



Around the Word BIBLE STUDY

Trinity, 2016

1 John 5:1-12

Water, Blood, & Spirit:

"Three things then we know to have issued from the body of the Lord when he hung upon the tree: first, the Spirit; of which it is written, "And he bowed the head and gave up the spirit." then, as his side was pierced by the spear, "blood and water." Which three things if we look at as they are and distinct, and therefore they are not one. But if we will inquire into the things signified by these, there not unreasonably comes into our thoughts the Trinity itself, which is the One, Only, True, Supreme God, Father and Son and Holy Ghost, of whom it could most truly be said, "There are three witnesses, and the three are one."

— St. Augustine (Homily on the Gospel of St. John and His First Epistle)

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Introduction: In this portion of 1 John, we read the end of the main body of the letter. John restates many of his points and wraps up his teaching. Again, we see John talking about the importance of living out our faith in actions, but the focus is on Christ and the free salvation that we have in him.

Opening: Psalm 77

- ¹I cry a- | loud to God,*
aloud to God, and he will | hear me.
- ²**In the day of my trouble I | seek the Lord;***
in the night my hand is stretched out without
wearing;
my soul refuses to be | comforted.
- ³When I remember | God, I moan;*
when I meditate, my | spirit faints.
- ⁴**You hold my eyelids | open;***
I am so troubled that I | cannot speak.
- ⁵I consider the | days of old,*
the years | long ago.
- ⁶**I said, "Let me remember my song in the night;**
let me meditate | in my heart."*
Then my spirit made a dil- | igent search:
- ⁷"Will the Lord spurn for- | ever,*
and never again be | favorable?
- ⁸**Has his steadfast love for- | ever ceased?***
Are his promises at an end | for all time?
- ⁹Has God forgotten to be | gracious?*Has he in anger shut up his com- | passion?"
- ¹⁰**Then I said, "I will ap- | peal to this,***
to the years of the right hand of the | Most
High."
- ¹¹I will remember the deeds | of the LORD;*
yes, I will remember your won- | ders of old.
- ¹²**I will ponder | all your work,***
and meditate on your | mighty deeds.
- ¹³Your way, O God, is | holy.*
What god is great | like our God?
- ¹⁴**You are the God who works | wonders;***
you have made known your might among
the | peoples.
- ¹⁵You with your arm redeemed your | people,*
the children of Jacob and | Joseph.
- ¹⁶**When the waters saw you, O God,**
when the waters saw you, they | were afraid;*
indeed, the deep | trembled.
- ¹⁷The clouds poured out water;
the skies gave forth | thunder;*
your arrows flashed on | every side.
- ¹⁸**The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind;**
your lightnings lighted | up the world;*
the earth trem- | bled and shook.
- ¹⁹Your way was through the sea,
your path through the great | waters;*
yet your footprints | were unseen.

²⁰**You led your people | like a flock***
by the hand of Moses and | Aaron.
Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy | Spirit;
as it was in the be- | ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.

5 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. ² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments.

Again, as we've seen all throughout this letter, John is drawing heavily upon and applying the things that he wrote in his Gospel.

Read John 3:3-8. How are we born of God?

Through our faith, what benefit have we received from God? Find the answer in John 1:12-13.

Read John 8:42-47. What is the characteristic of one born of the devil? What is the characteristic of one born of God?

1 John 5:2 is the positive opposite of 1 John 4:20. Do you think that this might add some meaning to John calling his readers children?

John is again giving a litmus test for the person who is unsure of their faith. It is faith that saves, and that faith also spurs us to certain righteous action. The actions themselves do not save us, but they serve as a testament to the faith that is in us which does save us.

³ For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.

Do you think that this definition of the love of God is consistent with what John says in 2 John 6?

What is Jesus saying about the connection between our faith and our actions in John 14:23-24?

Does Jesus think that following him is burdensome? Read Matthew 11:28-30.

4 For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. According to John 1:5, who is the first one to overcome the darkness?

Read John 16:31-33. Does the fact that Jesus has overcome the world mean that our lives are free from difficulty?

In 1 Corinthians 15:56-58, who gives us the ultimately victory over sin and death?

As you read 2 Corinthians 2:14, is the language of the triumphal procession past, present, or future? What do you think is the significance of this?

Note that our faith is the victory that has overcome the world, not something that we do.

5 Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

What is the heart of the Christian faith? Read Matthew 16:16-19.

Romans 6:3-6 tells us how belief in Jesus makes it so that we overcome the world. What is it that allows that?

Read Revelation 2:11, 2:17, 3:5, and 3:12. Does Jesus' language here seem similar to what John is speaking of in 1 John 5:5?

6 This is he who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.

What event is John alluding to at the beginning of this verse? Read John 19:34-35.

What does Jesus tell the Disciples that the Spirit will do when he comes in John 15:26-27. What is John doing through this letter?

Did the Spirit testify to Jesus during Jesus' earthly ministry? Read John 1:29-34.

Who or what else does Jesus say testifies to his truth in John 5:30-40?

7 For there are three that testify: 8 the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.

Read Deuteronomy 19:15. Why is it important to have three witnesses? Is there a criminal charge being made here?

How many people does Jesus say are needed in the Church to help show someone their sin in Matthew 18:16?

In 2 Corinthians 13:1, do we see the practice of having two or three witnesses continue in the Church?

The Spirit testifies to Christ through the Scriptures, the water testifies to Christ through baptism, and the blood of Christ testifies from the cross and the chalice. These three testimonies confirm the salvation that is ours through faith in Christ.

9 If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son.

Read John 8:17-18. Who does Jesus say testifies to the truth of his Words?

In Matthew 3:16-17, what does the Father say concerning the Son?

Read 2 Peter 1:16-20. How did the Father's testimony impact Peter and the other disciples?

10 Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son.

Read John 3:33-36. Was John the Baptist testifying about Jesus?

In Romans 8:16, what is the relationship between the Holy Spirit and our spirits?

11 And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

This is a reflection of John 1:4. What does Jesus teach about life in John 3:18, 5:24 and 6:53? Is John faithfully bringing that teaching forward?

What does John say the purpose is of his Gospel in John 20:30-31?

12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

According to Ephesians 2:8-9, is having the Son of God something that we do? How does this compare to what is written in John 3:36?

In John 6:40, what does Jesus say the Father wants? Is there any grey area when it comes to salvation?

Closing Hymn: Water, Blood, and Spirit Crying (LSB, 597)

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