

“Our God doesn’t lie” 1 John 5:9-13

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. 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. And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

When you have been a disciple of Jesus, have been with Him days and nights for several years, have witnessed with your own eyes His compassion and love, His wisdom and might, His divine power, when you have heard Jesus teaching and explaining God’s mysteries, when you have stood at the feet of His cross and seen Him dying, and then have met Him in new resurrected body, have eaten with Him after His resurrection and witnessed Jesus ascending into God’s presence, you can see things very clearly.

John, the beloved disciple of Jesus embodies all of this. And when He writes, we are to listen carefully and learn from Him. For that is the Holy Spirit Himself speaking through John’s writings, speaking to God’s chosen people across the centuries and continents.

Today we heard it read from the first letter of John. In this letter John speaks about what people believe and what they don’t believe and what our beliefs tell about our attitudes towards God.

Let us reflect on what we believe and how we got our beliefs. We all know many things, right? Some of us more, some of us less, but even children among us know a lot. It would be better to say – we believe many things.

The question is – where did you learn everything that you know, or what you think that you know, where did you learned everything what you believe to be true? When you were born, you didn’t know much, right?

So, how did you learn it? John uses the word testimony. Lately even philosophers of knowledge, that is those extremely smart people who spend their lives trying to understand better – how do we know, what we know, have come to realize that we know everything through testimonies.

That’s the word that John used in his letter. Testimony. We can simply say that testimony is when you learn something from others. That’s their testimony. You can learn things from your parents, and grandparents, and siblings, and friends, and teachers, and books, and journals, and today, of course, from Internet.

All these are testimonies. This is how we have learned what we know and believe to be true. The tricky thing is this – how often do we test these testimonies? How often do we check whether we can trust them?

How often do we evaluate the expertise of people whose testimonies we assume to be true? And, of course, we can't check everything. Studying geography, or history we hear testimonies, and it is hard to test them.

And the same is true about many other things. But why would then we believe these testimonies, if we can't check them? The answer is simple. Because we trust the people from whom we hear them.

If you trust a person, then you will trust what the person tells you. And the opposite is true as well. If you don't trust a person, then you won't believe what the person tells you. It is interesting how John puts it.

“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.” John acknowledges that we receive testimonies from men and believe them.

But then he contrasts testimony of men with the testimony of God. And which one is greater according to John? Of course, the testimony of God is greater. Why so? Because He confirms what He says by doing something that creates trust in Him. We can see it throughout the Bible.

Do you know who wrote the first five books of the Bible? That's right, it was Moses. Why did people right after Moses' death held these books in such high regard and read them, and copied, and preserved them and taught? Why?

Because these books were believed to be the testimony of ... not of men, but of God. How so? Quite simple. This is what God said to Moses when they were at the Mount Sinai: “Behold, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you and may also believe you forever.”

Do you see, what happened there? God revealed Himself to confirm that what Moses will later write – is the testimony of God Himself. Similarly, we can see it through the Old Testament. When God wants to give His testimony to us, He call someone to be His spokesperson and then confirms with signs and miracles that it was, indeed, the testimony of God, and not of men.

Finally, two millennia ago God spoke to us through His Son, Jesus Christ. And He confirmed that that was God's own testimony. He confirmed it speaking from heaven, He confirmed it through many miraculous signs that Jesus did.

Healing everyone. Feeding thousands. Raising the dead. Controlling the creation. And finally, God confirmed that it is His testimony, by raising Jesus from the dead.

Can we trust someone who for millennia have foretold what He will do in the fullness of time, who have recorded these testimonies for our sake, so that we could read them even today, and then have fulfilled them in Jesus exactly as He foretold.

The Bible is God's testimony to us. It is written so that we can be assured that we can trust Him, that we can believe what He says. And as John writes, this is the testimony of God "that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life."

This is the testimony of God, – God has given you eternal life. And this life is in His Son Jesus Christ. Whoever has Jesus, has the eternal life, whoever does not have Jesus, does not have the eternal life.

This testimony is as clear as it could be. It was foretold by the prophets. It was taught by Jesus. It was delivered to us by His disciples. As John wrote at the end of his Gospel account:

"These [things] are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life [eternal life] in his name." (Joh 20:31 ESV)

Has everyone believed God's testimony? No... even thousands of people who saw Jesus' divine powers at work didn't believe God's testimony. Nor many people throughout the ages and even today.

Strange, we all believe testimonies of men, but not everyone believes the testimony of God. John has some harsh words addressed to such people.

"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."

This is very direct. John calls things as they are. People may not like it, but the fact remains, whoever doesn't believe the testimony of God regarding His Son Jesus in whom God gives us eternal life, such person has made God a liar.

It is a serious charge. If someone has heard the testimony of God, if someone has heard that in Jesus there is forgiveness and eternal life, and doesn't accept the testimony of God, rejects it, ignores it, they make God a liar.

That is like saying to God who have given us all these testimonies which we briefly mentioned, who still speaks to us today through His Word: "I don't believe you. You are a liar." Such thing can not end well...

And don't think that this refers only to those ... outside. This charge hits us hard as well. How often we act as if we don't believe in the testimony of God? How often our attitude towards the Bible is like it was just another book, and not God Himself speaking to us? How often we forget that in Jesus we have the eternal hope, this wonderful hope that surpasses anything that we can imagine?

How often we covet, are angry, ungrateful, envious, unnecessary worried about things of this world, how often we forget about the wonderful gift that is given to us, the testimony of God regarding His Son Jesus.

I can't answer about you, only you can, but I confess that I am guilty in all the above mentioned. That so often what I say I believe doesn't match with how I act. So often I don't trust, don't give thanks, don't have peace and don't fully rely on my Father who is in heaven. I rightly deserve to be rebuked by the apostle.

John the apostle lived long life. He was just like us. He too experienced all these struggles. This is, why he writes to encourage us. And what an encouragement it is. "Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself."

Did you notice what John writes? If you believe in Jesus, you have the testimony of God in ... yourself. What does this mean? Nothing less than that God, who gives this testimony, dwells with you. Dwells is you.

That's right, the Holy Spirit who alone can change our hearts and enable us to believe the testimony of God dwells in you. Do you remember, what is the main job of the Holy Spirit? To testify about Jesus. To lead you to Jesus. To make you one with Jesus and the Father. And He does it so well. That's why you have believed, that's why you are here among God's saints.

But then John continues: "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life." You, who have believed that Jesus is the Christ, your Savior, you have eternal life!

As the Father has life in Himself, so also does the Son. And He has given you the Spirit of life, to dwell in you. The very source of all life, the very power that brings life to every living being, dwells in you.

He is very good with His job, the Holy Spirit. He has helped you to believe in Jesus, He has brought you to Jesus, and He has given you eternal life, and He will raise you as He raised Jesus, and will bring you in God's presence to be with Jesus forever. That is God's testimony to you.

And remember, God doesn't lie. You have received His testimony, you have received His promises, and you will live to see how they all are fulfilled, till the last one. Because our God doesn't lie. Amen.