

John 5:30-47 The Many Witnesses to the Person of Jesus

To begin our time, think of a courtroom. What is the goal of a prosecuting attorney in any court case? It is to prove someone is “guilty” or “not guilty” based upon evidence given. And the best way to give evidence is to bring witnesses. This is Jesus’ point in vv. 30-31. He is saying, “*Look around! See all the witnesses to my person. And as you see them, Believe in me.*” Brothers and sisters, THIS IS JOHN’S DESIRE in writing his gospel! As he says in 20:31: “**but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.**” In our passage today we have MANY witnesses to the Person of Jesus as the Son of God. I want to highlight 5 witnesses to the person of Jesus as the Son of God. As we see these truths our faith will be strengthened by the preached word this morning. And if you are not a Christian, I pray God will use his words bring about faith. Here they are: 1) The works of Jesus bear witness, 2) The Father bears witness, 3) John the Baptist bears witness, 4) The Scriptures bear witness, and 5) Belief in the Son bears witness.

1. The works of Jesus bear witness to his person. Look at v. 36b: “**For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me.**” Our story begins with a great miracle. A man lame for 38 years is healed. This is a great miracle. And this miracle bears witness to the person of Jesus. And so do ALL the works of Jesus bear witness to his person. In the Book of John so far, Jesus knows all things as tells Nathanael about his life before they met (1:47-49). And seeing this great work, he declares, “**Rabbi, you are the Son of God. You are the king of Israel.**” In cp. 2, we see the glory of Jesus as he turned the water into wine at the wedding (2:11-12). In cp. 4 he heals the official’s son. As we continue we will MANY miracles, many works that bear witness to his person. In John 10 the some of the Jewish leaders come to him and say, “*don’t keep us in suspense . . . tell us plainly who you are.*” And Jesus says, “**I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name bear witness about me**” (v. 25).

Brothers and sisters, the works of the Son (even just in the Gospel of John) are abundant. And in fact, John says, in 21:25: “**Now there are also many other things Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.**” So, this morning, if you are a Christian already, if you have the Holy Spirit within you, you know these things to be true. And, the works of Jesus only add to your praise and your amazement and your understanding of the glory of the Son. You rejoice as you read Heb. 1:1 which says, “**Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son . . .**” If you are not a Christian, I urge you to consider all the works of Jesus and know that God has given such works that you might believe.

2. The Father bears witness to his person. Look at vv. 30-32: “**I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me. If I alone bear witness about myself, my testimony is not true. There is**

another who bears witness about me, and I know that the testimony that he bears about me is true.” Also look at the first part of v. 37: “**And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me . . .**” What does this mean? How does the Father bear witness that Jesus is the Son of God? Now, from one perspective we MUST attribute ALL works to the power of the Father in revealing the Son. As Paul reminds us in Rom. 11:36: “**For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.**” But, in our context of John 5, how does the Father bear witness to the person of the Son? Wow! What a question! I will barely touch the surface. For his works and ways from eternity bear witness to the Son! But, I think back to the young Mary as the Angel declares to her that she will give birth to a son who will be called Jesus. And, “**He will be great and will be called the son of the Most High . . . and of his kingdom there will be no end**” (Luke 1:28-33).

Also, do you remember the voice of God at Jesus’ baptism, saying, “**You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased**” (Mark 1:11). Also at his baptism, John tells us that the “**Spirit descended from heaven like a dove and remained on him**” (John 1:32). Or, do you remember when Jesus was transfigured on the mountain with Peter, James, and John? Again, the voice of God says, “**This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him**” (Matt. 17:5). In these ways, the Father bears witness to the Son. BUT, in our context of John 5, the greatest witness of the Father to the Son is found in the VERY works of the Son. For the works of Jesus ARE the works of the Father. These are unique works that go way beyond the miracles. He is the Lord of the Sabbath. This means that as ONLY the Father can give rest to sinners, SO the Son does likewise. As ONLY the Father has LIFE in himself and can give LIFE to this world and to sinners, SO the Son does likewise. As ONLY the Father has the authority to JUDGE, so the Son has this same right. This means that Jesus is equal to the Father. Look back at v. 18: “**This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.**” This is why Jesus can say, “*believe the works I do,*” the “works that only the Father does.” In this way, the Father bears witness of me. This truth gives meaning to his words to Phillip in 14:9 “*if you’ve seen me you’ve seen the Father.*” Or, in John 10:30: “**I and the Father are one.**”

So what does this mean for us? This means that ALL the Father does to bring glory to himself, He does through the Son, who is the “*radiance of his glory,*” who is the “*exact imprint of his nature,*” “*through whom he created the world,*” “*through whom he upholds the universe by the word of his power . . .*” (See Heb. 1, Col. 1, Phil. 2, John 1). Can there be anything more glorious to you and to me and to anyone who considers such glory? This means that ALL worship, and honor, and glory, and power, and wisdom, ALL THINGS belong to the Son as they belong to the Father! This means that if we look to anything in this world less than the Son, we are idolatrous. This means that if we find other things in this world as more beautiful or more worthy than the worship of the Son, we are missing the truth at the center of the glory of God.

3. John the Baptist bears witness to his person. Look at vv. 33-35: “**You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Not that the testimony that I receive is from man, but I say**

these things so that you may be saved. **He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.**” John the Apostle has already spent considerable time emphasizing the witness of John the Baptist. So, I will be very brief today and only remind us of his witness. In 1:19-28 Jerusalem sends a group of priests and Levites to visit this preacher and baptizer named John. And they asked him if he was the Christ. And he immediately references the words of Isaiah who said of him, **“I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord’”**. And then he says to them, “I baptize with water . . . but there is one coming who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.” And, **“I am not worthy to strap up his sandals.”** And the very next day Jesus walks toward him and he says to those listening, **“Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”**

From the time of Malachi to preaching of John the Baptist there were around 400 years with no prophets. That’s a long time. But, at the right time, God raised this man for this very purpose. Verse 35 says he **“was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.”** Soon after this, the emphasis shifts from John to Jesus. But, according to Jesus, there was no one born of a woman greater than John (Matt. 11:11). Why? Because of his role as the one who announced the coming Messiah and the promised New Covenant. And from this perspective, this was John’s sole purpose in his short life as he would soon be imprisoned for his preaching and be killed for his faith. Especially for the Jewish people, there was no one like John. His sole purpose (for a time) was to bear witness to Lamb of God who would **“take away the sins of the world.”**

Quick application: None of us are John the Baptist. However, we are also witnesses to the person of Jesus. And, did you consider that we witness with much greater power than John. I just read from Matt. 11:11 where Jesus says John the Baptist was the greatest of men. But, if you continue reading to the end of the verse, Jesus then says, **“Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”** I believe we are “greater” because we have the Holy Spirit in fullness, as does EVERY believer in the new covenant. So, keep that in mind as you go into the world this week. John WAS a shining light. We are also shining lights as we bear witness. (Let’s move on.)

4. The Scriptures bear witness to his person. Look first at v. 39. **“You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me.”** In this conversation with the Jewish leaders, Jesus does not condemn them for searching the Scriptures, but for not concluding that the Scriptures bear witness to Him. Now, look down to vv. 45-46: **“There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. 46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe me for he wrote of me. 47 But if you do not believe his writings how will you believe my words?”** In the same kind of way, Jesus then speaks of Moses, Israel’s greatest OT prophet. And he accuses them of looking to Moses and not to the One about whom Moses writes.

Now, He does not accuse them for undervaluing the authority of Scripture. For they certainly believe in its authority. And they believe the Scriptures contain the words that lead to eternal life. So, how did they miss it? What was their error? They did not believe in Jesus who stood before them as the ONE to whom all the Scriptures teach. This is Jesus' point: ALL the Scriptures of the Jewish OT speak of him. And now, as the ONE who not only does the VERY works of God, but also speaks the VERY words of God is standing before them as the Lord of the Sabbath, as the author of life, and as the One in whom all judgement belongs.

In Deut. 4, Moses commands Israel to obey God. And he reminds them of their time as they stood at the bottom of Mt. Sinai and heard the voice of God. Listen to vv. 11-12: **"And you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, while the mountain burned with fire to the heart of heaven, wrapped in darkness, cloud, and gloom. Then the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of words, but saw no form; there was only a voice."** Now, fast forward to John 5 as Jesus stands . . . speaking to these Jewish leaders. Let me ask, *"Who do they have standing before them in Jesus?"* A voice with no form? NO! Who do they have? Think back to John 1:14: **"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father."** Brothers and sisters, the law and the prophets (Scriptures) bear witness to the Son of God. They speak of him! They bear witness to him!

Application. The Word of God is powerful. And it's powerful purpose is to lead you to Jesus. Speak to John's purpose (John 20:31). This means that the primary purpose of Scripture is to bear witness to the truth that Jesus is the Son of God, and that believing you may have life. This means the Scriptures have power, both when we read it and when we speak it. As Paul says, ***"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ"*** (Rom. 10:17).

Application: Reading the Scriptures in the power of the Holy Spirit (which point to Jesus) will produce fruit that leads to life. And this fruit will come down to you through the person and work of the Son of God. When you read the Scriptures, if you do not find belief (delight) in the Son, you are doing EXACTLY what the Jewish leaders of Jesus' day did, reading the word as merely a "guide" or an "authority" that merely helps you attain something (like eternal life). So, let me ask, "What does your time in the Scriptures look like?"

5. Belief in the Son bears witness to his person. Finally this morning, the very fact that we "believe" in Him bears witness to his person. This is really our big application. The Gospel of John and much of this text in chapter 5 speaks about belief. This is "faith" in Jesus as the Son of God. And for those who believe in the Son of God, what do they receive? Look at v. 34: **"but I say these things so that you may be saved."** Look back at v. 24: **"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life . . ."** Look at vv. 40-44: **"yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. I do not receive glory from people. But I know that you do not have the love of God within you. 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 do not seek the glory that comes from the only God.” There is a lot here. But, in these words, Jesus is saying “**your . . . BELIEF . . . your . . . FAITH . . . in ME (or not) bears witness that I AM the Son of God.**”

Now, Jesus will have a lot more to say about belief in him in John 6, particularly about the sovereignty of God in election. And we need cp. 5 to understand cp. 6. But for now, I want to finish with this very important truth. The very fact that we are here to today as those who believe in the Son of God . . . bears witness to who He is. Brothers and sisters, as the Church of Christ, we are a believing community in this world . . . and right here in China Grove. Your BELIEF, Your GATHERING this morning, together with others who also believe DECLARES to the world that Jesus is the Son of God. And this is a VERY powerful and supernatural thing.

Think about it! In this world, to be a follower of Jesus is to be in the minority. Matt. 7:13-14 says: “**Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.**” When we get to John 6, most of the crowds leave Jesus . . . But Jesus says to the disciples: “**Do you want to go away as well?**” And Peter says, “**Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. And we have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God**” (John 6:66-70).

Brothers and sisters, our GATHERING this morning (and all other congregations all of the world) bear witness to SON. And what do we believe? We believe EVERYTHING the Scriptures say about Him. We believe the incarnation. We believe he was born of the virgin, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe he was sinless. We believe he obeyed God in both his heart and his actions. We believe he laid down his life on the cross . . . for our sins. We believe he rose again, conquering death and now sitting at the right of hand of God. We believe he will come again. And, our belief, our faith, is given to us by the power of the Holy Spirit, in which we are also kept. This means we must never underestimate the great power of God in our salvation (the Church) to bear witness to the Son. And, our application is to obey the command of Christ to make disciples in this world.

In closing, with all these witnesses to the Person of the Son, the Father bears witness, his works bear witness, John the Baptist bears witness, the Scriptures bear witness, and the faith of all God’s church in this world bears witness. If you are a Christian, be encouraged today. God is bringing glory to his name through his Son. This will continue for all eternity. If you are not a Christian, what excuse do you have for not believing?

Our God is good!