 2:2; 10:16-17.
- D. The testimony of God is not only that Jesus is the Son of God but also that He gives to us eternal life, which is in His Son—1 John 5:10-13:
 1. Because eternal life is in the Son, if we have the Son, we have eternal life—vv. 11-12.
 2. God testified concerning His Son so that we might believe into His Son and have His divine life; if we believe into His Son, we receive and have His testimony in ourselves—v. 10.
 3. The written words of the Scriptures are the assurance to the believers, who believe into the name of the Son of God, that they have eternal life—v. 13.

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II. In 1 John 5:14-17 there is the indication not only that we have eternal life and enjoy it but also that we can minister this life to other members of the Body:

- A. Verses 14 through 17 show us that the eternal life within us can overcome death both in ourselves and in other members of the church.
- B. Verse 16 is the only reference in the Bible to ministering life:
 - 1. To minister life is to impart life.
 - 2. When we have a surplus of life, we can minister from this supply to others—v. 16.
- C. Verse 14 speaks of prayer in the fellowship of eternal life:
 - 1. We should ask according to God's will, not according to our way, desire, or preference.
 - 2. The prayer that is according to God's will indicates that the praying one is abiding in the fellowship of the divine life and is also abiding in the Lord Himself, and thus he is truly one with the Lord—John 15:4-5.
 - 3. The knowing in 1 John 5:15 is based on the fact that after receiving the divine life we abide in the Lord and are one with Him in our praying to God in His name—John 15:7, 16; 16:23-24.
 - 4. In 1 John 5:16 *he shall ask* and *he will give life* refer to the same person, that is, to the one who sees his brother sinning and asks concerning him:
 - a. Such an asker, who is abiding in the Lord and who is one with the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17), becomes the means, the channel, by which God's life-giving Spirit can give life to the one for whom he is asking.
 - b. This is a matter of the ministering of life in the fellowship of the divine life.
 - 5. The vital point is that if we would pray for a brother according to what is described in 1 John 5:16, we need to be one with the Lord—John 15:7.
- D. To be one who can give, impart, life to others, we must abide in the divine life and live, walk, and have our being in the divine life—1 John 1:1-7.

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- E. What is described in 5:14-17 can be experienced only by those who are deep in the Lord:
1. We need to experience and enjoy the eternal life within us, and we need to minister this life by being a channel through which eternal life can flow to other members of the Body.
 2. If we would be a channel for eternal life to flow out to others, we must be deep in the Lord, and we must know the Lord's heart by being in His heart—Psa. 25:14; Gen. 18:17, 22-33; Amos 3:7.