

INTRO

- What is one of the earliest life memories you can still remember?
- Have you ever been greatly surprised by something in the Bible? What was it?

READ

1 John 5:6-12

REFLECT & RESPOND

Throughout this series, we've been looking at what makes for an authentic faith. For the Apostle John, the *object* of our faith is equally important. That is, it is crucial that what we believe in is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. In this week's passage John speaks about some of the witnesses that the Father has sent about his Son and why it matters that we take them seriously.

Qu: Why does it matter that we believe the right things? Why can't we just have "faith in faith"?

1. The Three Witnesses

John speaks of three witness about Jesus' identity as both man and the Son of God. Two were events in Jesus' life: his baptism (the water) where God declared him to be his son, and his crucifixion (the blood) which was accompanied by great signs.

These two witnesses were joined by the inner witness of the Holy Spirit, an evidence of who Christ is dwelling in our very being and testifying about Him. Thus, John points our attention to witnesses both objective (in the world out there) and subjective (in our personal experience).

Qu: Can you think of other 'objective' witnesses about Jesus Christ beyond his baptism and crucifixion? What about 'subjective' evidence?

2. God's Testimony

It is likely that John's intention in emphasizing both Jesus' baptism and crucifixion was to combat a heresy of his time. A man named Cerinthus was preaching that Jesus' was divine at his baptism but only human (and not God) at his death. He was heavily influenced by certain philosophies that believed that all created matter was evil and that our goal in life is to attain enlightenment. Cerinthus had to twist God's own revelation about Jesus Christ in order to fit his philosophy.

Qu: Why is it so important that Jesus Christ was himself God on that cross?

Qu: Cerinthus' heresy is not around anymore, but in what other ways do we twist God's revelation to fit our own agendas?

3. Life in the Son of God

Finally, John points out that it is in Christ that we have life eternal. That means the gospel was not given to us just so we would believe in the right things (enlightenment) or becoming better people (sanctification) but that we would become alive. This life is a free gift from God, made available in Jesus Christ alone.

Qu: What is the difference between 'being alive' and having eternal life in Jesus Christ? Have you been living that life eternal in Christ?

PRAY

- Spend time praying for one another and those you know who need to hear the good news of salvation.