

“A True Believer Loves and Confesses Christ”
(1 John 5:1)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. As I began to prepare tonight’s message, I realized I had written a sermon not too long ago that dealt with the same topic.
 - a. Knowing how well we remember the sermons that have been preached here, I was a bit hesitant to reuse any of the material.
 - b. But seeing how much I had forgotten about it, I thought it might do us some good to hear it again.
 - c. Tonight, we’re going to consider how the true saint will love His Lord, Jesus Christ. Perhaps an expression of that love would be a good place to start.
 - d. Let’s listen to these words penned by Samuel Stennett (Baptist minister of 18th Century), and as we do consider what must have been in his heart that moved him to write:

To Christ, the Lord, let every tongue
Its noblest tribute bring;
When He’s the subject of the song,
Who can refuse to sing?

Survey the beauties of His face,
And on His glories dwell;
Think of the wonders of His grace,
And all His triumphs tell.

Majestic sweetness sits enthroned
Upon His awful brow;
His head with radiant glories crowned,
His lips with grace o’erflow.

No mortal can with Him compare,
Among the sons of men;
Fairer He is than all the fair,
That fill the heavenly train.

He saw me plunged in deep distress,
He flew to my relief;
For me He bore the shameful cross,
And carried all my grief.

His hand a thousand blessings pours
Upon my guilty head;

His presence gilds my darkest hours,
And guards my sleeping bed.

To Him I owe my life, and breath,
And all the joys I have;
He makes me triumph over death,
And saves me from the grave.

To heaven, the place of His abode,
He brings my weary feet;
Shows me the glories of my God,
And makes my joys complete.

Since from His bounty I receive
Such proofs of love divine,
Had I a thousand hearts to give,
Lord, they should all be thine!
(Samuel Stennett, 161-62).

- b. We've all heard words like these before:
 - (i) Words that express love for Jesus Christ, someone the author never met or had even seen, and yet someone he loved more than his own life.
 - (ii) And we know how this can happen, because we feel the same way – perhaps not as strongly, but substantially the same.
 - (iii) How can we account for this experience?
 - (a) It's not because we're deluded, or insane.
 - (b) But because the Spirit of God has put these affections in our hearts.
- 2. The Spirit gives us a love for holiness, as we've seen.
 - a. This means that we will love God most of all, because He is infinite holiness.
 - b. But we will also love those who are born of Him, because they share that image.
 - (i) John tells us this where he writes, "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments" (1 John 5:1-2).
 - (ii) There is a reciprocal relationship between loving the God and loving those begotten of Him: if we love the Father, we love His children, and if we love His children, then we love the Father.
 - (iii) It's because we love them for the same thing: holiness.
 - c. But who of all those begotten of Him most reflects that image of His holiness? It is the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. Preview.

1. Our text tells us that those who are born again of the Spirit of God, who are true Christians, true believers, are those who believe that Jesus is the Christ and who love Him.
2. These are the two things we'll consider this evening.

II. Sermon.

A. First, "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John 5:1).

1. We saw last week that the Spirit of God will bear witness in our hearts that we are true believers in at least three ways:
 - a. By teaching and guiding us into the truth (1 John 2:20, 27).
 - b. By giving us the conviction that we the children of God and the confidence to call Him our Father (Rom. 8:15-16).
 - c. And by convincing us of the truth that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, as opposed to those who denied that He had any real humanity.
2. What we see here follows on this last point:
 - a. John tells us we will not only believe that He has come in the flesh, we will believe He is the Messiah: the One who has come in answer to God's promises to set us free from our sins. This means we will confess three things about Him:
 - (i) That He is God, "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God" (1 John 4:15).
 - (ii) That He has come in the flesh, "By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God" (4:2).
 - (iii) And that He is the Christ, the Messiah, the anointed One of God (5:1).
 - b. But confessing this means more than just believing it to be true: we will actually trust in Him to save us.
 - (i) Believing the facts is only the first step to a living faith.
 - (ii) We must also trust Him completely to save us: "The one who believes [trusts] in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son" (5:10).
 - (iii) And we must submit to Him as our Lord.
 - (iv) Everyone who is born of God – who has been born again/regenerated by the Holy Spirit – will do this.
 - (v) But why will they do this?

B. It's because, second, everyone who "loves the Father loves the child born of Him" (v. 1).

1. What does John mean when he says we will love the child born of Him?
 - a. Literally, he says, "Everyone who loves the One who begat also loves the one who has been begotten of Him."
 - (i) If we love the Father, we will also love those who bear His image, who share His nature; that's what it means to be begotten of God: to be begotten of the Spirit.
 - (ii) But there are two categories of those who are begotten of God's Spirit: one category of one, and one of many.

- (a) There are those who are born again of the Spirit – God’s people.
 - (b) And there is the only begotten Son of God.
- b. If we love the Father, we will love them both for the same reasons.
 - (i) We will love Jesus Christ for His holiness, and our brothers and sisters for their holiness.
 - (ii) In the context, John probably has God’s people primarily in view.
 - (iii) But the same must be true with regard to Christ.
- 2. We will believe that Jesus is the Christ, and we will trust in Him, because we love Him.
 - a. We will love Him most of all for who He is:
 - (i) The Holy One of God, God’s only begotten Son, the true and only Son of the Father, and we will love Him as He is revealed in Scripture.
 - (ii) Anyone can love a Jesus of their own making:
 - (a) One who loves all men the same.
 - (b) Who died for all men.
 - (c) Who loves everyone so much, He can’t judge or send any to hell.
 - (d) One who is not sovereign in all things.
 - (iii) But only a true Christian can love the true Jesus.
 - (a) Yes, we love Him for His love – His grace, patience, kindness, etc.
 - (b) But we also love Him for His holiness: His infinite hatred of sin, wrath, judgment, love of righteousness.
 - (c) And for His sovereignty: that He died for His elect, saves only them, and will condemn the rest.
 - (iv) We must love the true Jesus Christ, or we don’t really love Him at all; we merely love a savior of our own making.
 - b. And yes, we will also love Him for what He has done.
 - (i) Because He first loved us and gave His life for us.
 - (ii) Because He saves us from hell and opened the doors of heaven.
 - (iii) Because He will reward us for our work and keep us forever in His love.
 - (iv) This poem by Samuel Davies combines both elements.
 - c. And we will love Him most of all.
 - (i) Jesus said to those following Him: “If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:26).
 - (ii) No other love in this world must even be close. Samuel Davies wrote,

Let others let their passions rove
Round all the earth, from shore to shore;
Since Jesus is my friend and love,
My utmost wish can grasp no more.

His glories have allured my eye,
 And into love transformed my heart;
 To Him my tenderest passions fly;
 Jesus, nor shall they e're depart.

Upon His friendship I rely,
 Still of His tender care secure;
 My wants are all before His eye!
 Nor can they overcome His pow'r.

His presence fills unbounded space;
 My heavenly friend is always nigh.
 Full of compassion, rich in grace;
 Touched with the tenderest sympathy.

Faithful and constant is His love,
 And my ungrateful conduct hides;
 Safe to the happy world above,
 The meanest of His friends, He guides.

Amid the agonies of death,
 And terrors of the final doom,
 He saves them from almighty wrath,
 And leads the helpless pilgrims home.

Oh, may an everlasting flame
 Of love possess my grateful mind!
 And my last breath adore His name,
 Who condescends to be my friend!
 (Samuel Davies, 167-68).

3. Finally, how will we express this love?
 - a. We will do so to Him directly.
 - (i) Through expressions of love and devotion, as we've seen in these poems/hymns.
 - (ii) Through our prayers for His kingdom to advance, for His glory to be revealed.
 - (iii) Through our personal devotion to Him and His cause.
 - (iv) Through our trust in Him through life.
 - (v) Through our obedience.
 - (vi) In a word, through our worship: "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom. 12:1-2).

- b. We will also love Him indirectly.
 - a. Those who love the One who begat also love the one who has been begotten of Him.
 - b. We must also love God's children, begotten of the same Spirit.
 - (i) There is only so much we can do to show our love for Christ directly.
 - (ii) If we love Him, that love will also find its way also to those who share His image.
 - (iii) John writes, "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death" (1 John 3:14).
 - (iv) Thomas Watson, "He that loved Him that begat, loves him also that is begotten of Him." (1 John 5:1). It is possible to love a saint, yet not to love him as a saint; we may love him for something else, for his ingenuity, or because he is affable and bountiful. A beast loves a man, but not as he is a man, but because he feeds him, and gives him provender. But to love a saint as he is a saint, this is a sign of love to God" (*Treasury*).
 - (v) And John Hooper, "Love of man necessarily arises out of the love of God. The love of the creature is but the corollary to the love of the Creator. This is what the Christian finds, as a matter of fact. His heart is overcharged with love to God. It finds its way out in love to man. His direct service of God cannot, in the nature of things, go very far. He worships God publicly in His house. He glorifies Him secretly in the constant outpourings of his heart. He gives of his substance to the maintenance of every cause which is God's cause. But here it ends. God is so mighty, so self contained, that with all our puny efforts, much cannot be done to serve Him. So the Christian looks about to see how he is to show his love for God. He soon finds the way. Clearly, it must be by love for his fellowmen" (*Treasury*).
 - (vi) To show our love to Christ, we will love our family, friends, neighbors, and even our enemies.
 - (vii) But we will especially love the saints; if we don't, we don't love the Father or the Son.
 - (a) Our text says as much: "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him" (1 John 5:1).
 - (b) "If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also" (1 John 4:20-21).
 - (c) If we are truly born again from above, we will love the Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and those made in His image.
 - (d) We will love them as Jesus loved them. Jesus said, "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:12-13).
 - (e) May God grant us His grace to do so. Amen.