

“Jesus’ Witness”

John 1:6-18

Scripture: Psalms 22:3 *“Yet You are holy, O You who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel.”*

Introduction:

A wealthy man and his son loved to collect rare works of art. They had everything in their collection, from Picasso to Raphael. They would often sit together and admire the great works of art.

When the Vietnam conflict broke out, the son went to war. He was very courageous and died in battle while rescuing another soldier. The father was notified and grieved deeply for his only son.

About a month later, just before Christmas, there was a knock at the door. A young man stood at the door with a large package in his hands.

He said, "Sir, you don't know me, but I am the soldier for whom your son gave his life. He saved many lives that day, and he was carrying me to safety when a bullet struck him in the heart and he died instantly. He often talked about you, and your love for art." The young man held out this package. "I know this isn't much. I'm not really a great artist, but I think your son would have wanted you to have this."

The father opened the package. It was a portrait of his son, painted by the young man. He stared in awe at the way the soldier had captured the personality of his son in the painting. The father was so drawn to the eyes that his own eyes welled up with tears. He thanked the young man and offered to pay him for the picture. "Oh, no sir, I could never repay what your son did for me. It's a gift."

The father hung the portrait over his mantle. Every time visitors came to his home he took them to see the portrait of his son before he showed them any of the other great works he had collected.

The man died a few months later. There was to be a great auction of his paintings. Many influential people gathered, excited over seeing the great paintings and having an opportunity to purchase one for their collection.

On the platform sat the painting of the son. The auctioneer pounded his gavel. "We will start the bidding with this picture of the son. Who will bid for this picture?"

There was silence. Then a voice in the back of the room shouted, "We want to see the famous paintings. Skip this one." But the auctioneer persisted. "Will somebody bid for this painting. Who will start the bidding? \$100, \$200?"

Another voice angrily. "We didn't come to see this painting. We came to see the Van Gogh's, the Rembrandts. Get on with the real bids!" But still the auctioneer continued. "The son! The son! Who'll take the son?"

Finally, a voice came from the very back of the room. It was the longtime gardener of the man and his son. "I'll give \$10 for the painting." Being a poor man, it was all he could afford.

"We have \$10, who will bid \$20?" "Give it to him for \$10. Let's see the masters." "\$10 is the bid, won't someone bid \$20?" The crowd was becoming angry. They didn't want the picture of the son. They wanted the more worthy investments for their collections.

The auctioneer pounded the gavel. "Going once, twice, SOLD for \$10!"

A man sitting on the second row shouted, "Now let's get on with the collection!" The auctioneer laid down his gavel. "I'm sorry, the auction is over." "What about the paintings?"

"I am sorry. When I was called to conduct this auction, I was told of a secret stipulation in the will. I was not allowed to reveal that stipulation until this time. Only the painting of the son would be auctioned. Whoever bought that painting would inherit the entire estate, including the paintings.

The man who took the son gets everything!"

Transitional Statement:

Church accepting Christ is not a one time gig. Each and every day with we must wake up and make fresh our decision to accept or reject Jesus.

I. The introduction of Christ into the world

John 1:6-8

6 There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light.

A. Remember that the light in this text is Jesus.

1. Light in its basic form represents illumination.
2. The light of Jesus:
 - a. Reveals that which was a mystery...the plan of salvation
 - b. Exposes things that must change...in this the covenant
 - c. Provides security and protection
 - d. And last but not least, the light of Jesus gives direction

1) Psalms 119:105

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path."*

B. In thinking about the coming of Christ, have you ever wondered why God didn't just roll back the heavens and with His thundering voice announced His Messiah.

1. A truth that comes to mind here is that God Himself had put forth, in the Law, that every fact must be substantiated by the mouth of two or three witnesses.
 - a. Num. 35:30 & Deut. 17:6; 19:15

b. Jesus Himself points it out in Matthew 18:16

16 "But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED.

2. God not only stands true to His own directive, but wants the world to have a confirmed Lord.

C. Jesus could testify for Himself but who could be an adequate second witness?

1. Surely a priest?
2. What about a Scribe or Pharisee with their much learning and lofty opinions?
3. What about some business or civic leader among Israel?
4. God had a better idea:
 - a. How about a wilderness dweller wearing camel skin and eating wild honey and locust. (Matt 3:4)
 - b. God's choice is John the Baptist.

D. Interestingly enough the last words of the Old Testament point to John the Baptist. Read with me Malachi 4:5

"Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD."

1. And an angel of the Lord tells Zacharias the father of John the Baptist in Luke 1:17

"It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah..."

2. And Jesus points it out also by saying: *"...if you are willing to accept it, John himself is Elijah who was to come."* Matthew 11:14

E. This verse says that John's testimony was so that all might believe through Jesus... Since we should have a similar testimony today let's take a little time here to consider the life of John.

1. To start things out while John was in the wilderness the Word of God came to him. Luke 3:2
 - a. John was called by God and considering the use of "The Word" Jesus Himself may have been the one who came to John.

2. After this John began to preach. Mark 1:4
 - a. His message was simple... *"Make ready the way of the Lord, make His paths straight"*
 - b. Central to his preaching were the words... *"repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"* Matt 3:2
 - c. His preaching called for the response of baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

3. John shined the light of Jesus in some awful dark corners of humanity.
 - a. He warned the tax collectors not to take more than was required, exposing their greed. Luke 3:12-13.
 - b. He told soldiers to be content with their wages and not to take money by force. Luke 3:14
 - c. He criticized some for a presumed righteousness because they were children of Abraham. Matt 3:9
 - d. He warned some that God's mighty axe would cut down those who didn't show fruit in keeping with repentance. Matt 3:7-12
 - e. John even shined the light of Jesus on King Herod's immoral marriage to his brother Philip's wife Herodias...that cost him his head. Mark 6:17-19
 - f. Of John the Baptist Jesus says in Matthew 11:11

11 "Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist!..."
 - g. But John was kind of like Moses on Mount Nebo. He only saw the kingdom from a distance which is evident by the conclusion of this verse.

"...Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."
 - h. Some day I hope to meet old John the man who had the privilege of announcing the one true King to the world.

- F. This verse also reminds us that John the Baptist was not the light.

1. Something preachers and teachers need to remember for themselves.

II. Mankind's reception of the Son of God.

John 1:9-11

9 There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

- A. This is an interesting connection for Jesus to be called "*true*" light that enlightens every man.
 - 1. By the first century, the spiritual light of God's intention had grown very dim, under man's leadership approach to God had evolved into a legalistic chasm of fallacy, but Jesus would bring the pure light of God's intention to all of mankind now, not just the Jews.
- B. The sad fact was that when Jesus showed up, the world that was made through Him didn't know Him.
 - 1. i.e. the creation didn't recognize the creator.
 - 2. I can't imagine how many people talked with Jesus ignorant of the fact that they were talking to the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.
 - 3. Simply put the creation didn't recognize the creator.
- C. But worse than that when Jesus the Messiah showed up, His very own people rejected Him.
 - 1. Those people that God had claimed as His own.
 - 2. Those folks entrusted with the covenant....refused Him & hung Him on a cross.
 - a. Read with me Isaiah 53:3

*3 He was despised and forsaken of men,
A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
And like one from whom men hide their face
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.*
 - 3. Never would you think it possible for God's people to reject Jesus, but some times even Christians today forsake Him, chasing after the lusts of their hearts. They end up like the Hebrew writer says: crucifying Him again and putting Him to open shame (Hebrews 6:6)

III. But those who received Him.

John 1:12-13

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

A. Those that receive Jesus have the "*right*" to become children of God.

B. Born not of the flesh....

1. Not of the desires of the flesh
2. Not of man's will

C. But born of God.

1. 1 John 5:4 gives us one of the greatest promises of God.

4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith.

Conclusion:

How does it feel to be born of royal birth church?

I guess our biggest question of the day is....how are you treating the Son of God?