

# Test of Sound Doctrine

by William MacDonald

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of confessing Jesus as the Christ and believing that Jesus Christ came in the flesh as the test of sound doctrine.*

**Duration:** 36:52

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 2:11, Hebrews 11:16, 1 John 5:1-2, 1 John 5:4, 1 John 5:6-8

**Topics:** "Sound Doctrine"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher tells a story about a young man who owes everything he has to his mother. The young man helps his mother get ready for an event and brings her along with him. He delivers a valedictory address and receives a gold medal, but instead of keeping it for himself, he pins it on his mother's dress, acknowledging that she deserves it. The preacher uses this story to illustrate how we owe everything to Jesus Christ and should confess and stand up for him. The sermon also touches on the reasons why some people may not be saved and emphasizes the importance of valuing and honoring our mothers.

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## Transcript

1 John chapter 5, this time. 1 John chapter 5, and I'll begin reading at the first verse. 1 John 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.

By this we know that we love the children of God, and we love God and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous. For once a reverend born of God overcomes the world, and this is a victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.

Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the son of God? Is it he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ? Not by water only, but by water and blood, and it is the spirit that beareth witness, because the spirit is truth. Verse 8. And there are three that beareth witness in the earth, the spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.

For this is a witness of God which he hath testified of his son. He that believeth on the son of God is a witness in himself. He that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his son.

And this is a record that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his son. He that hath the son hath life, and he that hath not the son of God hath not life. For any who were not here in our previous meetings, I might just mention that we've been looking at John's first epistle, and we mentioned that in this letter he's giving us the text of life.

He's giving us the mark of those who truly belong to Jesus Christ. It's a very practical letter, and a very helpful one, although it does have problems in it, of course. We saw, first of all, that the true believer is obedient to the commandments of the Lord, the text of obedience.

He's not only obedient to the written word of God, but he wants to do the things that please the heart of Christ. I'll never forget, Stacey would say that in the authentic constant years ago, the Lord gave me a single, pure desire to do the thing that pleases your heart. I like that, and the true believer in the Lord Jesus is obedient by walking as Jesus walked.

And, yesterday morning, we saw a second mark of a true believer. He does not love the world. He walks in separation from the world, although testifying to it, and then yesterday afternoon we saw a third mark of the true believer, and that he does not practice sin.

He may sin, but he does not practice sin. It's not the dominating influence of his life. Now, this morning, we come to a fourth test of life, as far as the leader is concerned, and you might call it a test of sound doctrine.

The true believer confesses Jesus is the Christ. Now, perhaps a few words of explanation would be helpful here. We mentioned that the background of this letter was the rise of a heresy, a false cult in the early days of the church known as Gnosticism.

You can live a normal life without knowing that word. I'll spell it g-n-o-s-t-i-c-i-s-m. These people professed to have superior knowledge.

Knowledge that was superior to what's found in the word of God, and their con was, look, we have additional mysteries in which you should be initiated, and you'll never be really happy until you know what we know. It was a cult professing superior knowledge. Now, one of their basic tenets was that matter is evil.

Matter? So, they couldn't accept that Jesus was God, because Jesus was a man in a body of matter, therefore evil. So, here's God up here in absolute perfection, and here's Jesus down here. And what they did was they devised a series of emanations coming from God down to men.

In order to bridge that gulf between God and Jesus, they devised a series of what you might call emanations, spirits, influences, call it what you will. For instance, they say that the Christ came upon Jesus. Jesus was not the Christ, but the Christ was an emanation or an influence that came on Jesus, and infected him, and left in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Therefore, the Christ didn't die, Jesus died. They couldn't conceive of the Christ dying, so they separated the person of Jesus and the Christ. Let me say that again.

They said the Christ was an influence that came upon Jesus at his baptism, and left in the Garden of Gethsemane. So, Jesus went to the cross as Jesus, not as the Christ. Would you be surprised that there's a cult here in Dallas that teaches exactly that? Founded by a woman named Mary Patterson Baker's lover,

Eddie.

Shame to say it starts back, and that's Jesus for a kingdom, and it is a Gnostic cult, and it teaches exactly that, that the Christ came upon Jesus at his baptism, and left in the Garden of Gethsemane. Isn't it wonderful that our bible says, Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and was buried and rose again the third day according to the scriptures, and the word of God knocked that heresy right in the head. I mentioned before that God allowed all of the cults, all the heresies to arise in the early days of the church, and they're all answered in the sacred scriptures.

There's no new heresy today. All it is is a rehash of something that existed back in the apostolic time. So, it's a wonder of this book that we hold in our hands.

So, this book is adequate to answer any of the heretical teachings that men are propounding today. The answer is all here, and so God is saying here that the true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ identifies Jesus as the Christ. He believes that Jesus Christ came in the flesh.

That's the great confession, that that baby born in Bethlehem's manger was the Jehovah of the Old Testament, the anointed, the Messiah of God. Okay? That sounds awful. John says that the true believer believes that the Lord Jesus is the Son of God.

Now, a lot of the cults come around when they come to your door. They'd be willing to admit that Jesus is the Son of God, but what they're thinking is God has made them. All believers are spoken of as sons of God.

Beloved, how are we the sons of God? Let's not get up here where we shall be. God has done something. When the bible speaks of the Lord Jesus as the Son of God, it speaks of it as son in a unique way.

God has one unique son, and he has many other sons. The next all believers are sons of God, children of God, but the Lord Jesus is the Son of God in a unique way, and you know, the Jews of Jesus' day knew that. They understood that, and when Jesus claimed that he's the Son of God, they took up stones of stone, because he called God his Father, making himself equal with God, and if that wasn't the intention of the Lord Jesus, that was his perfect opportunity to say, no, no, you're misunderstanding me.

I'm just the Son of God the way all believers are sons of God. He didn't say it, because it wasn't the truth. That's why John in John 3 16 speaks of the Lord Jesus as the unique Son of God, and that's really what it means.

God so loved the world that he gave his unique son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life, and John insists in this epistle that the true believer confesses that Jesus is the Son of God. He believes that Jesus is the Christ. He confesses Jesus Christ come in the flesh.

The true believer accepts the teachings of the apostles as they are set forth in the New Testament concerning the person and word of the Lord Jesus. Now, I think what I've said this morning might illuminate somewhat verse six of chapter five of first John. It says, this is he that came by water and by blood.

Even Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by water and by blood. Well, it's a difficult passage, but in the light of what I've said, let's look at it this way. There were two termini terminals of Jesus' public ministrations, his baptism and his death on the cross.

Water is baptism, blood is death on the cross. The Gnostics would admit he came by water. They would say that Christ came upon the man in Jesus at his baptism, but they would deny that he came by blood.

They would deny that the one who died on the cross was the Christ, and John insists here that the two terminals of the Lord Jesus' public ministry were water and blood, the Jordan and the cross, his baptism and his sacrificial death. This is he that came by water and by blood, not by water only, as you Gnostics say, as you cultists say, but by water and by blood, and it's the spirit that bears witness because the spirit is truth, and that is the truth that the spirit of God bears witness to in this portion of the Word. Now, I'd like to just go beyond the text of sound doctrine.

I'd like to carry this matter of confessing Christ just a step further, and incidentally, when the scriptures speak of confession of Christ, it isn't just a matter of the lip, but it's the wholehearted confession of Christ with the life. Anyway, in other words, Jesus is Lord. A Hindu could say that, a Brahmin could say that, a Buddhist could say that, but confession in the scriptures is not just saying words with your mouth, but it's the whole being of a person wrapped up in that truth, and I'd like to suggest to you today that where there is real salvation for a person who has truly been born again of the spirit of God, there is that warm, outgoing confession of the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord.

In the days of the Roman Emperors, the Christians were put under tremendous pressure to confess that Caesar is Lord, and the word wouldn't come out of their lips. Instead, the word came out, Jesus is Lord. What a cry of triumph! With all the rest of the world down on their knees saying, Caesar is Lord, and here are a few Christians still on their feet saying, not so! Jesus is Lord.

They show the reality of their salvation by the open-hearted confession of the Son of God, but it isn't all that way. One of the greatest contradictions in the world today exists in the lives of people who are ashamed of Jesus. It's interesting, isn't it? People aren't ashamed of the name Ronald Reuben.

They're not ashamed to enter into conversations about politics, or business, or the letter, but it's an interesting thing that, when the subject moves toward the person of the Lord, thus the conversation comes to a screeching halt, and I'd like to think with you about that for a little while. The utter absurdity, a most bizarre situation in which a creature should ever be ashamed of its creator. Some years ago, a young kid in junior high school and the mother had to go to the high school to the junior high one day to contact him, and when she got there, the kids were all out in the playground having a ball out there, and the mother was trying to attract the attention of her son, but he didn't want to be attracted.

He was ashamed of her, and so he sinned against himself playing with his playmates so he wouldn't see his mother in his dreams. I've heard so many words than that. I heard of a young man, I hope it's just a story, a young man who lived at home with his mother, and he fell in love with a girl, and plans progressed toward marriage, and he took the girl to his home, and he found that there was an old lady living upstairs, and he introduced the old lady as old Mary.

It was his mother. She had brought him to the world. She had gone down into the jaws of death to give life to that fellow.

She had changed his diapers innumerable times, and said to him, he was a helpless baby. She had nursed him through massive sickness, and now he has the gall to introduce her as old Mary. A man.

He was ashamed of his mother. A year ago, there was a fellow down in Georgia, and he had a widowed mother. She was very poor, and she had to work hard to support herself and to pay his way to school.

So, she took him washing. The fellow was very bright, and he graduated, and he was going to graduate with honors. He was going to be given a gold medal.

He was going to be the valedictorian of his class, and graduation day came, and he said to his mother, Mother, this is graduation day, and I graduate. Why aren't you getting ready to come to the commencement exercise? And she said, oh, she said, I'm not going. She said, I have nothing fit to wear.

She said, you'd be ashamed of your old mother if I went there in my faded dress, she said. All the people of the city will be there in the auditorium, and his eyes beamed with admiration, and he said, what mother? Ashamed of you? Never. He said, I owe everything I have in the world to you, and I won't go if you don't go, and so he helped her get ready.

He insisted that she go, and she finally consented, and he helped her to make herself as tidy looking as possible, and he started down the street with his mother's hands and shoes, and they entered the hall where the exercises were going to take place, and he escorted her right down to the front, and he gave her a place among the elegant people of the town. There she sat in her faded dress, and they with their filth and elegance, and he put his plate on the platform, and he delivered the valedictory address, and the gold medal was pinned upon him, and there was much surprise, but no sooner had he received it and the exercises were over than he got on the platform, walked down to where his mother was sitting, and pinned that gold medal on her dress, and said to their mother, that belonged to you. You earned it.

Well, that's the way it should be. You know, Dr. Taric told that story years ago, and he told his tears streaming down the eyes of the people in his audience, and finally they broke out in applause. He said to them, there's something you can do better than applaud, and he said, by imitating that young fellow, he said, you owe everything to Jesus Christ.

Stand up and confess him. That's true, isn't it? We owe everything to Jesus Christ, and we ought to stand up and confess him. Why aren't people saved? Maybe they're unsaved people here in the meeting today.

I don't know. If you're here today, why aren't you saved? I'm here to go out back in New Jersey, and I had a first cousin back there. I hadn't seen him before in my life, but I met him.

We were in the car, and I said to him, are you saved? And he said, oh no, I'm not saved. And I said to him, why aren't you saved? And it was a long, dull, awkward pause, which I was determined not to break. Finally, he said, cry, I guess, and I guess he had guessed correctly, because that's why people aren't saved.

Cry, ashamed of Jesus, irrational, and it is. Let's take a minute. Ashamed of the one who created us, the one who designed these marvelous images in our fingers, and these eyes, and how these eyes projected images somewhere in our brain.

I can't explain the whole process of it. I don't even understand the pathology of the human body, but it marvels us, doesn't it? Marvels! The Lord Jesus is the one who designed it all, with the infinite variety of all the people in the world. Shall I be ashamed of him? Shall I be ashamed to confess his name before us? Not only that he made me, but he preserved me.

I often think of the miracle that I'm still alive after all these years. Did you ever think of that? It's marvelous, really. In any folk called to life, I think most of us have, most of us have been delivered out of situations the human being were impossible.

Only God could have plucked us out of those situations, and here we are. Did he even? Have you ever been down at the very edge of the valley of the channel? He brought you back. He preserves us.

Not only that, he supplies our needs. Think of what a wonderful God he is, that he opens his hand and provides the needs of every living creature. We admire him.

Should I be ashamed of such a one? How did he die this day? This is what baffles my heart. There on the cross of Calvary, he poured out his life for me. He put a price tag on me.

He said, I value him for the value of my own life, and I'll die for him. He did it. For you to die that we might have forgiveness of sins through Christ again, have a hold in heaven forever.

He died to save us. He offered eternal life to those who believe on him. Those who profess that Jesus is the Christ, he offered eternal life.

And now, he says, I want you to step forward and confess me before others. I want you to take a stand for me. It's kind of thrilling for me to think of how down through the ages people have been doing that, taking a stand for the Lord Jesus.

In the early days of the church, they would be saying, and immediately they would go into the waters of baptism, and before a hostile world they would say, Christ is mine. Let the consequences be what they may. Christ is mine, and I'm not ashamed to stand here in the waters and say, Jesus is Lord.

Dear Father, Paul wasn't ashamed of him. He said, I'm not ashamed of the gospel. Christ is the power of God, the salvation to everyone that believes him, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

He said, I know, nevertheless I'm not ashamed. I know whom I have to leave, and persuaded that he's able to keep that which I've committed against that day. Well, this man was speaking yesterday about a man named Antiphorus.

We can forgive him for his name, and love him forever, because Paul said he was not ashamed of my shame. Now, that was interesting. Paul was in a Roman prison, and his fair other friends have all taken off.

I hope it wasn't too healthy to go and visit Paul. After all, Paul started a revolution everywhere he went, and the civil authority didn't like it. I don't think of the English mission, he said.

Everywhere Paul went, he started a revolution. Everywhere I go, they serve me a cup of tea. Now, I think that's where we are in the 20th century.

Peter wasn't ashamed of the Lord, but the Lord Jesus was in trial there in the inner court. Peter was out in the courtyard, and there was a fire going there, and the enemies of Christ were gathered around the fire, and here's Peter warming his hands to the enemies of Christ outside below, and he had a name. I've never seen her before, and never saw her, so I can't ask her.

I didn't even know her. She came and said, you wrote a lot of them, weren't you? You've got that Galilean dialect that I don't know what you're talking about. And then another one came along and said, hey, you're associated with him.

He denied it three times with oaths and curses. A man came along and said, well, he's a Galilean. He belongs to Jesus? He was furious, denied the Lord, was caught in the throes, healed without it, wept in her.

Why did he deny it? Well, I think Peter might have had more excuse than most of us have, because life was on the line that night. God knew it. God knew that deep within his heart, in spite of those denials, there was that love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

This comes home very closely to me, because as I look back to my unsaved days, the thing that kept me from Christ was that I was ashamed of him. Looking back over it, it's been so insane, so irrational, so unreasonable, but there it comes. Ashamed of Jesus.

And I'll never forget our assembly met in a room in the basement of the Hotel Somerset in Boston, Massachusetts. And, one Sunday night, there was a mail for a text in, and they played that song, Ashamed of Jesus. Can it be a moral man ashamed of thee? Ashamed of thee whom angels praise, whose glory shines through endless days? I could feel a sore in my neck.

I mean, God was putting his finger right on Bill and Donald. Ashamed of Jesus, sooner far the evening blush to own her star. He said the beams of light divine for this benighted soul of mine.

Ashamed of Jesus, just as soon that midnight the exchange of noon. Since midnight, with my soul, till he bright morning star did darkness flee, they sang on, and I sank deeper and deeper into my tears. Ashamed of Jesus, that dear friend on whom my hopes of heaven depend.

So, when I blush, she lifts my shame that I no more revere his name. Ashamed of me, but yet I may, when I have no sin to wash away. No tear to wipe, no good to crave, no tears to quell, no soul to save.

That's when I can be ashamed of Jesus, when I don't have any of those things. Till then, there is my boasting vain, till then I boast the Savior's claim. Though made it my glory be, the Christ did not obtain the crown.

For as if on Jesus Christ you trust, speak for him you surely must, though it's humble to the dust if you love him plainly. If on Jesus you believe, and the spirit you receive, lest he should that spirit leave, don't delay, but stay so. I often think of Joseph of Arimathea.

Jesus' psalms on the next week of Easter. Joseph of Arimathea had a secret disciple of the Lord Jesus. I don't think it can be very long, really.

There's the Lord Jesus, and his body is entailed upon that trunk of wood, and Joseph is his signatory in town. He's a wheel. He's a member of the council, and the battle is going on within him, and he thinks, if I pitch my site with these of the Nazareth, that'll be the end of me as far as the synagogue is concerned, as far as you need to particularly administer.

That'll be the end of me politically as my career's on. That'll be the end of me economically. I'll be cut off by the Jews.

I'll be disinherited. I won't be able to find employment, and all of those things went through the mind of Joseph of Arimathea, and then he made a decision. I've got to take my stand for Christ.

He went to Pilate, and he begged the body of Jesus. Now, impressive something, dear friends. When Joseph buried Jesus, he buried himself, too, and he considered it a very good bargain.

A matter of what the cost may be, come out and place your petitions to the Lord Jesus. There are two wonderful verses in Hebrews, chapter 2, verse 11. It says, "...Christ is not ashamed to call us brethren." That speaks to my heart.

You know, he might very well be. He might be very well a king to identify himself with a wretch like me, but he's not. Therefore, he's not ashamed to call them brethren.

Then it says in Hebrews 11, 16, "...God is not ashamed to be called their God." He sees us walking down here, and especially you see people walking down, walking a pilgrim's pathway, and it says, "...not ashamed to be called their God." Dear friends, that's great. We were thinking about great. I want to tell you, that's great.

God is ashamed to identify himself with us. But, this is a mark of a true believer, the confession, the bold, warm, open confession of Jesus Christ as Lord. The empire said, "...I am not ashamed to own my Lord, or to defend his cause, and 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. Burn at his throne his promised land, and he can well secure what I've committed to his hands till the decisive hour." I love this last verse.

It says, "...then will he own my worthless name." Then will he own my worthless name before his father's face, and in the new Jerusalem appoint my soul. I say, any emotional experience that we might go through in confessing the name of Christ down in the world of hate, there will be nothing compared to the same joy of that moment in heaven when he confesses our worthless names to his father, and appoint our soul a place with him. I kind of was wondering if there's someone in the meeting this morning, and if he never confessed Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, and the Spirit of God pounding at your heart door this morning to say, do it.

Did you do it? How would I do it? Are your heads as it were? You're sitting by a definite act of faith, receiving Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, repenting of your sins, and believing that the Savior is your only hope for heaven. If the meeting is over, go up to someone and say, I receive Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. I'd like to sing a hymn with you in closing, and maybe God will use this moment for you to end with the Savior.

Hymn number 348, What Will You Do With Jesus? One of the marks of the believer is a confession that Jesus is the Christ. What a wonderful time to do it today. For the first time, Jesus is standing in silence, all friendless, forsaken, betrayed by all, what meanest it for us all was.

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