We are continuing our study of John’s 1st letter this morning and if we have learned anything from John’s letter, we should have learned at least two things. He says in 1 John 4:2 that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. And he says in 1 John 4:2 and 1 John 5:1 that anyone who believes that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God and indeed they have been born of God. And so what John is going to show us today is evidence to prove these facts concerning Jesus Christ.

A young woman was nervous about meeting her boy friend’s parents for the first time; she wanted to look her absolute best. As she glanced at herself in the mirror, she noticed her black pumps looked a little dingy, so she gave them a fast swipe with the paper towel she had used to blot her breakfast bacon.

When she arrived at their home she was greeted by the parents and their spoiled, cranky poodle. The dog got a whiff of the bacon grease on her shoes and followed her around all evening. At the end of the evening, as she was getting ready to leave, her boyfriend’s parents said, "Cleo really likes you, dear, and she is an excellent judge of character. We are delighted to welcome you into our little family."

And I guess the point is when we read about John’s views concerning Jesus we need to ask ourselves if John is an excellent judge of character? 1 John 5:6-11 “This is the one who came by water and blood-Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son.”

Now if you have ever been convicted of a crime, you know that when it comes to going to court to need some witnesses. When I had an accident in my car a few months ago, Jenny was my witness as to what happened when the bus collided with my car. And that’s what John is going to do today.

He is going to offer many witnesses to prove that Jesus Christ was who He claimed to be. Now the word witness is used 9 times in these few verses, the NIV uses the term testify or testimony. But it the Greek word, "martureo" which means "to be a witness” or "to give evidence for, to bear record. And John begins his court room appearance if you like by calling upon his 1st two witnesses.

Because when we put these two witnesses together they should tells us even more about the facts concerning Jesus Christ’s claims. He calls upon the water and the blood to take the stand, in 1 John 5:6a+8b Now remember John is dealing with Gnosticism in his letter and they taught that God couldn’t come in the flesh because the flesh is so sinful.

He says in 1 John 4:1-3 “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.”

Now remember that Gnosticism was beginning to develop at this time. One Gnostic named Cerinthus, who was the leader of a sect in the first century, taught some interesting ideas about Jesus.
“Being a witness for Jesus”

He taught that the divine side of Christ descended upon Jesus at the time of his baptism and then left him before he died on the cross. And it’s because of that teaching that the Gnostics claimed that the Christ did not experience death.

So what do John’s two witnesses have to say concerning this? Well the water and the blood are very significant to John’s argument. The “water” refers to Jesus’ baptism, and the “blood” refers to Jesus’ death on the cross. John’s point is that Jesus Christ came by both water and blood and not by water only. That’s why he says in 1 John 5:6a “This is the one who came by water and blood-Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood.”

And so what he’s really saying is that not only was the Christ present at the baptism, but that He also suffered in the flesh on the cross. Do you remember in Genesis 31:43-52 when it talks about Jacob and Laban set up stones as a witness?

The stones were a witness to the fact that Laban and Jacob couldn’t go past the stones into each other’s land. Well the water and the blood which John is talking about here have that idea behind it.

The waters of Jesus’ baptism and the blood that flowed from His side offer testimony concerning who Jesus Christ truly was. People who do not or cannot believe that Jesus Christ was God in the flesh need to listen to these two witnesses of John.

The story goes about T.H. Huxley, a well-known agnostic, was with a group of men at a weekend house party. On Sunday morning, while most of them were preparing to go to church, he approached a man known for his Christian character and said, "Suppose you stay at home and tell me why you are a Christian." The man, knowing he couldn't match wits with Huxley, hesitated. But the agnostic said gently, "I don't want to argue with you. I just want you to tell me simply what this Christ means to you." The man did, and when he finished, there were tears in Huxley’s eyes as he said, "I would give my right hand if only I could believe that!"

And I’m wondering if you believe that this morning? Do you believe that Jesus Christ was indeed God who dwelt among us in the flesh? Because John is going to call forward another witness as to the fact who Christ claimed to be. Because the blood and water are not the only witnesses, they are joined by someone else. They joined by the witness of the Spirit.

He says in 1 John 5:6-9 “This is the one who came by water and blood-Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement”.

The Spirit’s testimony is true because of His involvement in the earthly life of Jesus. So what proof can the Spirit bring into the courtroom? Well the Spirit can testify to at least four things.

1. He can testify to the conception of Jesus Christ. Matthew 1:20 “But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.” He was involved in the bringing forth of Jesus into the world, through Mary.

2. He can also testify to the baptism of Jesus. Matthew 3:16 “As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.” He was involved at the baptism of Jesus Christ.
“Being a witness for Jesus”

3. He was involved at the time of Jesus’ temptation in the desert. Luke 4:1 “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert.” He was led by the Spirit.

And finally 4. He was involved in Jesus’ ministry here on earth. Luke 4:18-19 “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

And when you think about this witness, the Spirit Himself according to Jesus was there to testify about Jesus in the first place. John 15:26 “When the Counsellor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.”

And how did the Spirit achieve this goal of testifying about Jesus? John 16:13+14 “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.”

The Holy Spirit did this by inspiring the apostles and confirming their word with spiritual gifts. The Hebrew writer tells us the same thing. Hebrews 2:3-4 “How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.”

You know when you are involved in any incident which requires the police and you need to get a lawyer to defend your case in court. You can have a great case but if your witnesses aren’t all saying the same thing, you could end up in trouble. If one witness says one thing and then another witness says another, the jury need to decide which witness to believe.

But that’s the beauty of John’s first three witnesses; they are all in agreement with one another. Because John says in 1 John 5:9 that all three are in agreement concerning whom Jesus was. The Spirit, the water, and the blood, all three bear witness, and they all agree as one. In other words they are saying and testify to the fact that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh!

Have you ever wondered why John brought forth three witnesses? Not just because three witnesses are better than one. Not just because three witnesses are better that two. I believe he gives three witnesses possibly because of Deuteronomy 19:15 which says, “One witness is not enough to convict a man accused of any crime or offence he may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.”

But loved ones John is going to stop at three witnesses, he’s going to call upon someone else who testimony is just as true. He now calls upon the witness of God Himself. 1 John 5:9 “We accept man’s testimony, but God’s testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son.”

When he was the pastor of the Methodist church in Scarborough, William Sangster had an eccentric member who tried to be a zealous Christian. Unfortunately, the man was mentally deficient and usually did the wrong thing. While working as a barber the man lathered up a customer for a shave, came at him with the poised razor, and asked, "Are you prepared to meet your God?" The frightened man fled with the lather on his face!

You can imagine standing in that court room and in comes God Himself. Who is going to argue against His testimony? John says in your normal courtroom of law, you have witnesses who are human beings and we usually except there testimonies, don’t we?
"Being a witness for Jesus"

What he’s telling us here is that "If we receive the witness of men," any witness of God would naturally be greater than that of man.

So what light does God Himself have to shine on this Jesus character? Well, God has born witness to Jesus on several occasions. Again if we think of Jesus’ baptism, Matthew tells us in Matthew 3:17 "And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

On the mount of Transfiguration, Matthew tells us in Matthew 17:5, "While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

And so I guess what John is saying here concerning these witnesses that the blood, the water, and the Spirit, together they form the witness of God Himself. In other words we have three witnesses who in agreement, speak for the fourth witness who is God Himself.

Do you remember when you were baptised into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins? Do you realise what you did? I remember when I was baptised into Christ in January 1997, now I didn’t fully understand what becoming a Christian meant. I did understand why I needed to be baptised to be right with God. But what I didn’t realise was just exactly who else was going to be affected by my obedience to Christ in baptism.

You see when you’re baptised into Christ; you become a witness for Christ. Witnessing is not something you do, witnessing is something you are. You are a witness to the fact that God did indeed in the form of Jesus Christ come to earth in the flesh. You see when a person believes the testimony given about Jesus as the Son of God, you become a witness.

That’s people who John calls people who are born of God. 1 John 5:10a “Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart”. John says anyone who believes in the Son of God is a witness themselves.

Now those words sound familiar don’t they? When the Jews were amazed at Jesus’ teaching, John tells us how He answered them in John 7:16-17 “Jesus answered, “My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. If anyone chooses to do God’s will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own”.

Jesus says anyone who does the will of God as taught by Jesus will know the teachings of Christ are truly from God. And so anyone who believes in the Son receives confirmation "in himself". Those of us who are Christians know who Jesus truly was, we may not fully understand it but we know. And it’s because of that belief and knowing that John said earlier in his letter that we have truly been born of God.

And yes this is a very subjective witness and we know we need to be careful at times. Because there are many people in the religious arena who claim to be Christians. Many people can and do deceive themselves easily into thinking that some feelings they might have is an indication that they are saved. Many people can and do deceive themselves easily into thinking that some feelings they might have is an indication that God has confirmed something to them.

But Solomon warns these people and us in Proverbs 14:12, where he says, “There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.” But if we as Christians believe and act upon the witness of God concerning His Son.
“Being a witness for Jesus”

If we believe and act upon what God has revealed in His Spirit-inspired Word, which agrees with the witness of the water and the blood. Then we as Christians will have confirmation in ourselves that Jesus is truly the Son of God!

Now loved ones this is where it gets tough for us. Because you see if we are witnessing to the fact concerning who Jesus was, then we need to show the world the confirmation we have by the way we live our lives. The call for the church is a call to grow.

To grow in knowledge and understanding of God. We all have a responsibility to grow into the likeness of the One we are witnesses for. Paul reminds us of that fact in Ephesians 4:15 “Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.”

Peter reminds us of our responsibility to grow in 2 Peter 3:18 “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.”

You see just like John says in 1 John 3:14 that our love for one another is an indication of passing from death to life. He says that our unity with one another is evidence that Jesus was truly was sent from God.

In fact that was one of Jesus’ final requests to His Father in heaven wasn’t it? John 17:20-23 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”

John has presented us with four witnesses this morning who all point to the fact that Jesus Christ was indeed God in the flesh. The first four, the water, blood, Spirit and God Himself all provide their evidence before you. And those who have believed who Jesus was and repented of their sins, confessed Jesus Christ as Lord of their lives and been baptised for the forgiveness of their sins are all the fifth witness.

But what about those who do not believe the four witnesses? You see if don’t believe these testimonies this morning then you are a liar. You might think well Mike you can’t call someone who doesn’t believe that Jesus Christ was God in the flesh a liar.

Well, I’m not saying that, John is, John says they are making God out to be a liar. He says in 1 John 5:10 “Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son”.

Can you imagine standing in the great courtroom on Judgment Day in front of all these other witnesses having to answer the great judge as to why you believed Him to be a liar? Wouldn’t it be much better for you to believe in the Son now and through obedient faith become His child?

And that’s the thought I want to leave you with, Paul words about how to become a child of God through faith in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:26+27 “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ”.

If you have faith, that’s great, let me encourage you to act upon that faith by being obedient to God in baptism.
“Being a witness for Jesus”

If after reading this you want to know more about witnessing for Jesus or if this sermon has raised other questions in your thoughts then please just contact me and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

God bless and thanks for taking the time to grow in your understanding of God’s Word.