

Reading: 1 John 4:7-5:1

Theme: A Message Worth Telling!

As a pastor the apostle John is brilliant, giving encouragements to those in his care. He does not simply give a piece of encouragement or evidence to strengthen these believers, but he piles encouragements, pieces of evidence one upon another to drive home the reality of and the comfort from the faith which they have. I am learning from what John has said and I pray I can pass on comfort and encouragement to us all. So I pray also some of the comfort, encouragement and blessing of God's word would come to you.

John wanted his 1st readers to be sure of spiritual realities in their lives and he wrote on such things, presenting them as evidences for their assurance. We have seen he gave the evidence of having 1. Received the Holy Spirit (v13); 2. Apostolic Testimony (v14) and we noted these areas and saw how the eyewitness testimony was activated, energised by the same Holy Spirit and the message they proclaimed was directed, overseen by the Holy Spirit as they spoke from eyewitness facts with the Holy Spirit's enabling and understanding - especially the message that God had sent His son to be the Saviour of the world. This brings us to the 3rd piece of evidence:

3. Personal Acknowledgement of Jesus As God's Son. (v15)

This is such an important area of evidence, such an important consideration in our recent studies. One writer describes 4:13-5:1 as a mountain range with glorious peaks and yet we are unable to decide which is the most glorious peak to be on. Personally, I feel this is the best peak, for all the others are put into perspective and rightly appreciated from it and they can be seen in the most wonderful light from here - a thrilling view as we can see previous peaks lead to this and the others arise from it. I hope to go on and

try to do this piece of further evidence justice as we look at it. I want to use 3 points to open it up, apply it to our own lives and understanding - with the 1st point being much larger than the other 2!

1. A Glorious Message.

Last time we considered the message the eyewitnesses gave. Here in v15 John condenses it by saying “*Jesus is the Son of God*”. Here is the focus of their message. John Calvin says of these words “*he puts the sum of faith in a word or two, for there is nothing necessary for salvation which faith does not find in Christ*”. The apostles’ message centres on the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God. They taught, preached and wrote of that One. To them the Lord Jesus was not one among equals - all great teachers, all showing a way to God or how to live a good life. Not at all. Jesus was unique for there was no one else like Him and none could come near Him. All the OT prophets, even John the Baptist, all these fade out of the picture as Jesus was not a mere man.

When John says “*Jesus is the Son of God*” He means more than a nice phrase or a creed to be repeated. It involved, as he had just written, that God the Father sent God the Son into the world. It includes and involves the necessity of the incarnation - Jesus had a real body and yet was fully God and fully man, 2 natures in one person. 1 Timothy 3:16 (KJV) “*great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh*” and also in Colossians 2:9 “*For in Christ all the fulness of the Deity lives in bodily form*”. John is emphasising here that Jesus was not a mere man, a good and great teacher, not even a prophet, but He is the Son of God in a real body. This is why John uses His human name given when He was actually, truly and really born - “Jesus” and His real position - Son of God, God the Son = fully God.

This is in agreement what the other apostles saw, realised and testified to - v14 - the Father sent the Son; we are to realise more of the wonder of the operation and cooperation of the godhead in our salvation as it is highlighted by the Son being sent by the Father, He came into this world in a real human body - the same as ours and yet so radically different - as He was without sin. Yes, He was tested by the devil, who tried to cause Him to fall and to fail in the work He was sent to do. Everything the devil could do he did and yet he failed for the Lord Jesus triumphed. His name, Jesus, means “Saviour” as Joshua in OT means. That is the reason Jesus was sent into the world - to be the Saviour and to save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21).

For Jesus to be the Saviour, it was not a case of coming into the world, doing some miracles and giving some amazing teachings. Jesus had to do something to accomplish our salvation. He came to be the Saviour of the world and was able to say that His work was finished i.e. completed. We are to remember that mankind had blown it regarding God. Adam and Eve were created perfect, righteous and to be established in that, they were told not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but they did! They had been warned of the consequences - death, actual, spiritual and eternal. Since then mankind has habitually rebelled against God and does not go God’s way as expressed in His Law.

To be the Saviour, the Lord Jesus had to actively and completely keep God’s Law - this is what He did in His perfect life, in **His active obedience**. He did what no man could do but He as the true man did. There was also a judgement upon our sin - Adam and Eve were warned of it - death which affected us spiritually, physically and eternally. Adam’s sin makes us guilty, as does our own actual sin. In the great scheme and scope of the plan of salvation, the Lord Jesus in His death on Calvary became sin - my

sin, your sin, the sin of the world and He took its guilt also. There on the cross He had to satisfy the demands of God's holy law and He took the punishment our sin deserved as if He were the guilty one. He swapped with each and every one of us. This is often termed **His passive obedience**. We need both facets of His obedience.

He was the sacrifice to turn away God's wrath from us and make peace on our behalf with God. Using OT types, He was both the sacrifice for sin and the Great High Priest who offered the sacrifice of Himself to God. Now in heaven He is seated at God's right hand, but still He continues His work as Saviour - for as our Great High Priest He makes intercession for us, He ever lives to save to the uttermost all who go to Him. It is through Him, by His work accomplished at Calvary that we can pray, as He takes and presents our prayers to the Father, as He is our Great High Priest and represents us, intercedes for us in heaven.

As amazing as that is, we are to realise He is not far distant from us - as we have seen and will note again later - He, by the Holy Spirit's person and work, dwells in us and we in Him. The Lord Jesus abides, lives, dwells in and with every believer - old or young, a new or a mature Christian - for every believer has this glorious honour and privilege. We considered this a few weeks ago and noted it is termed "*the mystical union*".

These things He accomplished to be our Saviour and yet there is more to fulfil this glorious salvation! Yes, it is wonderful and magnificent in all we have touched upon, but our bodies are not useless husks to be carelessly and lightly discarded. The whole scheme of salvation includes our bodies and one day they will be transformed - at His return, and we will be given resurrection bodies like His glorious body.

What a Saviour! He saves us, the guilty ones from the **penalty** of sin, He also saves us from the **power** of sin, so that sin is not to be the dominating, domineering power and force in our lives. As such we are being saved from the **pollution** of sin - our lives are to become cleaner as we go on in the Christian life (sanctification). Will never be perfect here on earth but we are to aim to be as holy and clean as a saved sinner can be.

Those things are briefly something of the glorious message about Jesus the Son of God. We need to know, think about and be delighted to tell that same glorious message. We see that this glorious message is:

2. An Inclusive Message.

This glorious message says that Jesus was sent to be the Saviour of the world it is for “*anyone*” (NIV), “*whosoever*” (AV) or “*whoever*” (other versions). At one time we see God dealing only with one family, then through and in one nation, but the glorious message is to all peoples - whosoever, anyone. It is not restricted to any class, any culture, any ethnic group. It is not restricted to nice people, do-gooders, or religious ones. It is for all people - irrespective of status, education, achievements, sense of worth, their personal history. It is for those with no hope, those full of self-contentment, for the high and the lowly, the rich or poor, the educated or uneducated, for younger or older. It is for the Far East, Middle East, Europe, America for those at the north and south poles it is for all people everywhere. Thankfully it is for people here in Doncaster and the surrounding area, it is for all whosoever, living wherever and whatsoever they are or are not, have done or not done. The Lord Jesus told the apostles to go into all the world - they had to begin at Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the world.

It is the inclusive gospel which is the hope of this world. It wonderfully declares how God sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world. It is not about morals, or culture, or lifestyle - while all these things are often changed for the better by the gospel, yet the gospel message declares there is a Saviour that can give eternal life to whosoever. We here in this church need to be involved in telling, showing that message to all. It is the only hope for our friends, neighbours, relatives, colleagues and those we meet. We need to proclaim it as witnesses, pray for it as it is ministered both here in this land and overseas. Pray that messengers would be raised up to go into the harvest fields at the direction of the Lord Jesus Himself. Yet we also see it is:

3. An Exclusive Message.

Now you're thinking "*What? An exclusive message, but you just said it was an inclusive message!*" Yes, it is an inclusive message - it is to all and for all. Yet its effects, its results are not automatic. Imagine a deadly disease was sweeping through the UK and a medicine was produced and it was 100% effective for all who took it. Some people went to doctors, had prescriptions and died! They had their medicine, but put it in their bathroom cabinet, or by the tea and coffee and there it remained unopened and untouched. A great medicine, the cure was in their possession but it was not personally applied.

This glorious message of the Saviour is 100% effective to those who acknowledge, confess Him - but it is not merely an intellectual agreement - that we like the way of life and the life teachings of Jesus. It is like saying that the miraculous medicine is great, brilliant and have it from the doctor. Yet it will do no good if left on an intellectual shelf or in a cupboard. We are not to leave this glorious message at an emotional level either - we are thrilled that there is the Saviour and want Him to meet some emotional

need in our life. He is not an emotional prop, some spiritual paracetamol to ease our pain. He is the Saviour first and foremost. Yes, He does help us in our emotions and life, but we are not to restrict Him to the emotional, psychological level.

When John uses the word “acknowledge” or “confess” He means much more than an intellectual acceptance of the facts of history. It does obviously include, incorporate that the apostolic eyewitnesses accounts are real and accurate, else why bother to believe them? Yet there needs to be an understanding, a recognition that Jesus came to be our Saviour **personally** and that we need Him to be our Saviour. We see that the Lord Jesus became a man to be our Saviour - it is as personal as that. It means we ask Him, from our innermost beings, hearts to forgive us our sin, accept us, make us His child and to transform us to be fit for heaven and then we go on and try our best to evidence that new life in our lives here on earth.

It is a heart acknowledgement, confession 1st of all, which then expresses itself in an outward acknowledgement confession - by our lives, by owning (*where possible*) that we are a Christian for we have asked the Lord Jesus to be our Saviour - as Paul says in Romans 10:9-10 *“if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.”*

This confessing, acknowledging, owning Jesus as the Son of God is not only an intellectual process, it is a work of God the Spirit opening our eyes and understanding. Sometimes it can be sudden and dramatic e.g. Saul of Tarsus or the Philippian jailer; other times it can be gentle and quiet e.g. Lydia whose heart the Lord

opened. How ever it happens, this glorious message is inclusive to all but exclusively effective only in the lives of those who believe and confess, acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord. It is not automatic. If we know we have trusted the Lord Jesus as our Saviour, have seen and realised He died for us to be our Saviour, then it is no small thing, for it means God the Holy Spirit has been at work in us and it should assure us that the grace of God and the salvation of God are ours. This glorious message is exclusively inclusive for everyone - whosoever will believe shall be saved!

Perhaps someone here has not trusted the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, then I would encourage you, urge you to do so. Perhaps someone here may have done so but has not publicly owned Him as their Saviour - tell me or someone afterwards, I can assure you we will rejoice with you. Perhaps someone here may have drifted away from their 1st love and service of this Saviour; if so can I urge you to come back to Him even in this service. I know many here are wanting to go on with the Saviour, to love and serve Him more, to live for Him and His glory more and to tell others of Him more, can I encourage you to do so and may you know the Lord Himself richly blessing you and your enjoyment of the Saviour as you would own Him publicly to others so that they too can come to know and love Him.