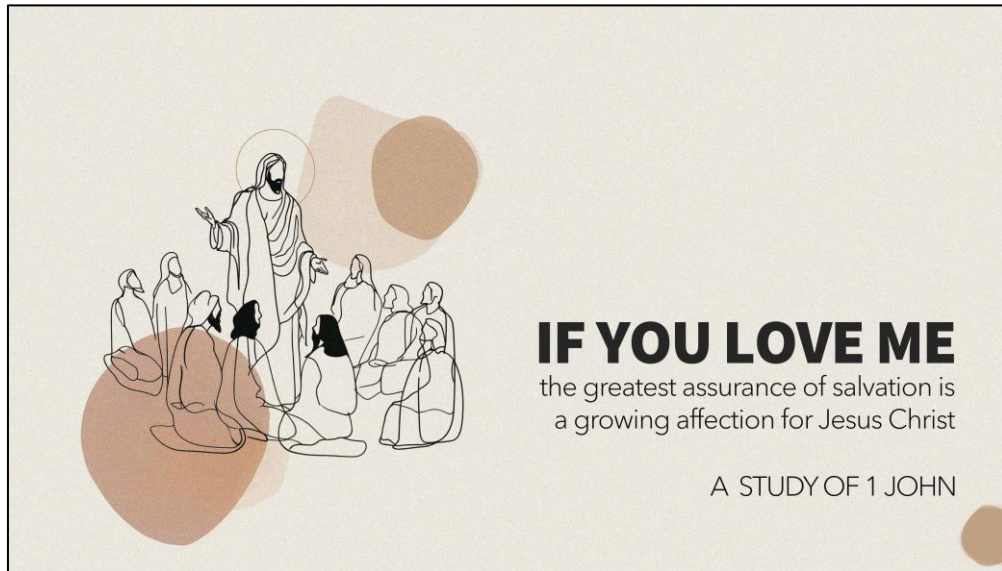




Jesus Christ
The Son of God and the Only Way to God
1 John 5:11-13

Lake Arrowhead Church, Waleska, Georgia
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JESUS CHRIST
The Son of God and the Only Way to God
1 John 5:11-13

Driving in different parts of the country can be confusing, especially if you've never been there before. And sometimes, road signs don't help, like these.¹

- “Stop. Don't turn left. Don't turn right. Don't backup and don't go forward.”
- And how confusing is this? “Stop.” And underneath, “No Stopping At Anytime.”
- And what about this one? “Speed Limit – 12 ½.” How do you do that? “Kathy, slow down, you're going 13!”
- But this one is even worse. “Slow, Children At Play.” And underneath, “Hunting With Shotgun Only.”
- And how confusing is this? “Keep Right.” That's real, I didn't make it up.
- And my favorite simply says, “Good Luck.”

Perhaps the most important road sign is the ONE WAY sign. If you ignore a ONE WAY sign, you're headed for collision and you're risking your life. The Bible claims there is ONE WAY as well. Culture may say they are many ways to God, but the Bible says there is only one way to God, and that is through His Son Jesus.

Referring to Himself, Jesus said, “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it” (Matthew 7:13-14, NIV). Jesus explained what that meant, when He said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6, NAS). And the Bible claims that “there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name by which we can be saved” (Acts 4:12, ESV).

This morning, we are going to talk about that “one way.” We're going to talk about Jesus as the Son of God and the only way to God.

The Apostle John knew Jesus up close and personal. He walked with Him. He heard every word and witnessed every miracle. In his own words, John said, “I've seen Him, I've heard Him, and even touched Him.”

First John is a sequel to the Gospel of John. In this short letter, John explained the Gospel to a new generation. He also explained what Jesus meant when He said, “If you love Me.” In his letter, John describes what a true Christian looks like. He describes what it looks like to truly believe and to truly love Jesus Christ. And that's why the theme of 1 John can be summed in this sentence. ***The greatest assurance of salvation is a growing affection for Jesus Christ.*** So, this fall we're studying the New Testament book of 1 John to deepen our love for Him.

Around the age of 90, and around the year of 90 AD, John wrote this special letter to a new generation. Paraphrasing John's words, *"The Creator of the universe has appeared. I've seen Him, I've heard Him, and even touched Him. I'm an eyewitness and I proclaim to you that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. In a human body, He died on the cross for our sins. But then, miraculously, He rose from the dead, proving to be the Son of God. And through Him, we can have eternal life. And I love Him because He has invited me into a personal relationship that will never end. And He's inviting you into that relationship as well."*

CONFUSION & OPPOSITION

One of the reasons John wrote this letter was ***to counter the heresy of his day and to boldly declare that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the only way to God.***

Jesus sends us into the world to do the same, to declare that He is the Son of God and the only way to God. Yet the task is daunting because our world is filled with cultural confusion, theological confusion, and moral confusion. The task is also daunting because we face cultural, theological, and moral opposition.

The same was true in John's day when he said, "Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us ... I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it ... ***Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist***" (1 John 2:18-19, 21-22, ESV).

"It is the last hour." John believed the return of Jesus could happen in his lifetime, and it is even more likely today. According to biblical prophecy, world events are aligning in preparation for the return of Jesus Christ. And the Bible says, "the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night" (1 Thessalonians 5:2, ESV). But we need not fear. Because as Christians, the Bible says, "we belong to the day" (1 Thessalonians 5:8, ESV). But until that day, the Bible tells us to "be alert and sober," because there are so many confusing and misleading voices in our culture (1 Thessalonians 5:6, NAS).

John said, "Many antichrists have come" (1 John 2:18, ESV). In John's day, there was so much confusion. We see the same thing in our day, yet it's even worse. Not just confusion, but cultural, theological, and moral opposition to the Gospel.

An example of this is progressive/liberal theology sweeping our country. I've warned about this before, but recently a new face has taken the stage. James Talarico is the Democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate in Texas. Talarico is receiving national attention, not only for his political positions, but also for his theological positions.²

Talarico's theology is rooted in St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Austin, Texas, one of the most theologically progressive and liberal churches in America.³ An example of this is how the church defiles the sacred by draping a gay pride flag on the cross of Jesus Christ. Another example is the pastor's denial of the resurrection of Jesus. Rev. Jim Rigby's mockingly said, "I don't believe in a literal resurrection, so I guess I'm not going to heaven." Another pastor of the

church, Rev. Babs Miller, rejects the thought that Jesus died on the cross for our sins, saying that God killing His Son doesn't make sense. In fact, she said, "We have no way of knowing if Jesus really existed, and it really doesn't matter to me."

Talarico himself has said that "God is nonbinary." Well, in a way, he's right. God is not male or female. But he grossly applies language from the trans movement to describe God. Talarico said Mary had to give her "consent" to be impregnated by God, that God gave her the choice. Therefore, women today should have the choice to give birth or abort their babies. Talarico often quotes Scripture to support his views on gender, as he did in quoting Galatians 3, which says, "There is neither male nor female." But he distorts Scripture by ignoring the rest of the verse. Galatians 3 actually says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28, NAS). And also says, "For you are all sons and daughters of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26, NAS). The point of Galatians 3 is that Gospel is for everyone, not support for the trans movement. Talarico has also said that Islam and Christianity are equal paths to God. The lyrics of a song sung at his church say, "Every way and every path is welcome ... naming Holy with many names."

I point to Talarico not to make a political point, but a theological point. I point to him because he is receiving national attention and being applauded because many see his views as a more compassionate and common-sense version of Christianity. But his views do not represent real, biblical Christianity, and instead are an example of counterfeit faith.⁴ The Bible warns us about those who preach "a different gospel – which is really no gospel at all" (Galatians 1:6-7, NIV). Again, I point to Talarico as an example of what John was warning us about. "Many antichrists have come" (1 John 2:18, ESV)

Therefore, John said, "Test the spirits" (1 John 4:1, ESV).⁵ That's exactly what John was doing.

And today, as in John's day, we must repeat and affirm the Gospel, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the only way to God. But not just shout it loudly, but share it compassionately. Because what's at stake is the salvation of people we know and love, of people who live in our neighborhood, or people all around us.

"I write to you," John said, "not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it" (1 John 2:20-21, ESV). John said, "We know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 5:20, ESV).

THE SON OF GOD

To counter the heresy of his day, John boldly declared that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. "We have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God" (1 John 4:14-15, ESV).

“Whoever confesses” what? “That Jesus is the Son of God,” and that He came in the flesh, died in the flesh, and rose in the flesh.

“Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh,” John writes, “is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist” (1 John 4:2-3, ESV). John repeated the great truth he declared in his Gospel, affirming the incarnation of Jesus. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory” (John 1:14, ESV).

In Ephesus, there was a Gnostic leader named Cerinthus who denied that Jesus was a real man.⁶ According to the Gnostics, Jesus only seemed to be a man.⁷ His body was not a real body, only a divine disguise. The Gnostics believed that all flesh was evil. Therefore, it was inconceivable that the divine could become flesh. But if Jesus did not come in the flesh, then neither did He die in the flesh. Thus an attack on the Gospel.

John’s letter was written to combat heresy and to affirm that Jesus was indeed the incarnate Son of God, that He came in the flesh, died in the flesh, and rose in the flesh. John said, “We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:1-2, ESV).⁸

Propitiation is a rare word meaning atonement.⁹ It refers to appeasement.¹⁰ The context is a temple. In pagan cultures, people would offer extravagant sacrifices to appease their ill-tempered gods. Our God is not ill-tempered, but He is holy. And our sin was so great that we were targets of His holy wrath. The Bible called us “children of wrath” (Ephesians 2:3, NAS). The Bible also insists “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Hebrews 9:22, NAS). Yet instead of paying with our own blood, the penalty was paid “by (Jesus’) own blood” (Hebrews 9:12, NAS). Jesus died in our place. He was our substitute. He sacrificed His life for us. Satisfying God’s holy wrath and pouring out amazing grace at the same time.

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On more than one occasion, *Jesus claimed to be the Son of God*. He said, “If you’ve seen Me you’ve seen the Father” (John 14:9). And after He was arrested, the religious leaders demanded, “Are You the Son of God?” And Jesus said, “Yes, I am” (Luke 22:70, NAS).¹¹

Jesus’ followers talked about Him as the Son of God. When Jesus asked Peter, “Who do you say that I am?” Peter was the first of His followers to say, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:15-16, NAS). After seeing Jesus walk on the water and calm a raging storm, the disciples worshiped Him, saying, “You are certainly God’s Son!” (Matthew 14:33, NAS).

*Jesus’ enemies despised Him because He claimed to be the Son of God.*¹² The religious leaders were ready to stone Him to death, and Jesus said, “I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?” “We are not stoning you for any of these,”

replied the Jews, “but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God” (John 10:32-33, NIV). And that’s why they wanted to kill Him.

*Jesus performed miracles that only God could do.*¹³ He healed the blind and raised the dead. He fed 5,000 people with five loaves of bread and two fish. People saw these miracles with their own eyes and His opponents could not deny them. Jewish historians wrote about His miracles, and so did Roman historians.

Jesus fulfilled hundreds of ancient prophecies about the Messiah. When Andrew and Peter met Jesus, they told all their friends, “We have found the Messiah! ... We have found the very person Moses and the prophets wrote about! His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth” (John 1:41, 45, NLT). Some 350 prophecies about the Messiah were fulfilled in the life of Jesus.

And the greatest proof of all, *Jesus rose from the dead proving to be the Son of God.* The incredible claim of Christianity is the physical, bodily, supernatural, dead-coming-back-to-life resurrection of Jesus Christ.

To counter the heresy of his day, John boldly declared that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. “We have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God” (1 John 4:14-15, ESV).

THE ONLY WAY TO GOD

John also declared that Jesus is the only way to God. “And this is the testimony” – this is the Gospel, this is the message – “that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life” (1 John 5:11-13, ESV).

“Whoever has the Son has life.” This is the Gospel. Jesus is the only way to God.¹⁴ How can anyone deny it? How can anyone say there are many paths to God? The resurrection proves that Jesus is the Son of God and that everything He said is true. And what did He say?

- “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6, NIV).
- “I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved” (John 10:9, ESV).
- Peter declared that Jesus is only way to God, when he said, “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name by which we can be saved” (Acts 4:12, ESV).
- Paul declared that Jesus is the only way to God, when he said, “There is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5, ESV).

- John declared that Jesus is the only way to God, when he said, “All who received him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12, ESV).

What does this mean? What does salvation mean? It means grace instead of guilt. Life instead of death. Heaven instead of hell. Hope instead of dread. Assurance instead of doubt. All through Jesus. Only through Jesus.

Again, to counter the heresy of his day, John declared that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the only way to God. “And this is the testimony,” John writes, “that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life” (1 John 5:11-13, ESV).

And today, as in John’s day, we must repeat and affirm the Gospel, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the only way to God.

CONCLUSION

“Christus Victor” is a majestic, modern hymn written by the Getty songwriting team. We sing many of their songs, like “In Christ Alone” and “Christ Our Hope in Life and Death.” The title is Latin for “Christ, the Victor.” The hymn celebrates the victory of Jesus on the cross. Those who witnessed the cross that day surely saw it as defeat, but those who witnessed it from heaven saw it as victory. On the cross, Jesus defeated Satan and his demonic forces, and defeated sin and death. The cross looked like defeat, but in truth, it was His victory.¹⁵

We’re going to sing this song, because we need to be reminded of the victory of Jesus, because on many days we don’t feel very victorious. In fact, on many days we can feel quite defeated. Maybe that’s how you feel today. You’ve asked God for help, but help has not come. You’ve prayed for relief, but relief has not come. You’ve begged Him to make things better, but things are getting worse. Whether it’s health problems or family problems, life is hard, and on many days, we can feel quite defeated.

And that’s why we need to be reminded of the victory of Jesus. That’s why we need to keep preaching the Gospel to ourselves. Because the Gospel points us to the ultimate victory, to our eternal victory.

So to our Savior and our Lord, to Jesus Christ, we believe Him, we love Him, and we worship Him!

NOTES

¹ Actual funny road signs



² Sources on the progressive theology of James Talarico include ...

- “Pagan Beliefs, James Talarico’s Lesbian, Nonbinary Pastor Claims Christ Didn’t Die to Save Sinners,” Hannah Davis, Decision Magazine, BGEA, September 24, 2026
- “James Talarico’s Pastor Makes Shocking Statements,” CBN News, September 25, 2026
- “Talarico’s Pastor Says Jesus Didn’t Die for Sins, Slanders Virgin Mary,” Jacob Wheeler, September 23, 2026
- “James Talarico’s Gospel,” Jamie Wilder, Mere Orthodoxy, March 2, 2026
- “James Talarico’s Backward Christianity,” Colin Redemer, First Things, March 4, 2026
- Jim Rigby, Facebook post, December 25, 2015

³ One of the songs sung at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Austin, Texas, denies the exclusivity of Jesus as the only way to salvation (John 14:6, Acts 4:12). From a worship service on September 20, 2026. The lyrics are ...

*Every way of compassion, every road of peace
Every life-giving path is welcome here
We are different and the same
Naming Holy many names*

⁴ The problem is not new. Every generation of the church faces theological battles. There has always existed a tension between historic, biblical, evangelical theology and a diluted form of theology. Historically, mainline denominations have increasingly tilted to the left theologically. However, today, acceptance of progressive/liberal theology is creeping into the conservative/evangelical church. Weekly, news reports come out of yet another church or another pastor publicly declaring their shift in theology, declaring that they have become enlightened and reshaping their theology to fit the times. Sadly, many churches and leaders are crumbling under the constant pounding of our culture. Therefore, it is critical that we stand firm on God’s word. And the better we know His word, the better we will be able to discern the flaws and deviations of progressive/liberal theology. Paul warned the Galatians, “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to **a different gospel – which is really no gospel at all**. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ” (Galatians 1:6-7).

⁵ When it comes to theology, every issue is important, but some issues are more critical than others. And we need discernment to tell the difference. It has been called theological triage (Gavin Ortland, *Finding the Right Hills to Die On – The Case for Theological Triage* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), pages 17-19). In an emergency room, a heart attack takes priority over a broken arm. This concept can be applied to theology. Gospel issues, salvation issues, are the most critical. These are first-tier issues, which are primary and essential. First-tier issues would include the Bible as the word of God, the deity of Jesus, the substitutionary atonement of Jesus on the cross, the miracle of the resurrection, and salvation through faith in Jesus alone. These are first-tier, critical issues to the Gospel. Important, but second-tier, less critical issues, might include views on baptism, communion, spiritual gifts, women in ministry, the age of the earth, and the end times. On these second-tier issues we allow grace and flexibility as we all grow and mature in our theological understanding. Yet when it comes to first-tier, critical issues, we must “contend for the faith,” as the Bible says (Jude 1:3). Sometimes, heresy is obvious, and we must point it out. An example of this is the difference between conservative/evangelical theology and liberal/progressive theology. In her book *Another Gospel?*,

Alisa Childers states that progressive theology is about “redefining, reinterpreting, or even rejecting essential doctrine.” Progressive Christianity redefines and reinterprets three essential doctrines – the Bible, the Cross, and the Gospel. “It is an entirely different religion,” Alisa Childers writes, “with another Jesus – and another gospel.” Conservative/evangelical Christianity believes the Bible is the word of God and comes from God, that it is divinely inspired, true, and authoritative over our lives. Liberal/progressive theology views the Bible as a human book, a collection of man’s primitive understanding of God in the past. Therefore, liberal/progressive theology does not consider the Bible as divinely inspired and not necessarily true or authoritative. Conservative/evangelical Christianity believes Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for sin. That through His substitutionary death we can be forgiven of sin. Liberal/progressive theology acknowledges that Jesus died on the cross, but not to pay the penalty for sin. Rather that Jesus was just a good man who died a tragic death at the hands of evil men. That His death is merely an inspiration of perseverance in the face of suffering. Paul urges every generation to “contend for the faith,” and it is critical and appropriate to point out heresy (Jude 1:3).

⁶ John R. W. Stott, *The Letters of John*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1964; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), page 50.

⁷ Known as Docetism.

⁸ Propitiation is also used in Romans 3:25, Hebrews 2:17, 1 John 2:2, 4:10. For more on propitiation see John MacArthur’s commentary on 1 John, pages 46-48.

⁹ The Greek word for “propitiation” is ἱλασμός (*hilasmos*), and refers to an act of appeasement, forgiveness, expiation, and satisfaction. Some NT versions translate the word as “atonement.” It is not just the act of forgiving. It is an act that accomplishes forgiveness, as the act of Jesus’ death accomplished or satisfied the holy wrath of God. As in the OT sacrificial system, the sacrifice of the animal accomplished or satisfied the holy wrath of God making forgiveness possible. As Hebrews 9:22 says, “Everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”

¹⁰ Redemption is a core concept in the Bible. It’s about being forgiven by God and reconciled to Him. Romans 3 uses three words which give three pictures of the Gospel – justification, redemption, and atonement. Romans 3 says we are “**justified** freely by His grace through the **redemption** that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Him as a sacrifice of **atonement**, through faith in His blood” (Romans 3:24-25, NIV). Atonement is a synonym for propitiation.

¹¹ Throughout the Bible, the writers say that Jesus is God. Jesus is often called “the Word.” Meaning He is the personification of truth and deity. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him ... And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory,” the very glory of God the Father ... “No one has seen God at any time,” but the one and only Son of the Father “has made Him known” (John 1:1-2, 14, 18, NAS). Even before He was born, Jesus was declared the Son of God. “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means God with us” (Matthew 1:23, NIV). At His baptism, everyone who was there heard a voice from heaven. It was the voice of God the Father, who said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased” (Matthew 3:17, NAS). God the Father declared that Jesus was His Son.

¹² When Jesus said, “My Father,” the religious leaders knew what He meant. They knew He was “making Himself equal with God” and that’s why they “were seeking all the more to kill Him” (John 5:18).

¹³ See Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands A Verdict* (San Bernardino, CA: Here’s Life Publishers, 1972, 1979), pages 122-126.

¹⁴ See also Romans 3:22-24.

¹⁵ In researching and composing “Christus Victor,” the Getty songwriters studied every hymn in the Bible, and three stood out. These three biblical hymns shaped the three verses of “Christus Victor.” The first verse is based on the first hymn in the Bible, recorded in Exodus 15. It was a hymn written by Moses celebrating the parting of the Red Sea and God’s deliverance of the Hebrews from Egyptian slavery. Moses led the people singing, “I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously. He has hurled both horse and rider into the sea” (Exodus 15:1-2, NLT). The first verse of “Christus Victor” echoes that. “He led us through mighty waters ... Our strength, our song, our sure salvation.” The second verse is about the cross. “By Your blood You have redeemed us ... Spotless Lamb, mighty Savior ... Who lived, who died, who rose victorious.” The third verse is based on the last hymn in the Bible, recorded in the book of Revelation. It celebrates the victorious return of Jesus. “Now to the Lamb upon the throne ... Be blessing, honor, glory, power ... In the triumph of the Son ... Hallelujah! Amen!” “Christus Victor” celebrates Israel’s victory over Egypt, Jesus’ victory on the cross, and Christ’s victory when He returns.