

TESTING FOR ETERNAL LIFE

II COR. 13:5-6

INTRODUCTION:

Have you examined yourself recently? This inspired admonition calls upon us to subject ourselves to personal spiritual examination. The purpose of the examination is to make sure that we have the life of God in us. There is the possibility of being spiritually deceived and being eternally lost even when you thought you were saved. The Apostle is aware of this serious possibility so he calls for a personal examination.

To personally examine oneself needs to be deliberately and intentionally done. It is to be done with the distinct purpose of making sure you are not a counterfeit believer; that you have the life of God in you. In the medical realm a number of tests have been developed that can help you be sure about your health. There are tests that can check your body for cancer, for tuberculosis, for heart diseases, and a number of other physical maladies. The scripture gives us three tests that we can use to make sure that the life of God is in us and that we have a genuine basis for the hope of heaven. Let us apply these tests to ourselves tonight.

I. THE FAITH TEST.

This is the test that the Apostle uses in our text. “Examine yourselves as whether you are in the faith. Prove yourselves. Do you not know yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you? Unless indeed you are disqualified.” The expression “in the faith” is the critical one. Some have understood this to be a test to make sure that you are orthodox in what you believe, that you are in “the faith” in

the sense of holding to the faith once delivered to the saints. That interpretation does not seem to fit this context. Rather in this context it seems to be a call to make sure that you have genuine saving faith. In order to do this there are two things that you can check.

1. Check the object of your faith.

In whom are you trusting? On whom are you relying? If you have genuine saving faith, then you will be relying upon and trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ alone. The most important thing about your faith is the object of your faith.

Can you bear the testimony of the Apostle. “I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.”

2. Check the outcome of your faith.

Saving faith always produces good works. Saving faith always leads to a changed life. So it is appropriate when you are making the spiritual check to make sure that your faith is the genuine kind by checking the outcome of your faith. Or, good works of love and ministry an obvious outcome of your faith?

II. THE FRUIT TEST

This is a second step in the faith test. Jesus gave more emphasis to the fruit test than any other in His teachings. He indicated that if there is a genuine saving relationship with Himself then there will be fruit. He discussed this at great length in that unforgettable fifteenth chapter of John in the parable of the vine and the branches.

1. The fruit of godly character.

When one becomes a Christian the living Christ Himself takes up residence in the life through the Holy Spirit. When the living Christ is present in a life through the Holy Spirit He begins an inner transformation of that life that manifest itself in godly, Christ-like character. This is the fruit that Jesus was discussing in John 15. The fruitfulness will not be as obvious in one life as in another life but there will be some fruitfulness in every life in which Christ dwells. So, check for the fruit of godly character.

2. The fruit of usefulness to God.

Another way of considering this fruitfulness is that of usefulness. The life that God saves He uses. Have you had an awareness in your life that the Lord Jesus who lives in you has been working through you to bless someone else? There should be in our lives an awareness that God is at work seeking to make us a blessing to someone else.

Check the fruit! It is one of the vital test that we can use in examining our lives.

III. THE FULNESS TEST

The Apostle John as well as the Apostle Paul discussed the inner working of the Holy Spirit as an evidence that one is genuinely a child of God. I am calling this the fulness test.

1. The witness of the Spirit.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians, “And because you are sons, God has sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” This inner witness of the spirit to our own spirits of our relationship to God brings into the life a dimension of fullness and satisfaction that the world knows nothing about. Have you experienced the inner witness of the Holy spirit concerning your relationship with the living God through Jesus Christ our Lord?

2. The walk in the Spirit.

Paul wrote to the Roman Christians, “As many as are led by the Spirit of God. They are the sons of God.” He admonished the Galatians to “walk in the Spirit!” Have you been aware that your life is in the Spirit? Have you sensed the Spirit of God leading and directing your steps day by day. Have you experienced His constraint and conviction when you have begun to lessen your devotion or wonder in your behavior? This is one of the test!

Before we come to the Lord’s table tonight, let me ask you to make sure that you have come to the Lord Himself. The coming to the table will have value and meaning only to those who have by faith come to the Lord already for salvation and life. He and He alone is the Savior. You must make sure that you are not a counterfeit but rather a genuine believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.