

Evidences of the New Birth

by Paris Reidhead

Paris Reidhead discusses the evidences of the new birth as outlined in 1 John, emphasizing the importance of personal experience and understanding in witnessing to others.

Duration: 38:19

Scripture: Galatians 4:6, 1 John 1:6, 1 John 2:3, 1 John 2:10, 1 John 3:24, 1 John 5:4, 1 John 5:10

Topics: "New Birth"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the evidences of eternal life as described in the first epistle of John. He emphasizes the importance of believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, in order to have eternal life. The preacher also highlights the role of the Holy Spirit in confirming our status as children of God and the need to overcome the world through faith. Additionally, he warns against loving the world and living in sin while claiming to be a child of God.

Transcript

Years ago, I was told that one of the most effective methods of homiletics was first to tell people what you were going to tell them, and then to tell them, and then to tell them what you had told them, because it usually takes three or four hearings before the point is clear. Now today, we are continuing lessons from the letter. The letter, the first epistle of John, and the lessons we're most concerned about reviewing are the evidences of eternal life.

You will receive after the service, not the outline, but four pages with a summary, one paragraph or two or three short paragraphs, on each of these ten evidences that are in the epistle to John, 1 John. You will understand that in John chapter 20, the gospel of John chapter 20, and verse 31, the apostle wrote that these things are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you might have life. We need the gospel of John, because by means of it, we have the testimony that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

But his letter in 1 John 5, 13, that we had on the top of our bulletin today, these things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. It's important that we know that we have eternal life. It's important that we know the evidences of eternal life, first for our own peace of mind, but more importantly, for those that we can help.

You're going to find, as you think about it in the days and weeks and months to come, that people to whom you talk are not at all sure that they have eternal life. If you talk with some, they will say, well, I joined the church when I was such and age. And they attach a tremendous importance to the fact that they did, on one occasion, become associated with a company of people, and that that event must certainly have prepared them for death, must have ensured that they have eternal life.

You'll find others who say, when I was baptized, when I was an infant, and I became, by that means, partaker of whatever it is that God gives. I got everything fixed up then when I was a baby. There are others that will say, but I made a profession of faith.

There was this person who came and he talked to me, or I was in such and such a meeting. Almost everyone you meet and talk to, in fact, I'm going to change that. Everyone you meet and talk to has a plan of salvation.

Everyone you talk to has a plan of salvation in which they're trusting, in which they are expecting to have the kind of results that they seek. The result they seek, of course, is eternal life. Now, they have invented it, or it's been inherited, it's been passed on to them.

But regardless of that, it's still the plan of salvation. Oh, I've had people tell me this. I don't think that there's any hell.

I think when you die, you're dead. Now, that's his plan of salvation. No hell, no life after death.

Therefore, it's a plan by which he's functioning. It's the basis of his decisions or her decisions. But it's that which they are using as plan for the future.

There isn't any future, it becomes a plan. There are others that will say, God is taking somebody up there is sort of keeping track of our good deeds and our bad deeds, and there's a scale. And if our good deeds outweigh our bad deeds, he's going to let us in, there won't be any problem.

That's his plan of salvation. So what you have to understand is that you can be nice. You can be affable and pleasant and say to anyone who comes along, well, okay, you got a plan.

So I guess that's all right. I don't want you to go around as with a club and break down everyone's misconceptions and misunderstandings. But I would like very much to think that you're going to be in a position to understand what people are saying when you talk with them.

When the person says, oh, I don't believe there's any life after death. Really, what he's saying is, I'm terribly scared. I'm frightened of the future.

And I don't know anything about it. And I wish someone could talk to me about it that wouldn't get angry with me and wouldn't find fault with me and wouldn't tear me apart and hold me in disdain and wouldn't think of me with contempt. But someone that would understand that I'm confused and perplexed and I'm ignorant, please help me.

It's a cry. But you see, one of our problems has been that we have thought that we were to be soul winners. Yeah, that's right.

We were told by someone that our task as Christians was to be soul winners. Oh, that's that's parasy. There's only one place in the Bible that it even mentions soul winning.

And that's in the Proverbs. And it says, he that winneth souls is wise. Now, it has nothing to do with the new birth.

And it has nothing at all to do with people being brought out of death into life. It's a Dale Carnegie statement that the writer of Proverbs is making. If you're going to get along with people, you've got to be smart.

You can't be a bull in the china shop going around trampling over everybody's garden and expect them to like you very much. It has nothing to do with the new birth. Winning souls means a selling Jesus.

According to the average little text on the subject of winning souls, how to sell Jesus. Well, the Lord Jesus didn't say we were to be salesmen of him. After that, the Holy Ghost has come upon you, you shall be a salesman of me.

No, he said you shall be a witness. And there's all the difference in the world between being a salesman of Christ and a witness for Christ. He didn't ask you to persuade people to come to him.

He asked you to witness to them. Now, once you understand the difference between winning souls and witnessing, you're going to be a lot more comfortable in talking to people about the Lord because you don't have to make a sale. You don't have to get a convert.

All you have to do is obey the Holy Spirit and say what's appropriate to say at that time and don't say too much. The scripture says let your speech be seasoned with salt. Sometimes when people give us an opportunity to talk about the Lord, we get our big ten-ton Mack trucks loaded with salt.

We back up over them. We put it in a lift. We open the tailgate.

Ten tons of theological salt rolls out over them. They tunnel their way up, shake their heads, blow the salt out of their nose and out of their hair. Boy, he's salty all right.

But they'll never get near you again. They'll never let you talk to them again. You blew it.

You thought you were selling Jesus. No, no. You're to be a witness for Christ.

And you're to tell what you experience because you're the world's best authority on you. Did you know that? Nobody in the world is an expert on you but you. And a witness is somebody who tells what he has seen, he has heard, he has experienced.

Anything else is hearsay. And that ten tons of theological salt is 99% hearsay, what somebody else said. Now, why am I so concerned? Because I want you to have something to witness about.

I want you to have something to share. What you have seen and you have heard and you have experienced because that is authoritative. So what are we talking about? Why have we taken ten weeks on John? I could have given it to you the way I'm giving it to you this morning.

Just a quick review and you'd have gotten it. But no, I'm concerned about your witness for Christ. I'm concerned about home Bible classes where we'll have people sitting in the Word and letting the Word speak to them.

Because I believe the Word of God is the sword of the Spirit. And if the Word of God pierced your heart, then it's going to pierce somebody else's heart. And when you tell somebody what the Word of God did to you, you're putting the sword right in the vital spots so the same sword of the Spirit can pierce them that pierced you.

Now, what do we have in John, therefore, is a little arsenal of spiritual daggers designed by the Spirit of God and given so that you could become effective in your witness for Christ. Now, there are ten evidences of eternal life set forth in this little epistle that I have identified and emphasized. I'll read them to you.

Chapter 1, verse 6, walk in the light. That person who has eternal life will walk in the light. If we say we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth.

Now, my case, I was a church member, but I was still walking in darkness. Elsie Born, my little school teacher, knew it, and I knew it because I had been, the Scripture says, honored thy father and thy mother. And I was lying and cheating and deceiving and I'd conned them into thinking what a nice guy I was while all the time I wasn't.

And the Spirit of God used that verse among others to convince me of my lostness even though I was nominally a church member and had it all because I was walking in darkness. Now, that's a witness. I'm telling you what I experienced.

I'm witnessing to you what I experienced. Do you understand? What is a witness? A witness is to tell what he has seen, what he has heard, and what he has experienced. I was a church member.

Why? Because I'm talking to church members in an Orthodox Bible-believing church, but I was lost. And how did I find out I was lost? Because I was walking in darkness. And the Scripture says, he that saith I have fellowship with him and walks in darkness is a liar.

That's my witness. Do you see how I've used the word in talking to you and telling you? Now, I don't know that you can say the same thing as I can say. Maybe that wasn't true of you.

That's why there's ten, because one of these is going to be appropriate to you along the way. So, the first one, first chapter one, verse six, I've got a little one off to the left, walking the light. The second is in chapter two and verse three.

And that is so explicit. Again, it's just right to the point. Hereby we do know him, know that we know him if we keep his commandments.

He that saith I know him and keepeth not his commandments is a liar. I'm witnessing to you. Elsie Bourne wrote my name next to that verse.

And in a recess, she said as I was leaving, if you'd stay after school this evening, I have something to show you. And I came to her and said, Miss Bourne, what do you have to show me? And she opened her New Testament and the date and my initials were there. And she said, as I was reading this today, God spoke to me about you, Sonny.

And it was this, just this, if he that saith I know him and keepeth not his commandments, because I had lied about something in her class. And yet I was a church member. And God used that verse to show me my lostness.

Do you understand? Witness, I'm telling you what the Spirit of God did through the word to my heart. And how a teacher used that word. Because it was there, just that clear.

God had spoken to her about the word, about me, my name, my initials, that day, in that morning. And God had told her she had the gift to give me. And it was the gift of love in the verse of Scripture.

Do you understand? Now, the third one is in chapter two in verse 10, where it says, He that loveth his brother abideth in light, he that hateth his brother is in darkness even until now. There wasn't any application of that particular verse to me. But I'm sure there will be to someone.

I'm sure you're going to be talking to someone once who's going to tell you what terrible things his blood brother did to him. And how he hates them because of what he's done and taking away. I had one man tell me I hate him because we started a partnership and he stole the business.

And now he's a multimillionaire and I'm here. And he was so filled with bitterness. And yet he was thinking himself to be saved.

But there was just hatred written in his face and in his eyes and carved in his visage, his face just was there. No, no, he hated his brother because what his brother's done to him. But the Scripture says that he that hateth his brother is in darkness.

Why? Because you can't, you can't have asked for forgiveness and not have forgiven. It was used as a means by which the Spirit of God could, that way I could bring that man to the Word and could let him see what the Word of God says. Concerning this, either he was seeing it as a great sin or he was seeing it as the evidence that he hadn't been born of God because there's no way he could handle it.

The fourth one is in chapter two in verse 15, where one has the four written, love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loved the world, the love of the Father is not in it. You'll find someone who says, Oh, yes, I'm a child of God, but living in the world.

Now you can use that verse, whether it's a, it meets your experience or not, it meets theirs. And God has made this Scripture, you heard God speak to your heart through this. And now you can witness to what you've heard God say to you regarding the theme, whether it was true in your own experience or not.

You've heard God speak to you through his Word. And so it's not, it's something you can share as a witness. God has shown me and made me to understand that were I to love the world, then it would be proof and evidence that the love of the Father is not in me.

Here it is. This is the one Scripture. The Lord has quickened this Scripture to my heart.

And I know this would be true of me. I rejoice that whereas once I loved the world, he's taken it out. Now, whom you love, you seek to please.

I'm not trying to please the world anymore. I'm trying to please the Lord. You have an opportunity to witness through this.

Number four. Number five is verse chapter two in verse 28. And now little children abide in him.

That when he shall appear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming. You know that he is righteous. You know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of him.

And if you've been born of him, you're going to abide in him. You're going to continue in the Son and in the Father. You're going to stay there.

Well, I walked with the Lord years ago. I made a start. But I've fallen away.

I've backslidden. No, he said, if you have evidence of eternal life, is that you continue to live in Christ. There's no, let me put it this way.

There is absolutely no assurance of salvation while a person is living by choice in known sin. I want to say it again. There is absolutely no grounds for assurance of salvation while one is living in known sin.

The Lord knoweth them that are his and let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. No grounds, whatever, for assurance of salvation while we are living in sin. Years ago, and this is the sixth one, chapter three in verse nine and number six next to three, nine, a very simple, direct, whosoever is born of God does not commit sin.

In verse ten, in this, the children of God are manifest. The word commit is a key to understanding this verse. Keeps on practicing.

I said lives by choice or keeps on practicing sin. I said that there's no grounds for assurance of salvation for anyone living by choice in known sin. Charles Haddon Spurgeon was a Calvinist Baptist preacher who hosted the Sovereign Grace Conference at Park Street Church in London in 1856.

At the opening message, he met some of the charges leveled against that fellowship. They said that Spurgeon and his associates were antinomian and preaching that people should continue to live in sin. And Spurgeon's reply was as follows.

Anyone who claims to be a child of God through faith in Christ who continues to live in known sin is either criminal or crazy. The election of grace is an election unto holiness. Now, this is Charles Haddon Spurgeon speaking 125 years ago, and he is saying that there is absolutely no grounds of assurance of salvation while living in known sin.

Why? Because if you're born of God, you hate sin. You have partaken of its nature. It doesn't say you may not fall into sin, that you may not be overtaken in a fall.

That we had clear in the first chapter. But when a child of God, someone born into God's family, falls into sin, he is doing something he basically and fundamentally doesn't want to do, because in repentance and in faith, his purpose became clear to please God in everything. So, even though a child of God may fall into sin, he doesn't go on practicing it because he can't.

God's spirit is in him and the spirit of God is going to deal with him. You see, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the fear of the Lord is to hate evil. So now the next one is 7, chapter 3 and verse 14, love one another.

We know we have passed from death into life because we love the brethren. They tell about a man who rushed down to the dock in Toronto. Two boats were leaving.

One was a group going out into the lake and halfway between the states, New York and Canada, where they had a gambling ship. They bring all the gambling out and they continue. The other was the Sunday school from one of the evangelical churches going out on a boat for a day's picnic.

And this man was one of the gamblers. He rushed down, saw the boat, jumped aboard as it was moving and he got on the Sunday school boat. And after about two hours there, he went to the captain and he said, Captain, will you please put me, haven't you got a dinghy or a boat or something you can put me in? I've got to go ashore.

I can't stand it. Why, being with the Sunday school people is hell. I just can't stand it any longer.

Well, obviously he didn't love the brethren. There was absolutely no love for the people of God in his heart. But I'll tell you this, when you've been born of God, you love the people of God.

And that's what the text tells us. We know we've passed from death into life because we love the brethren. Now, we have the 8th, which is the witness of the spirit.

We put 8 after before 3.24 and 4.13 and 5.10. I shall not dwell long on that. We only have this from Galatians 4.6. And because you are sons, God sent forth the spirit of his son into your heart, crying, Abba, Father. How I appreciate the testimony in song and testimony of Brother McIntyre, as he spoke to us of that great truth of John Wesley and Captain Booth of the South Asian Army, who emphasized to their generation the necessity of the witness of the spirit.

The 9th, in chapter 5 and verse 4, whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world. And number 10, he that hath the sons has life, because life is in the son. Years ago, in a little college in Iowa, there was a meeting going on.

An evangelist, a lady evangelist, was there, and she was exalting Christ and preaching the words of the students and the friends that gathered there at the college chapel, then John Fletcher College. I'd come from my Baptist pastorate and Baptist schools, where to us, salvation was a formula. Once you recited the formula, you had all there was to get.

Even though God in his grace had saved me in a Methodist holiness camp meeting, where they emphasized the witness of the spirit of the new birth, still in my Bible school training, I'd come up under a formula approach. And so I was a little bit taken back and somewhat surprised when one evening of that meeting with that evangelist, students went to the front. Many of them were prayed for various things, but I noticed the evangelist and the president of the college and one of the teachers over at the end at the altar.

They were there for 30 minutes. They were there for an hour. They were there for an hour and 20 minutes.

They were there until the person for whom they were praying, they weren't talking, they weren't pushing, they were just there standing, sharing, until that college student had evidence to her satisfaction that she had the witness of the spirit. I'm so glad the president of the college stayed and the evangelist stayed and the teacher stayed, because the student was my wife. Not yet at that time, but a college student whom I had seen one evening as she made my own.

Oh, how important it is for us to understand that when we're dealing with people, we're dealing with the precious, never dying souls of man. In the original diary, journal of David Brainerd, as edited by Jonathan Edwards, not by subsequent editions, he tells on one occasion when on Sunday he had preached, there was great persecution and he sought to give comfort to the saints in one village and then in the evening in another village. There were several that professed good faith in Christ and that night as he went to prayer, thanking God for those that had come to know the Lord during the day, it dawned on him that perhaps, just perhaps, that some of these who'd been awakened had not yet come to assurance, had mistaken the

comforts for the children of God as applying to them before they'd been born into the Father's family.

And so, said he, I spent most of that night in prayer, though coughing blood throughout the lonely hours until the great dawn came. I awoke without rest, weary in body, and made my way to each of the huts where I, of those, the homes of those who had made profession of faith in the morning. And then, in the afternoon, I went to the homes of those who'd made profession of faith in the evening.

And alas, alas, my worst fears were realized, for of the seven that had made profession of faith in those two services, there was only one that gave good evidence that they'd passed from death to life. And then he exclaimed, ah, to think that had I presumed these would of that day have risen up in the lake of fire, among that number of whom it was said, they say unto me, Lord, Lord, and I will say away with you, I never knew you. And they would single me out as one of the servants of God and curse me before him as an unfaithful servant, because I had deceived them in the most important thing in all the world, the destiny of their never dying souls.

Perhaps you understand why the later revisers left that out of the Journal of Jonathan Edwards. Because it could become, be viewed as an indictment of our day and of our time, but I believe it can be viewed also as an exhortation to Trinity Alliance Church to labor closely and carefully, wisely and well with the Spirit of God in dealing with people about the most important subject in all the world, their never dying souls. Shall we pray, Father of Jesus, we love thee, we worship thee, we adore thee, thou God of all grace, thou Father of Jesus, we thank thee and we praise thee for everything we've learned of thee and everything our hearts have felt, and we're looking to thee now that thou, in the days to come, will make us as a people, those who witness effectively to their day, to their time, to their generation, and that we may have the joy of seeing many brought out of death into life with good grounds for their assurance in Christ and the witness of the Spirit of the new birth.

Oh, Father of Jesus, give to us the courage that we need to be witnesses for Christ and save us from the tyranny of feeling that we have to be salesmen of Jesus. Help us, Lord, just to share what you've taught us, what you've made real in our hearts, our lives, and in our experience. Thank you again for your presence with us this day, for this study in May, for meditating upon it in the months that lie ahead, and an assurance to us as a people, we ask in Jesus' name, and for his sake, amen.

With assurances in our hearts, number 495, 495, let us stand together as we sing. Oh, yeah, I have found him whom my soul so long has prayed. Jesus satisfies the longing through his blood I now am saved.

Feeding on the husks around me till my strength was almost gone. Longing for something better, only still to hunger on. Hallelujah, I have found him whom my soul so long has prayed.

Jesus satisfies my longing through his blood I now am saved. Poor I was and sought for riches, something that would satisfy. But the dust I gathered round me only marked my soul's head dry.

Hallelujah, I have found him whom my soul so long has prayed. Jesus satisfies my longing through his blood I now am free. Well of water ever springing, bread of life so rich and free.

Untold wealth that never fadeth, my Redeemer is to me. Hallelujah, I have found him whom my soul so long has prayed. Jesus satisfies my longing through his blood I now am free.

If that assurances that we've talked about, those ten, are yours, let's sing that chorus once again with that kind of meaning. Hallelujah, I have found him, that one that satisfies, alright? Hallelujah, I have found him

whom my soul so long has prayed. Jesus satisfies my longing through his blood I now am free.

Thank you for that satisfying aspect of knowing of the witness in the spirit. Thank you for these lessons from First John. Thank you for the fact that we have something to share and witness about.

Now as we're scattered, I pray help me Father that the teachings concerning you, we might be able to share. And that we might be able to point to the one who can bring conviction and repentance. And in turn, that witness in our friend's lives that they have been born again.

Bless us now as we are scattered, may we sense the fact that we're still church. Though we're not together as a body, bless we pray in Jesus name. Amen.

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