

The Birthmarks of God's Children

Lesson for Sunday, April 20, 2025

TEXT: 1 John 5:1-5

INTRODUCTION:

- ⇒ Who has a trait that is like their parents? *Could be a look, could be the way we talk...*
- ⇒ Children often follow in their parent's footsteps.
- ⇒ In 1 John, the author has been drawing out attention to three overarching birthmarks of God's children:
 - They have the right belief (the doctrinal mark).
 - They have the right love (the moral mark).
 - They have the right behavior (the social mark).
- ⇒ In today's text, John draws out the implications of these three birthmarks and highlights six specific evidences that a person is a child of God.
- ⇒ Read the text and then read over the six points; then begin to dive into each.

BIBLE STUDY:

1. True children of God believe Jesus is the Messiah (5:1).
 - a. John begins and ends this section with an affirmation of Christ. True Christianity always comes back to Jesus – Who He is and what you believe about Him.
 - b. The verse begins with “Everyone.” No one is excluded. All must embrace and articulate the statement that follows.
 - c. The word “believes” speaks of a continuous action.
 - i. The idea is “everyone who is believing.”
 - ii. Adrian Rogers wrote, “The assurance of my salvation comes not from the fact that I did trust in Christ but that I am trusting in Christ for my salvation.”
 - d. What must we believe? We must believe “that Jesus is the Messiah.”
 - e. Such a confession is a birthmark that we have been born of God and that we are children of God.
 - f. Remember that this is more than a belief in a stated doctrine – it is a belief concerning a Person!
2. True children of God have been born of God (5:1, 4).
 - a. John alludes to the “new birth” three times in these verses. Being “born again” is a biblical birthmark of a Christian.
 - b. We see different terms used throughout the Bible:
 - i. “Born again” or “born from above” – John 3:3, 7 & 1 Peter 1:23
 - ii. “Regeneration” – Titus 3:5
 - c. It is not an optional experience for a child of God. It is essential. See John 3:7, “You *must* be born again!”
 - d. If you are not born again, you are not a child of God.
 - e. But, if you trust Jesus as your Messiah – believing Him to be the very Son of God who lived the life you could not live, died the death you should have died, and was raised from the dead to give us a salvation we don't deserve – you can be born again! Have you experienced the new birth?
3. True children of God love the Father and His Family (5:1-2).
 - a. In these two verses we see that our love for God is multidimensional.

- b. First, the new birth brings us into a new relationship with the Father. However, we not only love the Father, we also love the family the Father is building.
 - c. This reminds us of Jesus's words in Matthew 22 – the Great Commandment. Our love for others is the natural complement and companion to our “first love” for God. When we love God, we will love others.
 - d. APPLICATION: This is why faithfulness in the local church is so critical to our Christian growth. The church is where we live out our faith in practical ways!
- 4. True children of God obey His commands (5:2-3).
 - a. John says in this verse that following God's commands “are not a burden.” What does he mean?
 - b. When we are born again, we receive a new nature. Now we love God and He gives us new affections and values.
 - c. Because we love the Father, we delight in obeying Him. His commands are not a burden – they are a blessing! They are not drudgery – they are a delight!
 - d. Loving God is not just an outward behavior and obedience. Loving God is a longing to do His will from the heart, out of gratitude for Who He is and for what He has done for us.
 - e. We move from “I have to obey” to “I want to obey.”
- 5. True children of God have overcome the world (5:4).
 - a. The theme of this verse is seen in the repetition of the word “conquer.” Both victory and conquer come from the same Greek word *nike*.
 - b. The one who has been born of God conquers – is constantly victorious over – the world!
 - c. The world is no longer our passion – God is! Sinful desires and attractions are no longer tempting – God and His will are!
 - d. Don't think that this is an automatic transformation! When we are born again, we are equipped with the tools necessary to have victory over sin (Holy Spirit, prayer, the Word, the church, etc.) but we must put the tools to work! (Lots to discuss here if time allows!)
- 6. True children of God believe Jesus is the Son of God (5:5).
 - a. John brings us full circle and back to Jesus. Those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God understand that this faith commitment is the means whereby they gain victory and overcome the world.
 - b. The birthmark of a Christian is that they believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that only Jesus is the Son of God.
 - c. Once again “believe” is a continuous action. It is a continuous and ongoing faith. See also John 3:36.

DISCUSSION/APPLICATION:

- ⇒ You can evaluate your class, and the six birthmarks listed above, to determine what is best for your application and discussion.
- ⇒ Point #3 is a big one due to the attitude of radical individualism that dominates modern-day Christianity. We cannot love God in isolation!
- ⇒ Points #4 & 5: Obedience and victory over sin are problems everyone deals with.

NEXT WEEK'S TEXT: 1 John 5:13-21