

Small Group Guide

Based on 1 John 5 -- The Testimony of God and the Life Found in His Son

Overview

This sermon wraps up the book of 1 John, focusing on the confidence believers can have in Jesus as the Son of God, the testimony that confirms who Jesus is, and the life that is found only in him. John writes with urgency, countering false teaching by pointing to eyewitness testimony, the witness of the Spirit, and the simple but profound truth that whoever has the Son has life.

Key Takeaways

- Belief in Jesus is not merely intellectual agreement -- it is an active entrusting of your life to him.
- The opportunity to believe is open to everyone, but it is also a deeply personal choice.
- Jesus was fully God and fully man from birth, not just at his baptism or before his crucifixion -- this is a non-negotiable truth of the faith.
- Three witnesses confirm who Jesus is: the water, the blood, and the Spirit -- and they are in agreement.
- The only sin that leads to death is unbelief in Jesus. All other sin has been covered by what Christ did on the cross.
- Obedience to God is not a burden we carry to earn salvation -- it is a response to the salvation we have already received.
- The church is called to be a unified, thriving witness to the world of what life in Jesus looks like.

Discussion Questions

Opening -- Getting Into the Text

1. The pastor described John's writing style as circular -- he keeps coming back to the same themes. Why do you think John repeats himself throughout this letter? What does that tell us about what he considered most important?
2. Read 1 John 5:1-5 together as a group. What stands out to you? What questions does it raise?

Going Deeper -- Understanding the Message

3. The pastor explained that the Greek word for "believes" in verse 1 is an action word -- it means to entrust your life into something, not just to agree with it mentally. How does that change the way you think about what it means to believe in Jesus?
4. John says God's commands are not burdensome (1 John 5:3). The pastor explained this is because obedience flows from being saved, not from trying to get saved. Do you find it easy or difficult to think about following God this way? What makes it feel like a burden sometimes?
5. The false teachers in John's day claimed that the "Christ spirit" only came upon Jesus at his baptism and left before the crucifixion. Why does it matter that Jesus was fully God and fully man from birth all the way through his death and resurrection? What is at stake if that is not true?
6. John points to three witnesses -- the water, the blood, and the Spirit -- as testimony to who Jesus is. The pastor also highlighted that John himself was an eyewitness at both the baptism of Jesus and the crucifixion. How does eyewitness testimony strengthen your own confidence in the truth of the gospel?
7. The pastor said the only sin that leads to death is unbelief in Jesus, and that all other sin has been paid for at the cross. How does that truth affect the way you see your own sin and your standing before God?

Getting Personal -- Applying the Message

8. The pastor challenged the group by saying some people are still holding on to sin and not experiencing the freedom and life God has for them. Without going into anything you are not comfortable sharing, do you relate to that? What tends to hold you back from fully trusting God?
9. John shifts between talking about "everyone" who can believe and "only the one" who does believe -- moving from the universal invitation to the personal decision. Have you made that personal decision? How would you describe it in your own words?
10. The pastor talked about what the world sees when it looks at the church. What do you think the people around you -- at work, in your neighborhood, in your family -- see when they look at your life? What would you want them to see?

Closing -- Commitment and Prayer

11. John closes his letter by saying simply: whoever has the Son has life, and whoever does not have the Son does not have life. If someone in your life asked you what that means, how would you explain it to them?

12. What is one specific thing from this sermon that you want to carry with you into this week? Is there a step of surrender, a conversation you need to have, or a truth you need to hold onto?

Practical Applications

- **Pray for one another.** John specifically calls believers to pray for their brothers and sisters who are struggling with sin. Take time in your group to pray for each other by name, not just in general terms.
- **Examine your belief.** Spend time this week asking yourself honestly whether your faith in Jesus is a living, active trust or something more passive. Journal about what it would look like to more fully entrust your life to him.
- **Memorize the simplest truth.** Commit 1 John 5:12 to memory this week -- the verse that says whoever has the Son has life. Let that anchor your thinking when doubt or fear creeps in.
- **Live as a witness.** John reminded the disciples that they were called to testify because they had been with Jesus. Consider how your daily life -- the way you treat people, the way you handle hardship, the way you love your family -- is either pointing others toward Jesus or away from him.
- **Confess and walk in the light.** The pastor encouraged the group to stop holding on to sin in private and to step into the light with God and with trusted brothers and sisters. If there is something you have been carrying alone, take a step this week toward bringing it into the light.

Closing Prayer Focus

Close your group time by praying together over these three things:

1. That each person in the room would have genuine, active confidence in Jesus as the Son of God.
2. That your church would be a unified, loving community that the world can look at and see life that is truly life.
3. That God would bring to mind someone in each of your lives who does not yet know Jesus, and give you the courage to be a witness to them.