

“The Father’s Testimony for Jesus”  
(John 5:31-47)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

John started this chapter with the healing of the man by pool of Bethesda.

Jesus did this on the Sabbath,

And had the man carry his pallet on the Sabbath

To draw the attention of the Jews.

Once He had it,

He made several astonishing claims –

At least they would be

If He was anything less than what He claimed to be:

Equal with God (v. 18).

He said God was His Father,

That He was doing what He saw His Father doing –

Carrying out what He showed Him of His will –

He claimed to have the authority to give spiritual life to the spiritually dead,

To be the One who would one day empty the tombs

Of all the righteous and the wicked

And to gather all the living for the final judgment

And that He would be the One who would judge all men on that final day.

B. Preview.

As I said, these were remarkable claims.

How could the Jews possibly know what He said was true?

This morning, Jesus tells them,

First, that that they shouldn't merely take His Word for it,

But that they should also listen to His Father.

## II. Sermon.

### A. First, Jesus tells them they shouldn't just take His word for it.

He says in verse 31, "If I *alone* testify about Myself, My testimony is not true."

He's not saying, of course, that what He said about Himself isn't true

Or that they couldn't trust Him –

He is the truth:

He said to Thomas, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life;

No one comes to the Father but through Me" (John 14:6).

Everything He says is absolutely true,

It can't fail to be true,

And will stand forever.

What He meant was that they weren't bound to believe what He told them

Unless there was at least one more witness.

Moses writes in Deuteronomy 19:15, "A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed."

This principle has not only to do with evidence presented in a criminal trial,

It has to do with establishing the truth of any testimony –

If only one person says it, it might be true,

But it doesn't prove anything.

But His point is, He isn't the only One making this claim:

He says, "There is another who testifies of Me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true" (v. 32).

Who is Jesus referring to?

They appear to have thought

That Jesus was talking about John the Baptist.

Jesus says, "You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth" (v. 33).

They sent to him to find out if he was the Christ –

Which he wasn't –

But they did find he was the one sent before Him to prepare His way.

We saw earlier in chapter 1:19-23, "This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, 'I am not the Christ.' They asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' And he said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the Prophet?' And he answered, 'No.' Then they said to him, 'Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?' He said, 'I am A VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, "*MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD,*" as Isaiah the prophet said.'"

Some of the Jews even believed him for a while:

Jesus says, "He was the lamp that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light" (v. 35).

But apparently, they stopped believing –

They needed more.

Jesus tells them that He has more –

Something more than a human witness:

“But the testimony which I receive is not from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved” (v. 34).

B. What is this testimony?

It's that of His Father:

They should believe Him because of the evidence the Father has given.

What is that evidence?

The *works* He gave Jesus to do,

And His *Word*.

1. First, His works.

Jesus says, “But the testimony which I have is greater than *the testimony of* John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish – the very works that I do – testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me” (v. 36).

What works was He referring to?

The works Jesus has been speaking about –

The things He saw His Father doing,

The greater things the Father would show Him

So that they might marvel.

He was referring to

The turning of the water into wine at the wedding at Cana (John 2);

The healing of the royal official's son who was at Capernaum, from Cana (4:46-54);

The healing of the sick man at the pool of Bethesda (5:1-8),

Which is the immediate context of our passage –

The miracle that ended in his carrying his pallet on the Sabbath.

The very thing they were accusing Him of –

Breaking the Sabbath by healing a man on the Sabbath –

Was the very thing that proved what He said was true –

It was the Father's witness that Jesus is His Son.

Miracles are what the Lord used to vindicate His messengers,

Which is why John recorded those he did.

He writes near the end of his Gospel, "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (20:30-31).

## 2. But the Father also testified about His Son through His Word.

Jesus says in verse 37, "And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me."

Now we might be tempted to think that Jesus was speaking

About the Father's testimony at His baptism.

Matthew writes, "After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove *and* lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased'" (Matt. 3:16-17).

That would have been a very compelling argument in itself.

But Jesus goes on to say, "You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form" (v. 37),

Is it that those particular Jews weren't at His baptism?

It's more likely that Jesus is referring to Scripture.

It's in the Scripture that God speaks, that He reveals Himself.

But even though He speaks and reveals Himself  
There are many who don't hear, who don't see,  
Because they don't have faith.

This makes sense of what Jesus says next,

“You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom  
He sent” (v. 38).

You possess God's Word –

You have copies of it –

But it doesn't possess you.

It's in your mind –

You've heard it read,

You've memorized portions of it –

But it's not in your heart –

Your eyes haven't been opened,

You haven't embraced it,

You don't truly understand it.

Jesus said if they had, they would have believed Him.

If they had, they would have come to Him

To receive the life the Father has granted Him to give.

He says, “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have  
eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to  
Me so that you may have life” (v. 39-40).

The fact that Jesus is the Messiah –

That He is the Son of the Father,  
 That He is equal with God,  
 That He has eternal life in Himself,  
 And the ability to give it to whomever He wills –  
 Isn't based merely on the testimony of men –  
 It's isn't based merely on His testimony as the Son of Man,  
 Nor that of John the Baptist –  
 It is based on God's testimony;  
 And in spite of that fact  
 They still would not believe.

Jesus says, "I do not receive glory from men; but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves. I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him. How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the *one and only* God?" (vv. 41-44).

They would believe others  
 That could advance their worldly pursuits,  
 But not One who clearly would not –  
 We'll look at this part more carefully this evening.

So what does Jesus say will happen to them?

They will be condemned,  
 Not by Him, but by the one they trusted most: Moses.

Jesus says, "Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope" (v. 45).

Jesus didn't come into the world

To accuse or condemn anyone,

But that men might be saved.

He will tell us in John 12:46-50, “I have come *as* Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness. If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment *as to* what to say and what to speak. I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.”

Jesus’ words aren’t the only thing that will condemn them –

Moses’ words will as well.

Why? Because they are also part of the Father’s testimony regarding Jesus.

“For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me” (v. 46).

What did Moses write?

That Jesus is the seed of the woman that would crush the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15),

The Son of Shem through whom Japheth would be saved (9:26-27),

The lamb the Father would provide as a sacrifice in place of Isaac (22:8),

The Son of Abraham through whom the nations would be blessed (22:18).

He is the fulfillment of the priesthood,

The prophet like Moses (Deu. 18:15),

The One who fulfills God’s Law,

The One whose sacrifice –

Which alone can atone for sin –

Was pictured by all those animal offerings.

If they, by the Spirit, had seen

What Moses was really pointing to –

What the Father was saying about His Son in Moses' writings –

They would have believed what Jesus was saying.

“But,” Jesus says, “If you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?” (v. 47).

If you're not willing to listen to the testimony God has given regarding His Son,

Through Moses, there is no hope.

Remember what Abraham said to the rich man

After he begged Abraham to send Lazarus to his brothers,

In the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus:

“‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ But he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!’ But he said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead’” (Luke 16:29-31).

### 3. To those of you here this morning

Who haven't received Jesus,

You need to understand

That the Lord has given you more evidence

Than the word of those

Who say they believe these things.

There are a lot of people who believe a lot of different things:

Moonies believe Rev. Moon,

Mormons believe Joseph Smith,

Muslims believe Mohammad,

Atheists believe in evolution.

But just because they believe it,

That doesn't make it true.

So what's the difference between their beliefs

And that of the Christian?

The difference is that God has testified

About His Son in His Word – in the Bible.

Here, you have an eye-witness record

Of the things the Father gave Jesus to do

To prove He is His Son.

Here you have the testimony of the Father

Through the apostles and prophets

As to why He sent His Son into the world,

And how you can be saved.

This is the only testimony the Holy Spirit will bear witness to

Because this alone is God's Word.

If all you had was someone else's word for it

That wouldn't be enough,

But you have more: you have God's Word.

I urge you again to believe His Word,

Because if you don't,

You will be condemned.

The Father has given you His Son

So that you might escape this.

Jesus says, "But the testimony which I receive is not from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved" (John 5:34).

Listen to what the Father says about His Son.

Turn away from your sins and trust Him.

Let me just say to the rest of you

Who have received the Father's testimony

That this is what you need to share with others –

What He has said regarding His Son.

Your personal testimony is corroborating evidence,

But it's the Gospel that God uses to save.

Paul writes, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Rom. 1:16).

Amen.

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