

That You May Know — 1 John 5:6-12

In this text John deals with a very serious issue that is being promoted by false teachers and the Gnostics of the day. Cerinthus was a false teacher who promoted the lie that Jesus was not the Christ. That the man Jesus had the Christ come on him at his baptism but then left him at the crucifixion. Therefore, the person who died on the cross was just an ordinary man. Cerinthus tends to pitch the idea that it really doesn't matter. One does not have to believe that Jesus is the Christ to have eternal life. John was pointing out that one must absolutely believe that Jesus came in the flesh and bore our sins as a substitute. He points out the testimony that was given by God and we must believe. One must believe in order to have eternal life. Let's take a look at a few questions.

Discussion questions — *do not feel the pressure to cover them all

1. This false teaching that John points out from first appearance seems to be only related to John's time. However, this Gnostic teaching may have changed name but has been repackaged for us today. What are some ways that you see the idea that Christ came in the flesh being overlooked today or outright neglected? How might a lost coworker, neighbor, or family member accept this heresy and what would it look like (i.e. believe that Jesus lived, believe He was a helpful man, but not believe in the incarnation)? What would you say to help them understand this more?
2. The testimony of men in Bible times was dependent upon 2 or 3 witnesses. We see in this text that God provides the testimony and it is greater than that of men. We see the baptism, the blood, and the Holy Spirit as the 3 witnesses to Jesus coming in the flesh. What do each of those mean and how do they provide witness to Jesus being the Christ? How do these three directly refute the claims of the Gnostics and Cerinthus (i.e. God the Father was present at both the baptism and crucifixion, the Father spoke to His approval, and the Holy Spirit was present in all)?
3. We talked about how believing that Jesus was the Christ is just as important today as it was then. We also talked about "selective ignorance," where we kind of tune things out. (i.e. seeing a homeless person, conflict, etc.). Where do you find yourself practicing selective ignorance towards the things of God? Maybe the thought of the crucifixion and the response required or loving someone the way Christ loved us even though it's difficult.
4. The text points out that if we don't believe the testimony that Jesus was the Christ then we are calling God a liar. However, for those who believe will have the testimony in himself. This is the testimony that God gave us eternal life. Eternal life is right now. Whoever has the Son has life and whoever does not

have the Son does not have life. How should this thought impact our daily lives? Do we really believe this? We walk among people every day that do not have life. How might we share that testimony with those in need? Who is someone you know that specifically needs to hear the testimony of life? Take some time and pray for them for God to soften their heart and for you to have opportunities to share.