

Marks of True Children of God - Part 4

by William MacDonald

The sermon emphasizes the importance of confessing Jesus as the Christ and making an outward confession of Jesus, and encourages listeners to obey the Lord in baptism and public confession.

Duration: 32:57

Scripture: Matthew 10:32, John 1:12, John 5:23, Romans 1:16, 1 John 4:3-5

Topics: "Children Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher tells a story about a young man who honors and appreciates his mother. The young man takes his mother to his graduation ceremony and gives her his valedictory address. He then presents his diploma and gold medal to his mother, acknowledging that she earned it. The preacher uses this story to illustrate how we should treat Jesus, recognizing that everything we have is owed to Him. The sermon emphasizes the importance of not being ashamed of Jesus and His sacrifice on the cross, and encourages listeners to fully commit their lives to Him.

Transcript

And I'm going to read some isolated verses. 1 John, chapter 2, verses 22 and 23. 1 John, chapter 2, verses 22 and 23.

Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is the Antichrist, even he that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father. He that confesseth the Son hath the Father also.

1 John, chapter 4, verses 1 through 3. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, try the spirits, attest them whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God. 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 not of God. This is that spirit of Antichrist whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world. So, verse 15 of chapter 4. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

And chapter 5, verse 1. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. Yesterday we had some studies in John's first epistle, and we mentioned that John is here giving the test of life, the test of divine life, so that a

person can come and look into the mirror and see if he really is born again. And we noticed yesterday that one of the marks of life is that the Christian, a true believer, does not practice sin.

Sin is not the ruling power in his life. He does sin, he commits acts of sin, but it is not his habitual behavior. And when he does sin, he runs to the foot of the cross and cries out his confession to the Lord and knows cleansing and forgiveness.

We also saw yesterday that the true believer loves God. He's not embarrassed by God, he loves God, and he loves God's people as well. Love, in a very real sense, is the hallmark of a born-again believer in the Lord Jesus.

And today we come to the test of sound doctrine, and I'm sure you noticed this as we were reading these verses, that John is insisting on the absolute deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the absolute identity of Jesus and the Christ. We mentioned yesterday that there was a cult in John's day, and many cults exist in our day, that make a separation between Jesus and the Christ. They say that Jesus was the man, but because Jesus lived in a body, in a material body, he could not be God, because all matter is evil.

This is what they taught. And so, they devised a system of intermediaries between God and Jesus. And somehow or other, coming between God and Jesus through all these intermediaries, you came to a mortal man, we might say, and a man full of error.

Well, John insists that Jesus is the Christ. John insists that that baby born in Bethlehem's manger is the Jehovah of the Old Testament, and not that the Christ came upon him, but that he himself is the anointed of God. And, of course, this is a basic truth of the Christian faith, the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And a man cannot be correct in anything else if he's wrong in that. I remember reading my Bible one day in public transportation, and a man came by and said, Are you a Bible student? And I said, Well, I do study the Bible. And he said, So do I. I went to a seminary in Brooklyn.

Some lights went on in my brain, and I said, Oh. I said, Do you believe that Jesus is God? And he said, Oh, no. I said, If I could give you six verses of Scripture that Jesus Christ is God, would you believe them, or would you explain them away? And he said, I wouldn't believe them.

Well, that's it. And this is how we test the spirits, whether they are of God. It's interesting to me how many of the cultists say very plausible things about Jesus.

They say, Well, yes, I believe that Jesus is the Son of God. But what they really mean is He's the Son of God, like all believers are sons of God. So, it's good to ask them, Is Jesus God? Or, Do you honor the Son even as you honor the Father? And if they're honest, they'll have to say no.

Yet, John 5.23 says that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him. So, John, in these verses that we read today, insists that a true believer confesses that Jesus is the Christ.

And I should just say a word about that confession. This isn't just the confession of the lips. This is the wholehearted, warm confession of a person's entire being.

Because, actually, a man could say those words with his lips and not mean them. He could say Jesus is the Christ, and he might not mean it at all. But when John speaks about confession, he's speaking about

the belief of a man's heart, the total dedication of his life.

He confesses Jesus Christ come in the flesh. He believes that Jesus is the Christ. He accepts the teachings of the apostles as they're set forth in the New Testament concerning the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, I'd like to carry that thought of confession just a step further this morning, and say that if a person really believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, he's going to make an outward confession sooner or later. I'd like to speak not just upon the doctrinal confession that Jesus is the Christ, but the practical confession of our lips. The bold confession that Jesus is the Christ.

Some years ago, there was a little fellow, and he was in junior high school, and his mother wanted to contact him. It was very important that she contact him, and so she knew when they'd be out in the playground at recess, and she made a trip down there to the junior high to see him. And he looked out through the fence, and he saw his mother, but he didn't want to see her.

And she tried to attract his attention, but the more she tried to attract his attention, the more he became engrossed in the game he was playing with his friends. He was ashamed of his mother. He didn't want his schoolmates to see him with his mother.

It kind of hurts, doesn't it? It's kind of grotesque, bizarre, almost obscene to think that any kid would be ashamed of his mother. You know, people are ashamed of Jesus. People can talk about the Republican Party, and the Democratic Party, and the war in the Falklands, and the Dow Jones Industrial Average, and all the rest of them, but the minute the name of Jesus comes into the conversation, they clam up as if they were smitten with lockjaw.

Why is that? Ashamed of Jesus. I heard of something worse than that. I heard of a young man that lived at home with his mother.

She was old, wrinkled, gnarled. And this young man fell in love, and of course, he was going to bring his bride back to live in the house. And she came to the house, and she found this old lady living upstairs, and he introduced his bride to his mother as Old Mary.

How do you like that? That dear old woman living upstairs was just Old Mary now. She had gone down into the Valley of the Shadow to bring him to life, and the countless nights that she stayed up with him when he was sick, nursing him back to health, all the loving care she bestowed upon him, and now he has the gall to introduce her to his fiancée as Old Mary. Makes you sick, doesn't it? Something worse than that.

The Lord Jesus actually went down into the Valley of Death for us. As we've already heard this morning, he died that cruel death on the cross of Calvary to put away our sins by the sacrifice himself. And rotten, stinking pride in man makes him ashamed of Jesus Christ as something dreadfully wrong.

But you know, there's a happier side to it, too. Down in Georgia, there was a widow who had worked very hard to provide an education for her son. Actually, she had brought in washing and done all kinds of menial work to support herself and him.

Graduation time had arrived, and he was the valedictorian of the class. He was walking off with high honors. He was going to get a gold medal for his distinctive excellence in academics.

And the graduation day came, and he said to his mother, Mother, it's commencement day. This is the day I'm going to graduate. Why aren't you getting ready for the commencement exercises? She said, Oh, I'm not going.

I'm not going to the commencement exercises. She said, I have nothing but a poor old faded dress, she said. And she said, all the posh people of the community will be sitting there.

And she said, you'd be ashamed of your old mother in her faded dress. And his eyes beamed with admiration for his mother. And he said, What mother ashamed of you? Never.

I owe everything I have in the world to you. And if you don't go, I won't go. And so he helped his mother get ready, and he took her to the commencement exercises and walked in with her arm in his.

And they entered the hall, and he took her down and seated her at the very front with the elegant people of the community in their silk and all the rest. He took his place on the platform, and he delivered the valedictory address. And he received a great deal of applause, and he was given his diploma, and he was awarded the gold medal.

And no sooner had he received it than he got down off the platform, and he went to his mother, and he pinned it on her. He said, This is yours. You earned it.

Good, isn't it? He said, There, mother, that belongs to you. You earned it. You know, you and I can imitate him by treating the Lord that way.

You and I owe everything we have to Jesus Christ. We can acknowledge it by standing up and confessing him. It comes home very powerfully to me, because as a young man, I think the proudest heart that ever beat was the heart that beat in me.

And I can remember resisting the Spirit of God as he pled with me to trust the sinner's savior. And I'll never forget one night in our meeting, a male quartet got up and began to sing. I don't think I had ever heard this song before, but it went through me like a thousand daggers.

It said, Ashamed of Jesus? Can it be a mortal man ashamed of thee? Ashamed of thee whom angels praise, whose glories shine through endless days? Ashamed of Jesus, that dear friend on whom my hopes of heaven depend? No, when I blush, be this my shame, that I no more revere his name. They went on singing, Ashamed of Jesus, yes I may, when I've no sins to wash away. No tear to wipe, no good to crave, no fears to quell, no soul to save.

That'll be the time to be ashamed of Jesus. Till then there is my boasting vain, till then I boast a savior slain. No, may this my glory be, that Christ is not ashamed of me.

I wonder if there's someone here this morning, and the reason you're not saved is because you're ashamed of Jesus. The reason you're not saved is because you're so full of pride. It would kill you to go to your friends, you think, and confess that you had trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior.

Maybe today the Lord will speak to your heart, and you'll flee to the cross of Calvary and put all that rotten pride behind you, and fall on your knees, and confess Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Peter was ashamed of the Lord, wasn't he? But really he had more excuse than we have. There's poor Peter out there, and the Lord Jesus is on trial upstairs, and Jesus is down there in the courtyard, and the brazier is

there, and he's warming his hands at the fire with the world.

With the world. And a maiden whom he never saw before, and probably never saw again, comes up to him and says, let's see, you were one of his followers, weren't you? He said, I don't know what you're talking about. Then a man came up to him, he probably never saw him before, and never saw him again.

He said, hey, you've got a Galilean accent, you're one of his followers. He said, I don't know him. And then a maiden came up to him again, and she said the same thing, and he began to curse, to swear, to deny that he knew the Lord.

I often think of that, I think of the kids in high school that I used to pick so much, I was more concerned with what they thought about me than what God thought about me. That's why I didn't get saved. All I could see was the faces of those kids in high school, and maybe the curled lips, if I were to go and tell them that I had been saved.

You know, they're all gone now. I couldn't name one of them to you. They seemed so important at that time.

They don't seem important now. The only thing that seems important to me now is what God thinks about me, not what they thought about me. I remember sitting in a car with a cousin of mine back in New Jersey some years ago, and I had never met him before actually, and so I thought this was a chance.

And I said to him, Angus, are you saved? And he said, oh no, I'm not saved. And I said, why aren't you saved? And there was a long pause, a long silence, and I was determined I wasn't going to break it. But I let him hang there, and finally he said to me, pride, I guess.

And I said, yes, I think you've guessed right. That's it. You know, pride is the parent's sin.

Pride is the first sin that ever took place in the universe, and pride is a sin that will drag your soul down to hell if you don't come and confess Jesus Christ. It's just as simple as that. Peter was ashamed of the Lord.

There's a lovely man that we read about in 2 Timothy 1, 6. His name was Onesiphorus. And, you know, we can forgive him for having a name like that because of what he did. When Paul was in prison, Onesiphorus sought him out.

It wasn't too healthy to seek out Paul. I mean, you know, Paul was really, in a very real sense, he was a revolutionary. Everywhere he went, he started a revolution, it seems, a spiritual revolution.

It makes me think of the old bishop in England. He said, everywhere Paul went, he started a revolution. Everywhere I go, they serve me tea.

Well, Paul did. He started a revolution everywhere. Now he's in prison, and a lot of his friends just dissolved.

All they that are in Asia, they left him, you know. But Onesiphorus didn't neglect him. He sought him out.

Paul said, he was not ashamed of my chains. I love those words. He was not ashamed of my chains.

Paul was not ashamed. He said, nevertheless, I'm not ashamed. I know whom I have believed, and I'm persuaded that he's able to keep that which I've committed unto him against that day.

He said, I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. It's the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first, but also to the Greek. The martyrs of the Christian faith were not ashamed, were they? I think one of the greatest things in my heritage, I was brought up in a home where we were told the stories of the Christian martyrs.

I can still recall men and women who were backbone for God, who stood for the Lord Jesus Christ. I think of that woman, John Brown's wife, and how John Brown was slain in cold blood before her and the children because of his confession of Christ. And Lord Claverhouse said to her, what do you think of your husband now? And she said, I always thought a great deal of my husband, but I think more of him now than I ever did before.

Something to say, isn't it, with your husband's body lying at your feet? But that was because of their love for the Lord Jesus Christ. Why are people ashamed? I want to tell you this morning, it's irrational to be ashamed of the Lord Jesus. He created us.

Imagine a creature being ashamed of his creator. I think of the marvels of the human body that the Lord Jesus survived. The hinges on our fingers.

I think of the marvel of sight, how some way the light gets in and must be flashed on a projection screen or something. I can't explain it. It's marvelous, isn't it? Don and I were talking about, in the airport, God designing so many people and he never repeated the pattern once.

Isn't that marvelous? It's thrilling when you stop and think, the wonders of God in creation. Should I be ashamed of him? And not only that he's my creator, but he's my preserver. I think of the close scrapes with death that I know I've had.

I wonder how many I don't know about. I thought Jay was getting pretty close to home and he started talking about that terrible driver. I felt very self-conscious.

In fact, one of the interns went out one day in the parking lot and he put a sticker on my car. It says on the back of my car now, Jesus is Lord. And he said, here, Brother Bill, this will make a better driver out of you.

Well, it's embarrassed me a few times because I do foolish things and then realize the car behind me sees my testimonies. But just think of God's preserving care. Do you know it's a miracle you and I are alive today? It is.

It's a miracle of the preserving grace of God that any one of us is alive. And we owe it all to him. Don't ever forget it.

And not only that, but the wonderful way he supplies our needs. Do you ever think of the logistics problem God has on his hands with a world like ours and all the people in it and all the birds and animals and fish and all the rest? I tell you, it's wonderful. His mercies are new every morning and his faithfulness is great.

But you know, most of all, he dies to save us. I see a cross there lifted high on that hill called Calvary. And I see the blessed Son of God dying there for me.

And I tell you, I am ashamed to my tiptoes that there was ever a time in my life when I didn't want to confess him as my Savior and my Lord. Ashamed of the one who offers eternal life today to anyone who will accept him as Lord and Savior. I think it's a wonderful thing that the Lord Jesus, when he sent out the

apostles, he said, now go forth and disciple the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.

And, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Baptizing them. The Lord Jesus left us a way in which, as soon as we're saved, we can stand before the world and say, I belong to Jesus.

Jesus belongs to me. And that way is baptism. Have you ever been baptized? You say, I'm a believer.

I believe in the Lord Jesus. I know I have eternal life. Have you ever been baptized? It's interesting to me that there are a lot of people that will come to Christ for salvation, and they don't think enough of his commands to follow him in baptism.

How about you say to me, I don't have to be baptized to be saved? No, that's true, you don't. You don't have to be baptized to be saved, but you have to be baptized to be obedient, don't you? And I like to remind friends that, although you can go to heaven without being baptized, if you do, you'll be unbaptized for all eternity, and I don't want that. Baptism is one of the ways we can obey the Lord down here.

We won't be able to obey him up there. As far as I know, there are no baptismal tanks in heaven. And I think it would be a dreadful letdown to find myself in heaven and realize that this was something I could have done to please the heart of Christ down here, and I didn't do it.

But what a wonderful thing it is. I think one of the happiest moments in my life was when I came up out of the waters of baptism. I had taken my stand for Christ.

My friend knew it now. And I often say that when I went out to the place that night, I don't think my feet touched the floor. I identified with the Ethiopian eunuch that said he went on his way rejoicing, so that's the way I was.

I want to tell you, dear friends, there's a tremendous joy in confessing the Lord Jesus Christ publicly. Amen? There really is a tremendous joy. And not only that, but you grow in assurance of your salvation when you obey the Lord in baptism and in open, public confession of him.

How is it with you this morning? Young man, young woman, middle-aged man or woman, older man or woman, how do you stand with regard to the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you love him? Do you believe he's your only way to heaven? Have you ever, by a definite act of faith, received him as your Lord and Savior? Have you ever confessed him openly to another human being? Have you ever gone down into the waters of baptism, identifying yourself with him in death, burial and resurrection? If on Jesus Christ you trust, speak for him you surely must. Though it humble to the dust, if you love him, say so. If on Jesus you believe of the spirit you receive, lest you should that spirit grieve, don't delay, but say so.

And I like to say this, on the day you receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and openly confess him before men, you don't know the wonderful things that the Lord has in store for you. I tell you, that day, as that day dawns, you have no idea of the wonderful things that God has in store for you. But the treasure package never starts to unfold until you take your place for Christ.

I wonder will you do it today? We're going to bow in prayer, we're going to close our eyes and look to the Lord, and the Christians will be praying. And I just wonder if there's someone here, God has been speaking to you, you know you're a sinner. You know if you die it will be a lost eternity.

God is speaking to your heart today, and the time has come. You feel your heart beating just a little faster, and you know that the spirit of God is knocking at your door. I wonder if you'll say today, I'm not ashamed to own my Lord or to defend his cause, maintain the honor of his word, the glory of his cross.

Jesus my Lord, I know his name. His name is all my trust, nor will he put my soul to shame, nor let my hope be lost. Firm as his throne his promise stands, and he can well secure what I've committed to his hands till the decisive hour.

Then will he own my worthless name before his Father's face, and in the new Jerusalem appoint my soul a place. Dear friends, do you want him to own your worthless name someday before the Father? Come to him now, receive him now as Lord and Savior. If while we pray you do receive the Lord Jesus, I'm going to leave it to you to tell somebody immediately after this, come to us, come to Brother Nicholson, come to myself, let us sit down with the word of God and tell you how you can have full assurance of faith this day.

Father, we just thank you for your precious word, we thank you for this threefold testimony this morning, not easily broken, and we just pray that by the spirit of God, right now you'll speak to hearts here in our meeting, and that if there are those who are unsaved, who've never taken this place with Christ, that today they will open the heart's door and let him come in. And we pray, Lord, that you'll give grace to make a bold, confident confession of faith in him. We thank you, Lord, that you are not ashamed to call those who thus confess you as your brethren, and that you're not ashamed to be known as the God of those who take this path of separation unto yourself.

Bless and honor your word today in the salvation of souls, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

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