

“Witnesses to Jesus Christ”  
John 5:31-47  
(Preached at Trinity, January 16, 2019)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. After Jesus healed the man on the Sabbath He immediately received condemnation from the Jews.  
**John 5:16 NAU** - "For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath."
2. Jesus then threw gasoline on the fire by making bold statements regarding His deity and equality with the Father.  
**John 5:17-18 NAU** - "But He answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working." <sup>18</sup> For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God."
3. He declared the unity of purpose between the Father and the Son.  
**John 5:19 NAU** - "whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner."
4. As the second person of the Godhead, Jesus had the right to make self-claims. But as God incarnate, Jesus needed to be validated by other witnesses. According to Jewish law one's self-testimony was not admissible in legal proceedings.  
**John 5:31 NAU** - "If I *alone* testify about Myself, My testimony is not true."
5. In the final verses of **Chapter 5** Jesus declares four witnesses that testified of who He was and validated Him as the Son of God.
  - I. The Witness of the Father – Verses 32, 37-38
    - A. Jesus had been sent forth from the Father
      1. This is at the heart of the Covenant of Redemption
      2. The Father testified of His Son at His baptism  
**Mark 1:10-11 NAU** - "Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; <sup>11</sup> and a voice came out of the heavens: "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."
      3. The Father again confirmed the Son at the Transfiguration  
**Matthew 17:5 NAU** - "a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"
    - B. The Father testifies to His Son
      1. He has done this since the fall  
These verses speak of the multiple ways the Father has accomplished this
      2. The chief means of the Father's revelation of His Son is the testimony of His Word.

3. To reject the testimony of the Father regarding His Son is to continue in unbelief  
**John 5:38 NAU** - "You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent."

## II. The Witness of John – Verses 33-35

- A. John saw Jesus with his own eyes and believed  
**John 1:29-34 NAU** - "The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! <sup>30</sup> "This is He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.' <sup>31</sup> "I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water." <sup>32</sup> John testified saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. <sup>33</sup> "I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' <sup>34</sup> "I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God."
  1. John was sent forth by God to testify of His Son  
**John 1:6-7 NAU** - "There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him."
  2. John's work was to prepare the way for the Messiah
    - a. He was the lamp illuminating the way for the Christ  
**John 5:35 NAU** - "He was the lamp that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light."
    - b. John knew that Jesus Christ was the true light that shines brightly in the world.  
**John 1:8-9 NAU** - "He was not the Light, but *he came* to testify about the Light. <sup>9</sup> There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man."
- B. John's great joy was proclaiming Christ
  1. Upon accomplishing His mission he made the wonderful declaration  
**John 3:29-30 NAU** - "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made full. <sup>30</sup> "He must increase, but I must decrease."
  2. The purpose of Jesus calling attention to John's testimony was that others might believe upon Him and be saved.  
**John 5:34 NAU** - "But the testimony which I receive is not from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved."
  3. John was just the first of many who would testify of Christ. The Holy Spirit empowers all of the disciples of Christ as His witnesses  
**John 15:26-27 NAU** - "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is* the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, <sup>27</sup> and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning."

**Acts 1:8 NAU** - "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

### III. The Witness of the Works of Christ – Verse 36

#### A. God used miracles to validate His promises

1. He validated the prophetic voice of Elijah with signs and wonders
2. The Apostles were validated by signs wonders and miracles

**2 Corinthians 12:12 NAU** - "The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles."

**Acts 2:43 NAU** - "Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles."

#### B. No greater wonders were performed than by Jesus Christ Himself. The miracles of Jesus attested to His identity

1. Jesus had made many extreme claims about Himself
  - a. That He was the Son of God
  - b. That He was equal with God
  - c. That He would die and be raised from the dead
  - d. That He had the power to forgive sins

#### 2. The miracles that He performed validated His claims

**John 10:25** - "Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me."

**Acts 2:22** – "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:"

3. Jesus called attention to His works to validate Himself to John the Baptist
 

**Matthew 11:2-5 NAS** - "Now when John in prison heard of the works of Christ, he sent *word* by his disciples, <sup>3</sup> and said to Him, "Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?" <sup>4</sup> And Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup> *the* blind receive sight and *the* lame walk, *the* lepers are cleansed and *the* deaf hear, and *the* dead are raised up, and *the* poor have the gospel preached to them."
4. Jesus cast out demons, healed the sick, calmed storms  
He changed water into wine.

### IV. The Witness of Scripture – Verses 39-47

#### A. The words of Christ were a rebuke of the religious leaders

1. They were demonstrating their own incompetence as the leaders of God's people. They should have known the truth about Jesus. It was their responsibility to know. The Scriptures were clear. They searched the Scriptures and missed the truth.
2. All of the OT Scriptures pointed to Jesus. There were over 300 prophecies pointing to Christ.

**Matthew 21:42 NAS** - "Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures, 'The stone which the builders rejected, This became the chief corner *stone*; This came about from the Lord, And it is marvelous in our eyes '?"

**Luke 24:25-27 NAU** - "And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" <sup>27</sup> Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures."

**Luke 24:44-45 NAU** - "Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." <sup>45</sup> Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,"

B. The problem with unbelief is not with the Word of God.

1. The problem of unbelief is hardness of heart. They did not want to come to Christ.

**John 5:40 NAU** - "and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life."

2. Jesus knew their heart. He wasn't trying to win their approval. He wasn't trying to impress them. He didn't want their toleration. He wanted their hearts. And this is what they were not willing to give.

**John 5:41-42 NAU** - "I do not receive glory from men; <sup>42</sup> but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves."

Grammatically, the word for "God" is in the genitive case—it is an objective genitive translated "love *for* God."

- a. They didn't love God. A faithless heart is a loveless heart.
- b. The evidence of their lack of love for God was clear. They did not receive the Son of God.

A heart that does not love God doesn't love the Son.

**John 5:43 NAU** - "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me"

- c. They were more desirous of the praise of men than the praise of God.

**John 5:44 NAU** - "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?"

3. Their wicked heart was their condemnation.

- a. Jesus states Moses as their judge. Moses represents the Law. The Old Testament is divided between the Law and Prophets. Here, Moses represents the entire testimony of the Old Testament.

- b. Jesus is declaring if you don't believe the Scriptures you will not receive His words. They are one and the same.

**John 5:46-47 NAU** - "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. <sup>47</sup> "But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

## Conclusion:

1. This section of Scripture deals with the question of how a person can know God. How does God reveal Himself? The ultimate revelation of God is His Son.  
**Hebrews 1:1-3 NAU** - "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, <sup>2</sup> in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. <sup>3</sup> And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,"
2. The Son reveals the Father but the Father testifies of His Son. He verified His Son through various witnesses. Ultimately, it all rests upon the Word of God. The ultimate purpose of the Scripture is to declare Christ. The Bible is the unfolding of God's redemptive purpose in Christ.  
**John 5:39 NAU** - "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me;"
3. The testimony is clear but lost men will not believe. One of the key themes in John is the idea of faith or belief. The verb πιστεύω occurs 98 times. The Word of God must be received. It must be believed. In our day that questions the reality of absolute truth the claims of the Bible are easily rejected. Many reject the Divine origin of Scripture to their condemnation. This stresses the necessity of regeneration.  
**John 5:24-25 NAU** - "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. <sup>25</sup> "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live."
4. The rejection of Divine revelation by men in no way diminishes its authority. And the rejection of Christ in no way diminishes His glory.  
**John 5:41 NAU** - "I do not receive glory from men;"
5. The problem of fallen humanity is our great desire to display our own glory. We crave the recognition of men and labor hard to be exalted.  
**John 5:44 NAU** - "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?"
6. Jesus didn't need to do this. He is intrinsically glorious, and yet few see His glory and surrender before His excellence. Their unbelief was their undoing. And it is still true today.