



DAILY FAITH PRACTICES

Seventh Sunday of Easter (B) – 1 John 5:9-13

Focus: *Testimony of God*

word of life

“And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” 1 John 5:11 (NRSV)

Read 1 John 5:9-13

As the season of Easter draws to a close on this Seventh Sunday of Easter, the lectionary reading is from the final chapter of the First Letter of John. In the epilogue recorded in 1 John 5:13, we learn the purpose of this letter. “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.” (1 John 5:13 NRSV) What an appropriate passage to conclude the season of Easter.

Consider how closely these words from the First Letter of John resemble the epilogue in the Gospel of John, “But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.” (John 20:31 NRSV)

1. *What similarities do you find in these two passages?*
2. *Define “life” as used in the above passages.*

As this letter draws to a conclusion, the writer turns to God to give testimony to the truth about Jesus Christ. Testimonies are often associated with legal settings spoken by a witness at a trial. It is assumed the person who gives the testimony is under oath to tell the truth.

The Greek word translated *testimony* shares the same root as the English words translated *witness* and *martyr*. The one who testifies is expected to verify the facts and act as a witness to that truth. In reality, those who bear testimony to the truth of their faith are sometimes killed because of their words. To give a testimony is not to fill the air with idle phrases, but to recognize the importance of accuracy when uttering words—especially if those words may lead to a martyr’s death.

When it comes to Jesus Christ, who best to testify about God’s actions than God? Who best to understand the comprehensive scope of all that has occurred than God?

3. *What do you think of God being asked to give testimony?*
4. *How does God testify?*

As God is at work in our lives, then we too can testify and give witness to Jesus Christ. “Those who believe in the Son of God have the testimony in their hearts.” (1 John 5:10 NRSV) Without God’s Holy Spirit connecting us to God’s truth, we have no hope of grasping and bearing witness to God’s ways. After all God has done in Christ, if we do not believe, then in a sense we call God a liar. (See 1 John 5:10)

5. *What are the implications that the words “martyr” and “witness” share the same root word?*
6. *What would it feel like to call God a liar?*

So, what is the content of God’s testimony? “And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” (1 John 5:11 NRSV) That sums up the faith in a simple sentence; but that sentence is worth our lifetime of pondering and claiming.

7. *Paraphrase 1 John 5:11.*
8. *What does 1 John 5:11 mean to you?*

word among us

Jacob was standing in his yard when he witnessed a horrible car accident. He had never seen anything like it before in his life, but it was made worse when the reckless driver who caused the accident drove off without stopping. Jacob instinctively looked at the license plate on the car speeding off in the distance. He immediately wrote down the plate number and a description of all that he had seen.

By the time he had finished writing his summary, the police were at the scene of the accident. He quietly walked over to the scene of the accident and gave his report to the police. Later that night, he began to fret about being a public witness. It was so unlike him to interfere with anything controversial. But he didn't really have any choice on the matter. Jacob had seen the whole accident—including the driver who left the scene. He realized that he would expect other citizens of his community to step forward in a similar way. Finally, he prayed about it and resolved in his heart to serve as a witness to all he had seen.

1. *Can you appreciate Jacob's concerns about being a witness?*
2. *What might you say to Jacob?*
3. *Have you ever been in a similar situation?*

Our focus in this lesson has been on God's testimony about Jesus Christ. "If we receive human testimony, the testimony of God is greater; for this is the testimony of God that he has testified to his Son." (1 John 5:9 NRSV) God has seen it all and gives an accurate testimony to the life now given through Jesus Christ.

4. *When have you heard the testimony of God?*
5. *What makes it difficult to hear the testimony of God?*
6. *How do we respond to God's testimony?*

We receive the testimony from God about Jesus Christ which is the gift of eternal life. At this point, we become bearers of that testimony. We witness to the life given to us.

faith practice in daily life

Hear the word of God and share in the Lord's Supper

God is at work, testifying about all that has occurred in Jesus Christ and bringing life to all who might hear. First, we hear the word of God through God's testimony through the Holy Spirit about Jesus Christ. God's testimony is not where it ends, but instead is the beginning. We hear the word of God and share in the Lord's Supper; we leave inspired to give testimony to God's mighty work in the world and our lives.

7. *How might hearing the word of God inspire us to give testimony to others?*
8. *Take a moment to share a personal testimony of God at work in your life.*

Prayer

God, you give us eternal life. Send us out into the world, equipped to testify to that life given to us through Jesus Christ. Give us courage to bear witness into a world that needs to hear of your life and hope. Amen

last word

Give a testimony
about Jesus
to someone this week.