

TESTING OUR FAITH

2 CORINTHIANS 13:5 • TV250B

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by
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2 Corinthians 13:5

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”

A long time ago, I brought a message from this same text from the book of **2 Corinthians**. I am going to do it again today. The title of this message is: **“TESTING OUR FAITH.”**

In **2 Corinthians 13:5**, Paul writes these words, *“Examine yourself whether you be in the faith. Know ye not your own selves how that Christ dwelleth in you except you be reprobate?”* Examine yourselves.

Sometimes, religious people are a bit harsh with one another and a bit cruel. Many religious people are quite sure that they are saved and they are quite sure that you are not saved. They are saved and quite sure of it. When they examine you, they can find no evidence of salvation. They are quick to judge another man’s relationship with God. They usually, are very slow to examine their own hearts.

I have this to say to you and I want you to listen to me carefully; the very first point that I would make in this message is this:

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Salvation is a personal relationship with God. Salvation and communion with God is a very personal matter. It is so personal, in fact, that it is quite impossible for you to know another man's heart; it is impossible. I don't care who you are or who the individual is.

I know that the apostle Paul was saved because God said he was. God said, "*He is a chosen vessel unto me.*" I know that Jeremiah was saved because God said, "*Before He formed him in his mother's womb, before he came out of the belly; I knew him and sanctified him.*"

I know that there are some fellows in the Scriptures that are saved. It is impossible, impossible, for you to know another person's heart. You just cannot tell and it is impossible for you to be sure that another person is either saved or lost; that is a very, very, private and personal matter.

But, now; it is not only possible for us to know our own state before God but we are commanded to know it. That's right! In **2 Peter 1:10**, the Scripture says; "*Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.*" You do not know about the other fellow but God exhorts you to "*make your calling and election sure.*"

When you come to the Lord's Table, when the bread and the wine is set forth, representing the broken body and the shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, the apostle Paul delivered these words to us; he said, "*What I received of the Lord I delivered unto you.*"

Our Lord said, "*Let a man examine himself and so let him eat.*" You cannot examine anyone else but you can examine yourself. You can try your own heart; you can try your own soul; you can try your own relationship with God and you can see if you have any understanding of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Listen to this Scripture in **2 Corinthians 13:5**, in my text that I read a moment ago; "*Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith.*" What I am saying is this; salvation and communion with God is such a personal, private, matter that it is impossible for you to know beyond a shadow of a doubt whether or not another person knows God or is saved.

You cannot look on the outward countenance and tell; "*God looks on the heart.*" You can determine your own relationship with God. We are commanded to examine ourselves. We are commanded to "*give diligence to make our calling and election sure.*" We are commanded to examine ourselves when we come to the Lord's Table.

Then, there were believers in the Old Testament and in the New Testament who were quite certain of their salvation. Job said, "*I know that my Redeemer liveth and though I die and worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh, I will see the Lord.*"

David knew; he said, "*The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the House of the Lord forever.*"

Paul the apostle knew about his relationship with God; he said, "*I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day.*"

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The beloved John knew; he said, "*We know that we have passed from death unto life.*"

Preacher, how do you go about examining yourself? How would a man go about testing his faith? How would a man go about determining if he really knows the Lord of if he has a false, hypocritical, profession or is just a church member?

On what ground can we determine our relationship with the living God? I am going to make six statements. I want you to listen very carefully to these six statements. I am taking them straight from the Scriptures.

I have written some Bible Class Commentaries. They are printed in English and we are translating them now into French and Portuguese. They sent them to France to be observed by some preachers over there.

One of the preachers said, "He only says what the Bible says; that is all that he says in his Commentaries, what the Bible says." Well, that is what we ought to say. Paul told Timothy, "*Preach the Word.*" That is what I am trying to do, preach the Word.

When I tell you to examine yourself and determine your relationship with God, I am telling you to do it on the basis of the Scriptures, what God says in His Word. I'm not talking about feelings. You can't say, "I'm saved because I feel I am saved. I'm saved because I was there when it happened. I'm saved because I have turned over a new leaf or reformed my life."

I want you to listen to what God's Word says. I know this and it is very important, listen to it.

First: A man is not saved; a man is not a Christian, who has not been "*born again.*" That is what the Word of God says. I don't care if it is me, your pastor, your priest, your pope, your president, or the best man on earth or the worst man.

It doesn't matter if you are the most religious person, elder, deacon, or a Sunday school teacher. A person is not a Christian and he is not saved if he has not been "*born again.*" This is what the Bible says.

Are we going to go by the Scriptures? If we don't go by the Scriptures then we are left to just believe anything that we can come up with; we are forced to believe it unless we turn to the Word of God.

Isaiah said, concerning the Scriptures, "*If they speak not according to the Word of God it is because they don't have any light in them.*" Our Lord said, "*Nicodemus, except a man is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.*" Again, he said; "*Except a man is born again he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.*"

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I will answer that question as plainly, forcefully, and simply as I can from the Scriptures. I do not care who the person is, what they claim, or what kind of life they live. If a person has not been “*born again*,” he cannot see the Kingdom of God and cannot enter.

It is important to note to whom our Lord is speaking when He said that. He is not speaking to a Publican, a harlot, or a drunk; He is speaking to a religious man. He is speaking to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, a teacher of the Scriptures, a moral Pharisee. He is speaking to a man with all the outward form, ceremony, legalism and separation of religion.

He is saying to him that salvation is a heart work. Salvation is not outward form and ceremony. Salvation is not the claims of our lips; it is the condition of our heart. Salvation is a new life created by the Spirit of God within the sinner.

That is what our Lord is saying and He is saying it to one of the most prominent, moral, and religious men of His day. Our Lord is saying, “*You must be born again.*” The first time you were born you were flesh; “*That which is born of the flesh is flesh.*” You were born of human parents and you became a human being with a fleshly nature.

Now, you have to be born from above. You have to have a new heart, a new nature, and a new life. You have to be born of God, born of the Spirit of God, born through the Word of God. This is what the Scripture teaches; you have to be born of God, born of the Spirit of God, born of the Word of God, made a new person, and made a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Salvation is not reformation, it is regeneration. Salvation is not education, it is revelation. Salvation is not form without, it is life within. Salvation is not lip worship, it is heart worship. Salvation is not performing religious duties; salvation is a real, sincere, spiritual devotion.

“*If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, (the life of Christ), then he is none of His.*” So, I know that this is true when we are examining ourselves. If a man has not been born again he is not saved. He is not a believer and he is not a Christian.

That new birth is a work of God and it is a gift of God. That new birth is the very life of God and it is a new nature. It is supernaturally given to us by the power of God. That is what the Word of God says, “*Except a man be born again, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.*”

Secondly: A man is not saved or a Christian (no matter what he claims) who has not heard the true Gospel of Jesus Christ and believed it in his heart. He may be the highest religious officer in your denomination. If he has not heard the true Gospel of Jesus Christ and believed it in his heart, he is not saved. He is not a Christian and he is not a child of God.

Can I make good on that? I want you to listen to me; “*Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. But how shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher? How shall they preach except they be sent?*” This is in **Romans 10:13 through 15.**

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Romans 10:17 says, *“Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”* There is no doubt or no question about it; Christ is the Gospel and the Gospel is Christ. Paul said in **Romans 1:16**, *“This Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation.”*

Every man who is saved has heard the Gospel. Listen to me; he hasn't just heard it with these ears; he has heard it within that new heart, that new life that is given him in regeneration by the Spirit of God.

Our Lord said to the disciples; *“Blessed are your eyes, they see and your ears, they hear, your hearts, they understand.”* He said, *“I speak to them in parables (stories) because they have eyes but they can't see. They have ears but they can't hear.”*

Whoever heard of a man having ears but not hearing? He can hear it with a natural ear but he doesn't hear with the heart. They have hearts but they do not understand. Their hearts are in darkness.

Listen to this in **1 Thessalonians 1:4**: Paul is writing to the church at Thessalonica and says this, *“Knowing, brethren, beloved, your election of God because our Gospel came not unto you in Word only, but it came to you in power.”* It did come in Word but not Word only.

Do you know what power is? There is electrical power, the power of dynamite, and the power of a jet engine. The Scripture says, *“This Gospel came to you in power, in the demonstration of the Holy Spirit and you became followers of us and the Lord.”*

Something took place, something dynamic, something unusual, something supernatural. *“The Word came but it came not in Word only.”* That is how most people have heard the Gospel; it is just words, words, words.

That is the reason that they argue debate, quarrel, bicker, and ask questions. It is just doctrine, tradition, ritualism, and just words. To the true believer, the Word of God is life, life, life.

In **1 Corinthian 15**, Paul says; *“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, wherein you stand, by which you are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached to you, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried and rose again according to the Scriptures.”*

My friends, a man is not saved although he may have religion. A man may be a preacher, teacher, a moral man or an example in his community. I want you to listen to me, according to this Book, *“He that heareth my Word and believeth on Him that sent me hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation but is past from death unto life.”*

“Our Gospel came not to you in Word only, it came in power.” This power is life giving, life transforming power. God made it effectual to bring life to the soul, sight to the eyes, hearing to the ear and life to the heart. That's right!

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Thirdly: A man is not saved who does not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. You might say, “Do you mean to tell me that I have to believe on Jesus Christ, Jesus of Nazareth, that Jesus is the Christ in order to be saved?” That is what God says in His Word; *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.”*

Listen to **1 John 5:10**; *“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself and he that believeth not God hath made God a liar because he hath not believed the record that God gave of His Son. This is the record that God hath given unto us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son of God hath life.”*

What kind of life am I talking about? I am talking about eternal life and salvation. *“He that hath not Jesus Christ the Son of God hath not life. These things are written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life. And we know that the Son of God hath come and given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true and we are in Him that is true. This is the true God and this is eternal life.”*

I didn’t make this up; I am reading you this from the Scriptures. *“As many as received Jesus Christ to them gave He the power to become the Sons of God.”* A man is not saved who does not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

There was a television program on recently where several preachers were sitting around and talking. The Master of Ceremonies or the Host Master addressed two of the guests (who were prominent, religious figures) and asked them, “Does a man have to believe on Jesus Christ in order to be saved?”

These men hummed and hawed around and didn’t answer the question from the Word of God. I’ll answer that question; the answer is “yes,” that is what the Scripture says; *“He that believeth on the Son of God hath life. He that believeth not the Son of God shall not see life, the wrath of God abideth on Him.”* This is what the Scripture says.

If you argue, don’t argue with me; argue with the Word of God. I have been commissioned, anointed, called and sent, to preach the Word of God. I haven’t been called to preach what the Baptists believe but what God says. *“We are going to give an account”* to what the Scriptures say.

What do you believe about Jesus Christ, preacher? I believe first of all that He is God in human flesh; He is God. In fact, He said; *“Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is anti-christ and is not of God.”*

This is what the Scripture says; *“Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come; (He has come into this world in the flesh), is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is anti-Christ.”*

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I believe that Jesus Christ is that prophet of whom Moses wrote. He said that *“God will raise up among the brethren a prophet like unto myself and him you shall hear.”* Then the voice from heaven said of Jesus Christ; *“This is My Son; hear him.”* He is that prophet.

He is that Priest that offers a perfect sin offering and sacrifice. Jesus Christ is the *“King of kings and Lord of lords.”* Jesus Christ is the *“one Mediator between God and men.”* Jesus Christ is Lord!

My friends, when you argue, you argue with the Scriptures; a man is not saved who does not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. You have to believe Him to be who He is. You have to believe in what He did.

You have to understand to some degree why He did it, that *“God may be just and justifier of him which believeth in Jesus”* (sinners like you and me). You have to believe where He is now. He is the one Mediator; *“He is at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”*

Would you listen to me for just a moment? Are you familiar with the Scriptures? Or do you just read little bits and pieces here and there? Do you just memorize **John 3:16** and **Psalms 23** or do you *“Search the Scriptures to see if these things be so?”*

Do you read the Word of God? Do you pray over it, meditate upon it and diligently study the Word of God? You just can't pick it up and let it flop open somewhere and put your pencil down and say, “I will read that and do whatever that says.”

We are to *“Search the Scriptures.”* The Bereans searched the Scriptures *“to see of these things be so.”* I am telling you what it says; *“He that believeth on the Son of God hath life.”*

Fourthly: a man is not saved; he is not a Christian who does not love the Lord Jesus Christ as He is revealed in the Word of God. In **First Corinthians 16:22**; listen to what the Word of God says; *“If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha.”* What is this saying? This is saying, “Let him be accursed, when the Lord is comes.” That is what it is saying.

Salvation, my friends, is not just to accept Jesus. Salvation is not just to believe that such a person lived and died and rose again. Salvation is to love Him and worship Him. You have to be obsessed with Him and devoted to Him.

Over there in **Philippians Chapter 3**, Paul says something that is very interesting. He tells them to, *“Beware of dogs, evil workers and beware of the concision”* (false preachers, the circumcisers of the flesh and the merchandisers of the soul). He says this; *“We are the true circumcision who worship God in the Spirit, who rejoice in Jesus Christ and who have no confidence in the flesh.”*

**“My Jesus I love Thee
I know Thou art mine,
For Thee all the follies
Of sin I resign.**

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**I love Thee in life
I love Thee in death,
I love Thee as long
As Thou lendest me breath.**

So, a man is saved only when he comes by the grace of God to love the Lord Jesus Christ.

We see Him at the right hand of God and we are glad that He is there. We see Him bearing our sins on the cross and we rejoice in His shed blood. We see Him there ruling and reigning over His Kingdom.

We rejoice that *“God has exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow and every tongue should confess in heaven, earth, and under the earth, that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father.”*

Fifthly: A man is not saved who is ignorant of the righteousness of God in Christ. My friend, you might say; “I don’t quite understand what you are talking about.” I want you to listen to me; we have to have a righteousness. God is holy and in order to appear in His presence, in order to commune with God, in order to be accepted of Him, we have to have a holiness and a righteousness. *“Without holiness no man will see the Lord.”* If you don’t know anything about His righteousness, His provided righteousness in Christ, then you have to go about to establish your own righteousness.

That is what Paul said about these people in **Romans 10**, he said; *“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. I bear them record; they have a zeal for God but not according to knowledge; they are ignorant.”*

Paul is saying that he wants them saved. They are not saved because *“they are ignorant of God’s righteousness and they are going about to establish their own righteousness and have not submitted to the righteousness of God, for Christ is the righteousness of God, for Christ is the end of the Law for Righteousness to everyone that believeth.”*

Let me see if I can make that plain; listen to me carefully:

First of all: We have no righteousness; *“There is none righteous, no not one.”*

Second: We have to have a righteousness, a perfect righteousness. He said, *“Except your righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the Kingdom of God.”*

Third: We cannot produce a righteousness; *“It is not by works of righteousness which we have done.”*

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Fourth: God has provided a righteousness. *“By one man’s disobedience we were made sinners; by another man’s obedience we were made righteous.”* In **2 Corinthians 5:21** it says this; *“He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”*

Fifth: So, God has provided a righteousness. Where is it? Our righteousness is in Christ, in His life and death. How does it become mine? It becomes mine by faith in Christ I have a perfect holiness. By faith in Christ I have perfect justification before God. By faith in Christ, that is where it is.

Sixthly: A person is not saved who does not continue in the faith. **Colossians 1:21** says, *“You hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh to present you holy, unreprouvable, in His sight if you continue in the faith and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel.”* So, you see this thing of salvation is; we have been saved; we’re being saved and by the grace of God we shall be saved.

Repentance and faith are not isolated acts; they are a state of being, they continue. They have been, are being and shall be. Christ is the Son over His House *“whose House we are if we hold fast our confidence firm unto the end.”*