

Text – 1 John 5:9-13

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Risen Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

When you hear the word, *testimony*, you may think of oral evidence given under oath by a witness in a court of law. That is certainly a correct definition; but there is another correct definition which is more applicable to both today's Second Reading and to this being, for us, Confirmation Sunday.

“A public profession of religious experience” is also a testimony, and this is what we have in 1 John, chapter 5, today, and this is what we will hear from our confirmation students who affirm their baptisms today.

Their words spoken during worship are a testimony. Their “Statement of Faith” papers presented this weekend are a testimony to their faith.

As our Second Reading today contrasts human testimony with the testimony of God, we likely should sense and know what a great asset and wonderful blessing we have in Scripture, in the Bible, as the Word of God – because this is where we find the testimony of God.

But please note that here we're not speaking of “the word” as ink printed on a page of paper, though it is that. And we're not speaking of the Bible as a dusty reference book often seen, but seldom read, though it is that for many people today!

This rather is reference to the living Word, the Word, for instance, as described in the Gospel of John, chapter 1 – that Word which “became flesh and lived among us,” “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). This “living Word” is the Son of God, Jesus Christ!

As you likely know, in a capital trial by jury human testimony can be ever so important because it can determine widely different outcomes. Human testimony in such a trial can be the difference between a long prison sentence and a declaration of complete innocence!

Human testimony can even be the difference between an earthly life of complete freedom, or an earthly life of permanent restriction and bondage behind bars in prison, or even no life at all: a sentence of death!

But you heard what was read here today: the testimony of God is even greater than human testimony! And our Second Reading today even tells us why this is true: the testimony of God is preeminent, first-rate, and ranks above all because the Father God testifies to his Son!

This Son, Jesus Christ, is preeminent, first-rate, and ranks above all because he was sent by God to do God's will: to bring forgiveness to sinners; to bring light to a dark world; and to bring peace and hope to people mired in discouragement and despair!

This Son of God, Jesus Christ, did these things by his cross, and therefore, he is the Savior Supreme!

The best source for accessing the testimony of God is Scripture, the Bible. And at the very heart of the testimony of God is the “living Word,” the Son of God, the Savior of the world, Jesus.

Jesus is the primary focus of God’s testimony because he came into to this world as the agent of God. Jesus was on a divine mission as the anointed and appointed one to bring redemption and salvation to the world.

In his earthly mission, Jesus taught people; he taught people about the kingdom of God, and about what it means to be a citizen of this kingdom.

What does it mean to be a citizen of the kingdom of God? It means a life of service and love in Jesus’ name. It means serving others, serving especially those in need: the poor, the battered and broken, the hungry and the homeless, all those in great need of any kind.

It means loving; it means loving everybody – your family, your friends, your neighbors, of course; but Jesus taught that we should love even our enemies; we should love and pray for those who persecute us!

But as masterful and skilled as Jesus was in teaching us about the ways of God and how to navigate our way through this world of sin and evil, those weren’t the only things that Jesus taught. Jesus wasn’t just concerned with helping us make the pilgrim journey through this life.

Jesus saw the kingdom of God as beginning in this realm and also carrying believers into the next realm – a realm in which we are destined, through our faith in Christ, to live in with God in joy and happiness forever.

But in this realm, and at the present time, we all have our physical bodies. This means that we are animated by the life which God in creation bound together with the brain and nerves, the skeleton and tissues – all the living substances of our heads, torsos and limbs.

As marvelous as they are, these bodies of ours are of limited duration. Our earthly, physical bodies are one day destined to die – we know not when. But in the resurrection at the last day, God will give us a new body – like the body of Jesus after his resurrection – this is our destiny, in Christ!

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

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus forever. Amen.

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