

Those Who Testify in Favor of Jesus Christ - John 5:31-47 June 21, 2009 - Skip MacMillan

Earlier in Chapter 5 Jesus made some incredible claims:

One with the Father, loved by the Father, has life in Himself, reigns as Judge over all, deserves all honor and praise, calls us to believe in Him, has power to resurrect the dead with His voice and to judge rightly each one of us.

In John 5:31-47, Jesus points out five who testify to His claims.

"If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid. ³²There is another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is valid" (John 5: 31-32).

Jesus is explaining he is not mad man, believing in His own head while the rest of the world and God think He is crazy. No, Jesus gives five who testify or give witness as to His identity.

Who does Jesus refer to as a witness for Himself?

Four testify about Jesus, plus one more

1. John the Baptist

"You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth. ³⁴Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved. ³⁵John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light" (John 5: 33-35).

"Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' ³¹I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel." ³²Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. ³³I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God" (John 1:29-34).

"The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. ³²He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. ³³The man who has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. ³⁴For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God^[a] gives the Spirit without limit. ³⁵The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. ³⁶Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him" (John 3: 31-36).

John the Baptist pointed his finger to Jesus Christ. They knew it and Jesus was recalling his words.

Jesus' purpose of referring to John was "that you may be saved" (John 5:34).

He does not need or accept human testimony but it may persuade the crowd of humans to believe.

2. "Work"

"I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the **very work** that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me" (John 5:36).

Work = PLURAL, all of Jesus' ministry, the signs, miracles, resurrecting Lazarus, the redemption gained for humanity by His death on the cross, His resurrection and His ascension.

All of this is meant by "the very work that the Father has given me to finish."

"Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written" (John 21:25).

Jesus does only what the Father gives Him to do.
The signs reveal His glory, the glory of God Himself.

Purpose of Works: Reveal the glory of Christ, John 2:11

"After the miracle at Cana of Galilee, John comments: 'Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory (2:11). The raising of Lazarus happens 'for God's glory' (11:4). The blind man's blindness existed to allow a demonstration of the glory of the works of God (9:3). To John, it was not that there was no love and compassion in the miracles; but in every one of them he saw the glory of the reality of God breaking into time and into human affairs

"To John, the miracles were not simply single events in time; they were insights into what God is always doing and what Jesus always is; they were windows into the reality of God. Jesus did not merely once feed 5,000 people; that was an illustration that he is forever the real bread of life. Jesus did not merely once open the eyes of a blind man; he is forever the light of the world. Jesus did not merely once raise Lazarus from the dead; he is forever and for everyone the resurrection and the life. To John, a miracle was never an isolated act; it was always a window into the reality of what Jesus always was and always is and always did and always does" -Barclay.

Signs and miracles God gives you are to draw you into a deeper relationship with Him; you are not to get caught up in the sign nor to forget about it, but to see it as God's way of communicating with you, letting you know He is there, calling you to place your faith in Him.

Jesus says, at least believe the miracles, because these testify as to who I am.

3. The Father Himself

"And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent" (John 5:37-38).

God the Father's testimony is the weightiest of all testimony.

- **Prophetic, Isaiah 42:1.**
- Jesus' Baptism: "This is My Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17).
- Mount of Transfiguration: "This is My Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to Him!" (Matthew 17:5).
- "We accept man's testimony, but **God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God**, which he has given about his Son. Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. . . and **this is the testimony**: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life" (1 John 5:9-12).

Jesus gets in their face

"You have never heard his voice nor seen his form nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent" (v. 38).

- Here Jesus ties inextricably knowing the Father with believing in Him!
- Jesus says, if you heard Him you will hear Me, if you saw Him you will see Me, if you hid His word in your hearts you will see I am the Word – believe in Me, the One the Father sent.
- There is no relationship with the Father without going through Me, the Son.

4. Scripture

"You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life" (John 5:39-40).

Wrong use of Scripture

"You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life" (John 5:39).

- This group of "Bible Studiers" diligently searching the Scriptures, gaining knowledge.
 - They became enamored with the letter/note/book but not the author.
- Doctor vs. Spouse
 - They had a knowledge of God like your doctor has knowledge of you: cholesterol count, blood pressure, stats and graphs.
 - But your wife and children, they know you in a different way.
 - Both know you but one the way Jesus is talking about.
 - When you read the Scriptures as God intended they will testify to Jesus so you can know God personally.
- This kind of knowledge led them astray, believing the Scriptures would save them.
 - But studying the Scriptures do not bring eternal life if they don't bring you to Jesus.
- **Paul throws out a warning**, "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" (1 Cor. 8:1).
 - This group knew a lot, had a lot of knowledge.
 - Always had to be in the know, be one step ahead of everyone else.
 - Looking as if they knew it all, read it all, studied it all, and are therefore superior to everyone else. Don't you wish you could be just like me!
 - This is the kind of person who reads something one day and then repeats it the next acting as if he had originated it or had some great knowledge of it all along. "Aren't I amazing!"
 - Their knowledge puffed them up, it is a "me-centered" endeavor.
 - Paul says, "The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know. But the man who loves God is known by God" (1 Cor. 8:3).
- Serious Problem:
 - You can know the Scripture better than most and yet not know God.
 - You can separate the Scriptures from their author.
 - You can use Scripture for your own benefit, to puff you up.

- Scary to think you can be reading the Bible, have a critical mass of people around you and be so far from God. Knowing God in a stats and graph kind of way is not knowing God Biblically.

“These are the Scriptures that testify about Me (Jesus)”

- Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation were written to testify about Jesus Christ
 - Torah: Creator, Sustainer, the Tabernacle, the Glory of God, Deliverer, Priest and Sacrifice.
 - Writings: Judges, David, Temple, and the Psalms.
 - Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Minor Prophets
 - “All the prophets testify about Him that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name” (Acts 10:31).
- Jesus is the LOGOS, the Word of God in the OT, that WORD has become flesh.
- This is/was a horrific offense and the ranting of a mad man or the most profound, eternal truths made by any person.
- They were studying the Scriptures that testify about Jesus but refused to see Him, to believe, to “come to Me to have life” (John 5:40).
- What do the Scriptures do for you? Do they puff you up or do they deliver compassion, build love into your soul, and a desire to share it with others? Do they point you to Jesus? Do they uncover the identity of Jesus?
- All Scripture, when rightly understood testifies about Jesus Christ, their intent by God.
 - Read the OT and look for Jesus.
 - The OT points to Jesus ministry, teachings, death and resurrection.

Jesus points out four who give clearly testimony about Him in a clear, concise and Biblical way: John, Works, God the Father, and Scripture.

Praise from whom?

“I do not accept praise from men, ⁴²but I know you. I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts. ⁴³I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him. ⁴⁴How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God?” (John 5:41-44).

Jesus

“I do not “accept human testimony” (John 5:33).

“I do not accept praise from men but I know you” (John 5:41).

1. He is not trying to win their acclaim (DA Carson) but that they would believe and be saved.
2. Jesus sole aim was to please the Father.

“The world must learn that I love the Father and that I do **exactly** what my Father has commanded me” (John 14:31).
3. Jesus does not need the praise of/from men to validate who He is.

- All of humanity could deny Him and yet He remains God the Son!
- Jesus is not nor was He looking for praise from men.
 - How many times did He say not to tell anyone of His miracles or identity?
 - He knows who He is, He is solid in His identity, He does not need or accept praise from men.
 - "Jesus answered, 'Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going' " (John 8:41).

Pharisees: "but I know you. I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts" (John 5:42).

1. They do not love God but darkness; breaking the greatest commandment to love the LORD.
2. Accept those who come in their own name: good PR, recognized by the right groups, got the right forwards in their books.
 - a. Accept praise from one another: creating a self-perpetuating religious machine: you support me and I will support you.
 - b. "Yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God." God has little place in this system, this way of thinking and living. Because it is not about God, it is about themselves!

Application:

- Who are you seeking praise from?
- Are you making an effort to obtain praise from the LORD?
- "The world must learn that I love the Father and that I do **exactly** what my Father has commanded me" (John 14:31).

Moses

"But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. ⁴⁶If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. ⁴⁷But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?" (John 5:45-47).

Why does Jesus bring up Moses?

- Moses is their icon, their ultimate authority, the idol they worship, the mediator of Sinai. Jesus goes right to the heart of their belief structure.

"Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set."

- Jesus did not come to condemn; Moses will be the one who accuses!
- Moses wrote the Law; the Law points to Jesus. If you reject the purpose of the Law then "its human author Moses must stand up in outraged accusation" -DA Carson, p. 266.
- If Moses were standing here today, he would say, this is the One I spoke of; believe in Him.

"If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me."

- People today worship saints, Mary, people of history (St. Gregory the Great), ministries and pastors.
 - What must it be like for "St. Gregory the Great" in heaven? People setting their hopes on him as he sits in God's eternal glory, as a human.

- Every single one of them if they could talk to you today would say seek Jesus Christ.
- **Moses wrote the Scriptures, says Jesus Christ, not JEPD** (Genesis to Deuteronomy).
- **“he (Moses) wrote about Me”**
 - Moses wrote about Jesus in Genesis to Deuteronomy, I am the: Light – Genesis 1, Crushing Satan – Genesis 3:15, Lamb of God - Genesis 22, Passover lamb – Exodus 12, Manna - Exodus 16, Rock and Water - Exodus 17, Atonements – Leviticus 16-17, Greatest Prophet - Deuteronomy 18.
 - Monumental statement: Jesus says here I am, the one Moses wrote about
 - **Carson:** “Such a statement belongs to one who is himself to be addressed as God (Thomas said, ‘My Lord and my God” in John 20:28), or to stark insanity. The one who utters such things is to be dismissed with pity or scorn, or worshipped as Lord” (p. 255).

The Bible is one book, one story about the LORD; Genesis to Revelation.

Today, we have too many churches that make the Bible all about us when it's primary purpose is to reveal God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Read the Scriptures to discover God first, then He will help you with you!

Conclusion:

Jesus gives us five different testimonies to His identity:

John the Baptist, Signs, The Father, Scripture and Moses himself.

These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ” and “you may be saved” (John 20:31; 5:34).

Those who believe in Jesus are to be a testimony for Jesus.

1. Isaiah 40:10-13: you are called to be the LORD's witness, testify about Him.
2. Acts 1:8, ask the LORD to send the Holy Spirit, bringing His power and you will be His witness.