

Talk – 1 John 5:1-21 – Theology & Practice

Purpose of the Series:

The Christ is Jesus – and in him you may know that you have eternal life.

Central Truth

The Christ is Jesus – and in him (and only him) you may know that you have eternal life.

Purpose

I want to listener to have confidence in living for Jesus now, because there is an eternity coming thanks to him – but only for those in him.

Bible Reading

1 John 5:1-21

Today's issue:

Now is it - and it doesn't matter what comes after!

Talk – 1 John 5:1-21 – Theology & Practice

Outline

³¹ *‘these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:31)*

¹³ *I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that **you may know** that you have eternal life. (1 John 5:13)*

What we know...

The Christ is Jesus – and in him you may know that you have eternal life.

Theological Conclusion

A Victory

A Testimony

Pastoral Conclusion

A Future - confident in approaching God

A Job – look after those in God’s family

A Child – live as a child of God

[at 5pm Only]

*Loving and Knowing God,
Serving God and Others
and Growing His Kingdom
by Proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*

A Command – keep yourselves from idols

How has 1 John helped you to ‘walk’?

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CHECK TIME

Talk

Let's pray

Lord and Father,

You have written, through John, these words which we are about to consider - so that those who believe in the name of your Son may know they have eternal life.

Father, that is a promise that seems pretty big, and a promise which in the world we live in, also seems pretty remote.

Help us listen and respond, not just for now, but for all that you have to come.

In Jesus Name. AMEN

Intro

- 'I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life' so writes John in Chapter 5:13.
- For as confusing as John can be, one of his helpful writing quirks, is that he states clearly why he writes.
- At the end of his **Gospel**, John said; '*these things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*' (John 20:31)
- His purpose for writing the Gospel is to tell people about Jesus – and by doing so people could come to Jesus and see the Christ and Son of God - so that they might believe in him and have life.
- John wanted to introduce the Messiah to strangers.
- John is an evangelist.
- He puts Jesus, before people, and tells them about him, so that they can make up their own minds, believe, and have life.
- And many did.

What we have in 1 John – is a **letter** - to those who believed.

- And so, his purpose is slightly different - '*I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life*' (1 John 5:13).
- He wants to encourage those who already believed to hold on to what they knew about Jesus.

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- Here, John wants to ensure that the Messiah was no stranger.
- This is John the Pastor.
- His message: *The Christ is Jesus – and in him you may know that you have eternal life.*

What we know...

- For a few moments, I want us to think about ‘what we know’.
- It is a human value to like being ‘in the know’.
- To be informed and in the loop.
- With information comes understanding, with understanding comes comfort.
- John writes to a bunch of people who have the box seat when it comes to Jesus – because they know what he offers.

Illustration

- I remember when I was a boy holidaying in England, I was taken to visit one of the lovely botanic garden mazes.
- I was ushered into this maze with its high manicured shrub lined-fences – which as a young boy was fantastic – a great adventure.
- But as I journeyed into the maze further, and felt it go on and on, and as I saw the increasingly panicked look of some of the kids’ faces who have been wandering around the maze longer than I – my sense of enjoyment waned and my feeling of dread increased.
- I have often thought since that day that that maze was like a metaphor for life.
- We can often view life as a bit of an adventure, there are lots of twists and turns, traps and perils, thrills and spills – and at points you can just feel lost – and as time goes on, and you look around maybe at how others are faring, it is not always that encouraging.
- That day for me in the botanic maze only got worse, until I looked up, and on a platform high above the maze was my father. From his vantage point he could see the whole maze.
- All I needed to do, was call out to him and listen to his instructions and he would tell me the way through the maze.
- What John has done in his letter, is encourage those who know Jesus to look up and listen to him – and he will not just guide you through the maze of life, but bringing you safely into eternal life.
- What Jesus promises is not just helpful for the here and now, to is helpful for our forever future.

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- John reminds believers over and over again what they know.
- Look at 2:5 – ‘*This is how **we know** we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did*’
- 2:20 – ‘*You have an anointing from the Holy One and all of you **know** the truth. I don’t write to you because you don’t know, but because you **do know** the truth*’
- 2:29 – ‘*If **you know** that he is righteous, **you know** that everyone who does what is right has been born of him*’
- And he keeps going...
- 3:5 – ‘but you know...’, 3:10 – ‘This is how we know...’, 3:16 – ‘This is how we know...’, 3:19 – ‘This is how we know...’, 4:13 – ‘We know...’ and then we get to the last chapter which we look at today and eight times John says ‘We know...’

- John writes to believers to remind them that **what they know of Jesus**.
- He says that that knowledge should shape the way they live in the here and now – but that is not all – he writes to say that knowledge should give a believer assurance in the ages to come – in eternal life.

Application

- Let me ask you?
 - Do you know Jesus?
 - Does what you know of Jesus shape the way you live in the here and now?
 - And do you know you have eternal life?
- It would be presumptuous of me to assume that everyone here would answer Yes to those questions!
- If you don’t know Jesus, if your life is not shaped by Jesus, if you have no confidence in what happens when you die, then what you have before you in 1 John is a picture of what believers have and what is on offer to you.

- Jesus offers direction for the here and now, and he offers comfort for the life to come.
- John’s message throughout the whole letter has been: *The Christ is Jesus – and in him you **may know** that you have eternal life.*
 - – and his message to believers today is the same: *The Christ is Jesus – and in him you **may know** that you have eternal life.*

PAUSE

- Chapter 5 can be broken into two parts – the first half is the Theological conclusion to the letter and second half is the Pastoral conclusion to the letter.

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- And in this chapter we have two fairly tricky passages – so I hope you will go with me on this one.
- Let's work through it – I am going to spend the bulk of our time looking at the first half.

A Victory

- First a victory – verses 1-4
- We have seen time and time again in this letter that love, truth and obedience all hold together and in fact should be the mark of a believer.
- Any person who believes that Jesus is the Christ is one who is born of God – in other words, they belong to the family of God – and in being in his family you have around you many brothers and sisters.
 - Now, part of being family is that you are loved – loved by the Father and loved by his children.
 - And equally part of being family is that you, in turn, love – you love the Father and you love his children.
- Loving others is not just a sentiment – it comes as you obediently carry out his commands – so **love**, understood in truth, and demonstrated in obedience to God for the benefit of his children.
- Now friends, that should look different to what is on offer in our world – which is why in verse 4 he says, '*for everyone born of God **overcomes** the world*'.
 - This is not about conquering.
 - To overcome the world is to successfully live God's way and not succumb the ways of the world which can be unloving, or false, or disobedient.
 - By loving God's way, and by believing in his Son, you *overcome* the world – that is the victory of the believer.
- Now you might say, particularly in our current climate, that being Christian doesn't feel very much like being a winner.
- There is opposition, there is ridicule.
- Christians are blamed for all sorts of things.
- And there are some areas of public debate where Christians are now more than ever having to defend moral, good, godly positions which in the eyes of the world are deemed wrong, bad or out-of-step.
- Doesn't feel very victorious.

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- I think John recognises that, because in the next few verses he points people back to Jesus – the one who did live in the world in the face of much opposition, lost his life yet overcomes death – bringing a victory to all who believe in him.

A Testimony

- So second, a Testimony – verses 6-12.
- In this section, we see two kinds of testimony about Jesus.
- The first kind of testimony tells us something about Jesus and his *ministry in this life*.
- The second kind of testimony tell us something about Jesus and his *salvation into eternal life*.

Work with me on this:

- In verse 6 we see the first testimony – what we know of Jesus because he came by water and blood. It is a testimony to his earthly ministry.
- The *water* here refers to his baptism, when Jesus went down to the Jordan to be baptised by John the Baptist.
- Keep a finger in 1 John and turn back with me to John gospel (Pg: 1050) Chapter 1:29

WAIT

- When Jesus presented himself for baptism, John the Baptist recognised him – you can see what he says – verse 29 '*Look, the lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.*'
- It was John the Baptist who recognised Jesus to be the one who would deal with sin.
- It was his baptism that marked the beginning of Jesus earthly ministry.

- At the other end of his ministry life of course is Jesus' death – that is what the *blood* refers too in 1 John.
- Jesus came to save.
- His ministry was to save people from their sins and the only way for that to be complete was to die taking the punishment, taking the consequence, for that sin.

- What we see between Jesus' baptism and his death is opposition, ridicule and blame – in fact it led to the cross - hardly victorious.
- Yet what we also see in the earthly ministry Jesus, is the perfect and recognised example of one who loves, in truth, obediently to the will of his father.
- In Jesus, we see one who *overcomes* the world and despite all that the world throws at him, he does that in love, truth and obedience – just like what is now asked of those who believe in him.

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PAUSE

- The second kind of testimony tells us something about Jesus and his *salvation into eternal life*.
- If the first testimony highlights his *humanity*, this second testimony highlights his *divinity*.
- Let's look again at Jesus' baptism.
- When Jesus came out of the water at his baptism a dove comes and rests upon Jesus and a voice from heaven declared, *'This is my Son, whom I love, and with whom I am well pleased'* (the other gospels Matthew, Mark and Luke all record that for us)
- It was not just John the Baptist who testified about Jesus – it was God himself.
- Look again at John's gospel (*you've got it open*).
- Look at verse 32, John the Baptist says *'I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on Jesus. I would not have known him except that the one whom sent me to baptise with water told me 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain, is he who will baptise with the Holy Spirit. I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.'*
- What I think John the writer is trying to do is to establish both the *human* and *divine* testimony of Jesus – so that there can be no doubt that in Jesus we have God's Messiah.
- Believers can rest on both the human testimony of Jesus and also God's testimony of Jesus.
- So, if you go back to 1 John 5, I hope you will be able to see how this works – verse 9.
- *'We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is better because it is the testimony of God which is given about the Son'* – and when you believe, this testimony is also put on your heart.
- What is this testimony?
 - Is it simply that Jesus existed?
 - Is it that he was baptised?
 - Is it that he died?

Human history tells you those things.

If that is all there is – then whooped dee do!

- The testimony that believers have is better – it is a testimony that has indeed overcome the world. It is victorious.
- Verse 11 – *'This is the testimony: God has given us **eternal life** and this life is in his Son'*.

Do you know this Jesus?

- This man of history is also the Son of God – and the one who give life beyond this life.

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Illustration

- Can you imagine how amazing it would be if you could walk up to Myer (in Rundle mall) and off the shelf pick up a product called the ‘elixir of life’.
- An elixir that once taken would guarantee eternal life.
 - That would be better than any anti-aging cream – better than any muscle supplement – better than any medication!
 - Can you imagine how valuable that would be?
 - Of all the products, you could buy at Myer for a better life – that would have to be the top pick.
 - It would make our new hospital over the road seem a little overpriced!
- Jesus is not a product you can buy on a shelf – but he is God’s Son, and it is through him that we come into eternal life.
- Look at 5:12 – ‘*He who has the Son has life, he who does not have the son of God does not have life*’.
- You can’t make it much clearer than that.
- You have him or you don’t – if you have him you have life, and if not, you don’t.
- John leaves no room for doubt, no two-way bet – and he says:
- *The Christ is Jesus – and **only** in him you may know that you have eternal life.*

PAUSE

- What follows in the rest of the chapter are some Pastoral conclusions – all but one I have covered in previous sermons as we have moved through 1 John.
- So briefly:
 - If you know you have eternal life in Jesus then:

Pastoral response number 1. You have a future – verse 14, you can be **confident in approaching God**.

- What does that look like? well for now that is in prayer.
- Ask anything and, *if according to his will* he will hear and give.
- There is something very nice about being able to approach the Father of all and ask for what you want – and to know that if it is good for us he will give it – according to his will.
- So Pray.

Pastoral response Number 2. We have a job – from verse 16 – our job is to **look after those in our family**.

- Let me read from verse 16 because these verses can be tricky (and I have already had a few people ask me what these mean). *[READ 5:16-17]*

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- Notice that we are talking about a brother – so a fellow believer. That’s sets the context.
- What is the ‘sin that does not lead to death’ as opposed to the ‘sin that leads to death’?
- It could be referring to ‘a’ sin (as if there is a particular sin) or just ‘sin’ (in general).
- The clue is verse 17 when he says: ‘All wrongdoing is sin’ which would make it unlikely to be referring to ‘a’ particular sin.
- So John is referring to sins in general.

- The next clue is the phrase ‘leads to death’ which occurs four times in these verses (and three of the four in the negative) – and what it is suggesting is that there is a kind of sin which leads to death or *puts one on a path towards death*.
- So, what is the kind of sin that sets such a person and such a deadly path?

- Remember back in 1:8-9, John wrote that all sin has consequences, but through confession believers are forgiven and purified.
- So, what is this kind of sin that might lead to death? It would seem that the only sin that could never be forgiven is a persistent lack of belief in Jesus – the one whom God has sent to die for sin.
- The sin that leads to death here - is the sin of the unbeliever.
- The sin of the one unwilling to confess their sin.
- The ‘sin that leads to death’ is sin that remains unforgiven.

- Now, Yes, believers will commit sins, but that kind of sin does not lead to death because of Jesus who forgives sin.
- The ‘sin that does lead to death’ belongs to the person who has not received God’s forgiveness.

- The brother in verse 16 is the believer – if you see them sin (a sin that does not lead to death because they are forgiven) pray for them that they won’t sin.
- But for the unbeliever – the one who sins (and whose sin does lead to death because they are unforgiven), and it seems that he is saying don’t pray for them.

So why not pray for such a person?

- I suspect, that John point here (given it is the end of the letter and the part of the letter where he is trying to encourage believers to push on in faith) is that he just trying to encourage people to pray for believers who need it (especially in the face of sin), which let’s face it, we all need.

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- So look out for those in our family – help them to walk well in Christ.

Pastoral Response number 3 – Be a child - Live as a child of God – from verse 18.

- What does that look like?
- Avoid sin, avoid living in a way that dishonours the Father.
- At times that will even if it will mean living in a way that is out of step with the world.
- Where the whole world might live under the control of the evil one, those who live in the Son, live according to what we know is true.
- They love, in truth, obediently.
- *[at 9am]* Love God, Know him, Serve him and others and do that by proclaiming that the Christ is Jesus.
- *[5pm Church – outline and mission statement]*

***Loving and Knowing God,
Serving God and Others
and Growing His Kingdom
by Proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.***

And finally, Pastoral response number 4 – A command and the only one that has not been explicitly mentioned at any point in the letter – the very last verse - **‘Keep yourself from Idols’**.

- Some think this is an after-thought.
- As if John finishes writing and then suddenly remembers something else – and so he hastily tacts onto the end *‘Dear Children, keep yourselves from idols’*
- I am not convinced, because when you think about what an idol is - it actually fits nicely with all that John has been saying in this letter.
- An idol is anything that you worship in place of God.
- What 1 John has been doing in this letter has been pointing people to Jesus as God - and he has done that by encouraging believers to look away from the things of this world which call upon us to worship them.
- Those who look to the world get lost in the world – like an endless maze full of idols begging for attention.
- In contrast, John wants believers to worship rightly – by turning away from the idols of the world and turning to the saviour of the World.
- Believers should look to Jesus and listen to him – and he will not just guide you through the maze of life, but bringing you safely into his eternal life.
- *The Christ is Jesus – and in him (and only in him) you may know that you have eternal life.*

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Let's pray.

Thanks for the victory we have in Jesus

Thanks for the testimony about your Christ

Help us to live with your future in mind, doing the job you ask, as your child, according to your commands.

In Jesus, AMEN

Thanks for the privilege of allowing me to preach through the letter of 1 John.