

November 15/16, 2025

**Life in the Son**  
*Face to Face Series*  
**1 John 5:6-12**  
Pastor Ryan Harmon

In our study of 1 John together, I have come to this conclusion. The Apostle John must have been a pretty blunt guy. He just cuts straight to the point; he doesn't pull any punches. That's what I've felt as we've walked through this book together. Now that could be due to his personality; maybe we're seeing a bit of what he was like. We know this letter was written when he was older, and so maybe he just didn't have time for any nonsense. He was just going to give it straight. But his writing of this letter sets up over and over again stark contrasts, and these contrasts call us—the readers and listeners—to a decision. These contrasts make it very clear we have a choice. Will it be light or darkness, love or hate? Will we follow the Spirit of truth or the spirit of error? Stark contrasts that lay the decision bare. This morning as we continue, we come to what is perhaps the most sobering and stark contrast that leads us to a very important choice. Will we believe God, or will we make Him a liar?

That's what we want to consider this morning as we continue this study. We're in 1 John, Chapter 5, Verses 6 to 12. We're going to be picking up where we left off last week. We're going to recover verse 5, because that's where the flow of thought begins. John says this:

**Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? (\*NASB, 1 John 5:5)**

Now last week, Bryan reminded us of this good news. We can stand assured; we can stand confident that we can live an overcoming life, a victorious life, not because of anything we have done, but because of what Jesus has done. Jesus is the One who already overcame, and we now can step into the benefits that He has purchased: a victorious life, an overcoming life that anyone can enter. There's only one requirement: believing in Jesus Christ...believing that He was and is the Son of God. If you have made that choice, you can stand assured you have gone from death into newness of life. It's brought about purely by the grace of God, through faith in the Son of God. It's the only way anyone can enter into this overcoming, victorious life, available to all. But there's only one path for entry. It is through Jesus and Jesus Christ alone. The fact that it's through Jesus highlights why John has been so consumed with helping his readers and helping us understand clearly who Jesus actually was. It's so critical that we think rightly about Jesus. We've talked about how there were false teachers that had come into this community, and they were claiming partial truths about Jesus. John, then, was adamant to come in and to correct the record, to set the record straight. "This is who Jesus actually was!" It's critical that we understand who He actually was, so that we might follow Him. And so, as we continue in verse 6, John returns to this critical point to think rightly about Jesus. Verse 6:

**This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood.**

Clear as day, right? It is confusing. Commentators agree that this section of 1 John is the most difficult to interpret. It's a difficult section that seems to be somewhat confusing. What exactly does John mean by Jesus **came. This is the One who came by water and blood.** There are a number of interpretations that faithful Christians have offered up. But I believe the most straightforward understanding, the most helpful understanding, seems to be getting back to what John has been about from the very beginning...to understand this reference to the water and the blood this way: The **water and the blood** serve as book ends for Jesus' public life of ministry. The **water** is a reference to His *baptism*. He met John out in the wilderness. He was baptized by him in the waters of baptism. Now in that moment, you might remember that John said, "I'm not even worthy to baptize You." But Jesus said, "We must do this to fulfill all righteousness." He was baptized in the water of the Jordan, and as He came out, we're told the heavens opened up and the Spirit descended upon Him and never departed. In that moment, in those waters initiated the beginning of Jesus' life of public ministry, a ministry that was headed towards a very clear goal. Jesus had one end in mind, and that was to get to the cross, the **water** and the **blood**...the cross where He shed His blood. He shed His blood for the forgiveness of sins, His goal the entire time. The reason He was sent was to bring about salvation for all people...the **water** and the **blood**. Now, certainly that's inclusive of everything that happened in between.

When we worship Jesus, we want to worship all of who He is. We're just saying that we will give Him all our worship. We want all of us to worship all of who Jesus Christ is. We don't want partial Jesus. We don't want a fragmented Jesus. We want Jesus in His fullness, the real Jesus. Now it's very clear that some people in this community were professing, were proclaiming a partial view of Jesus. We can gather that by what John says in verse 6. At the end of verse 6, he says, **....not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood.**" We've talked about how there were false teachers who came in that made a claim that Jesus only appeared to be human, that He only appeared to seem to take on flesh. But He couldn't have really taken on flesh, because flesh in their mind was lower, was less than. In the same way, it seems that there were some that were willing to accept His baptism and accept His life of ministry, but they were unwilling to accept and receive that He also came and went to the cross, that He shed His blood. Now, of course, that's a logical conclusion for this belief system. If they don't believe that Jesus was truly human, didn't actually come in the flesh, then how on earth could He go to the cross in the flesh and shed blood in the flesh? In their mind that was below God. God would never do that! So they were willing to accept the water, but they weren't willing to accept the blood. So they proclaimed a partial Jesus. And John was adamant, because here's the truth: a partial Jesus cannot save! A partial Jesus is not worthy of being followed, of surrendering the entirety of your life to. Not only that, but a partial Jesus—to choose to only accept parts of Jesus' life—is essentially to reject His own testimony about Himself. He came and He made claims about who He was. He aimed to go to the cross. He said, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all people to myself." We're told that when it was time to go to the cross, He set his eyes towards Jerusalem. That is where He was headed. To reject that, to only accept part of His life, is to not take Him at His very word.

Now please understand as we ourselves are helping others study, inspect, and investigate who Jesus is, it is perfectly acceptable, in fact it is very helpful to ask questions. Sometimes we have doubts, and as we explore with God and with others those doubts, it actually serves to strengthen our faith. We look at Jesus. We look at His life; we ask questions; we ask questions about the cross; what was the meaning? It's good to do all of that, but at the end of the day, there does come a point where Jesus' very life and His claims demand that we make a decision. They compel us to a choice. What will we do with Jesus? Because at the end of the day, either He was who He said He was or He wasn't. It can't be both! Either the confession about Him is true or it is false. Either God revealed exactly who He was or He didn't. We can't ride the fence; we can't stay in neutral on that question.

Now really, that's just the way truth and reality work. Either something is true or it is not true. To say I'm not going to choose doesn't change whether or not it's true or not; it just means that I'm unwilling to make a choice. Imagine this, imagine I said, "I believe...I believe really strongly that I have hundreds of thousands of dollars in my bank account, and I really feel it. I feel it deep down. I feel wealthy today." I can believe that all I want. I can feel that with every ounce of my being, but I am quite confident that if I would begin to act on it, I would get a call from my bank very soon, and they would tell me the truth. "I don't care how much you feel rich, Ryan! You don't *got* that money." The truth does not adjust to our feelings. It doesn't even adjust to our beliefs. No one has ever made something true by believing it. Our goal is to align our beliefs with what is true, what is actually able to be counted on. It's the way the truth works. And John wants his listeners, his readers and us in their wake, to align with what is actually true with Jesus...as He truly was.

So His life comes and His claims come into our life, and they compel us to make a choice. We can't sit on the fence. We have to choose, "Is He telling the truth, or is He not telling the truth?" Now John has made his case, and it's been a very personal case throughout this letter. He opened this letter with his own personal experience. He said, "*Listen, I was there. I heard it with my own ears. I touched it with my own hands. That which I've seen, that which I've felt, that's what we proclaim.*" He made it very clear that he knows the truth. But as he continues, as he draws to the close of this letter and we reach this climactic moment in this letter, it's almost as if he says, "Now I'm going to call in an expert witness." And that's what we find in the end of verse 6. Let me read the whole thing for you again.

**This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.**

John is saying: I have told you everything I know, but ultimately when my words fade, there remains a witness. It is the Spirit, and the Spirit has a job. The Spirit's job is to testify to the truth. To testify is to witness, to bear witness, to authenticate, to verify. And what we believe is that if you have placed your faith in Jesus, you've cast your life upon Him, placed your trust in Him. God has given you His very Spirit, and His Spirit serves as an internal witness that testifies to the reality of who Jesus was and who He is. And John tells us that we can trust the Spirit's testimony, because it is true, because the Spirit is the truth. Now here's what this means. It means that if we possess a

deep internal confidence, an assurance that Jesus is who He says He is, that is not something that we, by our own strength, can conjure up. That is a gift of grace that God offers. That is brought about, that is produced by the very Spirit of God. The part of us hears the claims of Jesus, hears what we've read in 1 John, and our heart resonates with it and says, "Yes, that is true. It's true. I know it. Deep down in my bones I know it." That's something that God brings about by His Spirit. It is a gift.

Perhaps you remember last week, if you were at our nine o'clock service, there was a young man that was baptized. His name was Coulter, and he said that he grew up knowing the fact that Jesus died on the cross. He knew that fact, but something changed in him. Something changed where he became convicted that it wasn't merely the fact of the cross, it also was the truth that Jesus died **for him**, on his behalf, to forgive him of his sins...and that changed everything for him. It's a movement from a statement of fact to a deep conviction and commitment and confession of faith. "Yes, Jesus really is the One who came to forgive me for my sins when he died on the cross. He did that! If I place my faith in Him, then I am forgiven. I step into the overcoming life." That is a gift brought about by God's Spirit.

Now, as we wrestle to follow Jesus, as we try to understand more and more of who He is, there is absolutely a place for asking hard questions. I never want to discourage that. It's one of the most joyful things I get to do is walk with people as their pastor and say, "Let's think more about who Jesus is and was." But I also think this helps us understand there is another step that we can take. And sometimes I think what we just need to do is ask God: Lord, would you confirm this? Would you stir up assurance by the power of Your Spirit that we might echo along with that man in Mark 9, when Jesus said, "Do you believe?" He said, "I believe, Lord, but help my unbelief," that the Spirit might testify to the truth of who Jesus was and is. The Spirit testifies; God gives us this internal testimony that agrees, that shouts when we see Jesus, "Yes, He's it! He's the One! He's the One that I follow!"

As John continues in these next two verses, he's going to back up, support what he has already told us, but also tell us a little bit more about the water and the blood. Now he says:

**For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.** (Vs. 7-8)

So we've talked about the Spirit as a testimony, as a witness. The Spirit gives us an internal testimony that allows us to offer that internal "Yes!" that convicted "Yes! Jesus is the Son of God that died for my sins." But John doesn't stop there. He says, "Well, also there are two more witnesses, **the water and the blood, and the three, they're in agreement.**" In referencing three witnesses, John undoubtedly is going back to the Old Testament provision that said that you don't accept a claim solely on the basis of one testimony. But if you have two or three testimonies and they all agree, then you can be confident and accept the claim that is being made. So John is saying just that. There's not one testimony; there's actually three testimonies. **The Spirit, the water and the blood**, they all testify the same thing. They speak in agreement with one another. It's helping

us understand that the water and the blood, these are not just mere moments in Jesus' life. They are actually profound witnesses to the reality of who He was. They tell us something about Him. The Spirit, the water and the blood, they all agree, and they all point to this singular fact: Jesus was the Son of God that came in the flesh for us and for our salvation.

We've already talked about the **Spirit's** testimony, but it's helpful to remember in chapter 4, John said, "Test the spirits." Yes, test the spirits to see whether or not they're from God. And he said, "Here is how you know a spirit is from God. God's Spirit will always claim that Jesus Christ came in the flesh." The Son of God put on flesh, and that bears testimony that the Spirit that proclaims that, is the true Spirit. It's a witness that can be trusted.

The **water**; the water is a second witness: the water of baptism. We talked about that a moment ago, but it's helpful to recall it. It's a beautiful moment, that moment between Jesus and his cousin, John the Baptist. You remember, as we already said, that Jesus went in the water and the Spirit descended like a dove, and then something else happened. The heavens opened up and there was a voice that came from heaven. Do you remember what it said? ***This is my Son. I delight in Him. With Him, I am well pleased.*** Baptism is a moment of witness. It's a moment that testifies to Jesus' very identity, the Son of God who put on flesh, made clear and revealed in that moment of baptism.

The **Cross**. The Cross testifies the reality of who Jesus was, what He came to do. Remember on the cross, during that agonizing death that Jesus died, on two different occasions He called out to His Father. The first one is astounding! We can reflect on it forever. Jesus looks at those who are killing Him, and He says, "***Father, forgive them. They don't even know what they're doing.***" ***Father, forgive them!***" Then as time passes and Jesus comes to His last breath, He cries out, "***Father, into Your hands, I commit My spirit.***" The Son of God, testifying ultimate surrender to the Father and to the plan of God from all time. And in that moment, there is another confession that is an ironic confession from a Roman Centurion, a pagan that was part of the act of killing Jesus. And in that moment, he looked up at Jesus and he said, "***Surely, surely, this was the Son of God.***"

The **Spirit**, the **water**, the **blood**. All three speak in unison. They speak and they testify, they bear witness to the truth, the reality of who Jesus was. He was the Son of God. Which, then, leads us to questions, "What do we do with Jesus? Will we believe Him? Will we take Him at His word? Will we trust Him? Will we believe what God has revealed in and through Him?" God has given a testimony. He's born witness. Now, as John continues, he talks more about this reality of receiving the testimony. He says in Verse 9:

**If we receive the testimony of men. . .**

Now we do; that's his point. We do receive the testimony of men, all of us, every day, to one extent or another. We receive the testimony of people. Certainly we do it in the court of law. You know, we call in witnesses. That's important to verify a claim. But I'd also say, to a lesser extent, each and every one of us relies upon the testimony of people all the time, in small ways.

My car needs an oil change. How do I know that? I know nothing about motors, nothing. But those who built that car, they tell me, they testify that it's important that I change my oil. Those that know motors say, "Hey, you should change your oil every such and such number of miles." And so I do just that, because I'm relying on the testimony of those who know. I believe that those who built the car and who understand engines know much more than me, and so I'm going to follow. I'm going to receive what they say. We all, to one extent or another, live our lives relying upon the witness, the testimony of other people, even in our day-to-day lives. Now John, taking that reality in mind, makes the crucial point. He says:

**If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater;**

In other words, if we trust fallible, often untrustworthy people in our day-to-day lives, even in the court of law, why on earth would we not place our confidence, why would we not believe the testimony of the living God who tells the truth? His testimony, John says **is greater**. Greater means superior. It's better; it's unrivaled; it's final; it's conclusive. **The testimony of God is greater, and here's what it is...**the end of verse 9:

**...for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning his Son. The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; (That's the Spirit that testifies.) ...the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son. (Vs. 9-10)**

John just lays things bare. Here's the choice; here's the option. Either God has revealed who His Son really was, or He's lied. So the question is, as we consider the testimony of the Son, the testimony of God through the Spirit, through the water, through the blood, will we determine that is true? Bryan said last week that faith is believing that God tells the truth. Will we, in faith, trust God, or will we decide, "I think He's lying?"

John has condensed all of it down to that very clear, very sobering choice. Will we believe God or will we make Him a liar? Now it's not as if God just said these things and did not bring evidence and bring testimony and bring witness. We've already talked about the three. These are all supporting witnesses. As you consider the claim that Jesus was and is the Son of God, there is ample supporting evidence. John has named three, and that's more than enough he claims to trust that Jesus actually was the Son of God and that He came in the flesh.

But as I think about this, I also consider the incredible reality of what God did through His church in those first days. Just consider the facts. We've already talked about John. I'm so moved by him and his testimony. John was a friend of Jesus. He walked with Him for three years, gave up everything. John was there at the cross. He's the one disciple that had the courage to go to the cross. And Jesus looked at him from the cross and said, "Take care of my mom." It's essentially what Jesus asked John to do. He was there. It happened. He was there at the resurrection as well. He met the resurrected Jesus, and then he proceeded to proclaim the resurrection to a world that

did not believe. And he did that under the threat of death. Why? Because it was true. John proclaimed that throughout his life, was eventually exiled, sent to the island of Patmos. He continued to proclaim, continued to uphold the truth, because his testimony was true, and he was committed to the truth, not to a life of safety. He and the church proclaimed that over and over again and they made claims that could have easily been refuted. It's very important for us to understand all of the writings that you have in your New Testament, they were all written during a lifetime of anyone that would have been around Jesus, written in the decades following Jesus' life. These claims could have been refuted, but no one refuted them. They just said, "Stop saying it. You're causing too much trouble! The city is in an uproar because of what you're proclaiming. Stop it!" All of it was witnessed.

Jesus lived an incredibly public life. Certainly there would have been hundreds at His baptism. But then throughout His ministry, tens of thousands, probably five thousand at one meal, His death, the cross, the shedding of blood was a very public spectacle. It was intended to be. The Romans knew what they were doing. It was a public shaming. They put that cross right by a road so everyone walking by would see it. Verifiable Jesus rose from the dead, appeared to His disciples, but then appeared to five hundred more. All of it could be refuted, but it wasn't. And in fact, just the opposite happened. The Word of God, the Spirit of God, the Church of Jesus Christ expanded at an incredible rate. When people had no external benefit, society would not approve or be happy that they became Christians. When that was the situation, more and more and more people gave their life over to Jesus under the threat of persecution. So much so that within 300 years, we know that over 50% of the Roman Empire now was Christian. That is incredible! Now, could any of that be true if God was a liar? If Jesus was not who He actually said He was? Jesus' life confronts us; His claims confront us. They call us to the most important choice we could make in life. Will we believe God? And in fact, on this question, it's incredibly important that we don't talk about it as "we". It's a personal decision. "*Will I...will you believe God?*" In these last two verses, John makes it incredibly clear the stakes could not be higher. Verse 11:

**And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.** (Vs. 11-12)

One final contrast. Do you have the life, or do you not have the life? Well, here's what determines it. Have you received the Son? Have you given your life to Jesus that you might enter into eternal life? You know, John is the only one in the New Testament that clearly defines what eternal life is. When we think about eternal life, we think about duration, typically. We think about how long it's going to last. It's going to go on forever, and that's absolutely true. It starts the moment we place our faith in Jesus, and it will never end. But eternal life also has a quality. There's a content to that life. And in John's Gospel, John 17, verse 3, as Jesus is praying the high priestly prayer, Jesus says this. ***And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.***

Eternal life lasts forever, unending life. And it's an unending life that is defined by ongoing relationship, intimate interaction with the God that created everything there is...with the God that brought this world into being...with the One who is all knowing, all powerful, all goodness...with the God that is more joyous than we can possibly imagine. The God that is more creative than the most creative person we could imagine, brought everything into being, upholds it by the Word of His power, and we are offered the opportunity to step into that unending life marked by that type of joy. All that is required is that we believe God, and we put our faith in Jesus.

Have you ever considered the creativity of God? What must it be like, to be God? How much joy must He have looking at His creation! All of us caught a glimpse of that, or at least some of us, I'm sure, caught a glimpse of that this past week. I am confident that a number of people in this room were willing to risk embarrassment, to shuffle out of your house in your pajama pants, to point your phone or a camera up towards the northern sky so you could see the Northern Lights...this incredible display! Colors that God brought into being. No one has ever created a new color. They've just mimicked what they've seen in God's creation. And God put this show on display that reveals His glorious, creative mind. And God—the God that we can live with eternally—He sees that moment and unlimited other moments like it, and more grand than even that moment was. He calls you and me to Himself, to enter into that eternal life with Him. And He says, “*You, too, may enter if you simply believe in the Son of God and believe that He came and died for your sins.*” The question is, “Which will we choose?” “Will we believe God?” Let's pray together.

*Our Father, You, in love, sent Your Son into the world. He put on flesh. All of that was motivated by Your love, that we might enter into unending life with You. So, Father, in this moment, we praise You and thank You for that, but we also ask that You would help us be people who live absolutely assured that Your Spirit would grant us confidence. And, Lord, I also ask that if there are those that are struggling to believe, Lord, might this be the day that the weight of evidence, the weight of the witnesses, and the prompting of Your Spirit might lead them to become one of Your children. We pray these things in Jesus' name, Amen.*

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