

Sermon Outline

“LIFE IN HIS NAME”
THE PURSUIT OF WHOLENESS AND THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

WITNESSES

JOHN 5:30-37

I. Introduction

II. The Fully Trustworthy Son (Jn 5:30)

- A. The reason Jesus gives for why we can and should receive what he says comes back down to who he is—specifically the kind of person that he is.
- B. We must believe in Jesus, because he is someone who is ever devoted and aligned to the will of the Father.
 - Jn 5:30: “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.”

III. The First Witness: John the Baptist (Jn 5:31-35)

- A. Since the Lord understands our human need for greater certainty, he calls in a witness: *John the Baptist*.
- B. The Lord says, “If I alone bear witness about myself, my testimony is not true” (v 31).
 - 1. Jesus is not denying the validity of his own testimony.
 - 2. Rather, Jesus is trying to make a concession to his listeners. He’s acknowledging that from their perspective, a man’s testimony about himself is not easily accepted.
- C. Jesus references the fact that the Jewish leaders tried to get to know John the Baptist (cf. Jn 1:19-34) and were willing to draw hope from John’s message for a time.
—They “were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.”
- D. If they were willing to listen to John, then why not to the One John endorses?

IV. The Second Witness: The Works from the Father (Jn 5:36)

- A. There is another witness who’s even greater than John the Baptist—*the works of Jesus* himself (v 36).

- B. All the signs that Jesus performed serve as witnesses to Jesus' messianic identity. They demonstrate that he is not crazy, that his claims are to be reckoned with.
- C. Thus far, Jesus has done such works:
 - the turning of the water into wine
 - the cleansing of the temple
 - setting the captives free on the Sabbath—those are all signs that something has indeed happening in Jesus.
- D. They are signs that Jesus has been sent by God the Father.

V. **The Third Witness: The Father Himself (Jn 5:37)**

- A. The most authoritative witness of all is *God the Father*.
 - Jn 5:37: “And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me.”
- B. Yet again, Jesus directs our attention to the Father, and demonstrates his utter reliance on the Father's Word.
- C. The Lord is training us to think in a truly biblical way, to formulate truly God-based, God-centered answers to life.
- D. Why should we believe in Jesus?
 1. We should believe in Jesus because...
 - a. he is fully conformed to the will of God the Father
 - b. the prophet John the Baptist endorsed him
 - c. his own miraculous works cry out for him
 - d. God himself has sent him.
 2. We should believe in Jesus, because God sent Jesus. God himself commands us to believe.

Our Lord is teaching us that his authority and our belief in him are rooted in God himself. God is the Source of the Messiah's authority. God is the final reason we must believe in Jesus Christ for our salvation. And God alone is the source of our own belief in Jesus Christ.

VI. **Faith and Knowledge**

- A. Our Lord's teaching addresses the *issue of knowledge*.
 - How do we know what we know?
 - Who has the authority to decide what is objectively true or false, right or wrong, good or evil?
 - Who is the One who defines who we are?

- Who has the final right to bind our consciences, i.e., make us feel good or poorly for what we have done?
- B. This is an important issue today, because we are entering an age of fiercely competing worldviews.
(e.g. The battle between secular liberalism, focusing on the rights of individuals/minorities; and secular conservatism, emphasizing traditional values, the rights and values of the dominant or older group).
- C. Younger, more-globalized generations are going to have to wrestle with such fundamental questions. They will wrestle with first principles in a way previous generations may not have needed so to do.
- D. The Lord Jesus is calling us to do is to root of our thoughts fully on *God* himself. That is the only way forward—to return to God; to return to his Word; to listen closely and carefully to his Word.
- E. When we do, we will find that at times, God (in Jesus) looks like a conservative; and at other times, he looks like a liberal.
- Conservative:
Mt 5:17-18: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.”
 - Liberal:
Mt 11:19: “The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds.”
- F. What matters is where your moral authority is. Who determines your deepest values in life? Is it the Lord God who reveals himself in Scripture, or is it yourself? Is it cultural tradition, or is it the Lord God who reveals himself in Christ?
1. A conservative whose value system is not decidedly rooted in God and Christ is still secular (“worldly”).
 2. He is of the same camp as the secular liberal, even if his lifestyle looks quite differently.
 3. He is, in fact, in rebellion against the Creator of heaven and earth.
- G. We must not be distracted. We must return heart and mind to the Word of God.
1. We must let God be our final and supreme authority.
 2. The best way of doing that is to look at *Jesus* himself, to listen to how Jesus would have us read and apply the Scriptures.

VII. The Obedience of Faith

- A. As the Lord addresses the issue of knowledge, he also addresses *the issue of faith*.
- B. Why should we believe in Jesus and keep on believing in Jesus?
 - 1. We should accept Jesus as the Truth, because John the Baptist, the heir to the Old Testament prophetic tradition, endorsed him.
 - 2. We should accept Jesus as the Truth, because of the miracles that Jesus performed. They were miracles that set the captives free.
 - Mt 11:5-6: “And Jesus answered them, ‘Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them”
 - 3. Belief in Jesus is ultimately a matter of trust and obedience in God himself.
 - a. Whether or not we accept the evidences that Jesus presents depends largely on whether or not our hearts have been inclined toward God.
 - b. The Jewish leaders rejected Jesus not because there was no evidence whatsoever for his claims.
 - c. They rejected Jesus because they did not think his evidence was good enough for them.
 - d. As Jesus will explain, they disbelieved that evidence, because they disbelieved God himself. They do not have God’s Word abiding in them.

VIII. The Gift of Faith

- A. In the end, *faith in Christ is a gift from God*.
- B. Faith is a product of a heart that has been touched by God, ignited by the fire of God’s love, regenerated by God’s mercy.
- C. At the end of the day, there is never enough evidence out there to convince a heart that is fully dead in sin.
- D. Faith in Jesus is pure gift.
 - Jn 6:44: “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day” (v 44).
- E. How are we to know if God has given us the gift of faith? When we trust in Jesus to save you from your sins, reconcile you to God, sanctify you, and raise you up on the last day.
- F. If you believe in Jesus, even if your belief is weak, rest assured: God has come to you. You are his child.

Questions for Reflection

1. Was there anything in particular about today's sermon that blessed and encouraged you?
2. Was there anything that you disagree with or found difficult to accept?
3. Who/what are the witnesses does Jesus bring in to testify for him?
4. Based on Jesus' teaching, how did the Jewish leaders react to John the Baptist initially (v 35)?
5. How do the miraculous signs of Jesus testify to him? (cf. Mt 11:5-6)
6. Who is the ultimate witness for Jesus?
7. The Jewish leaders rejected Jesus not because there was no evidence whatsoever for his claims. Rather, they rejected Jesus because they did not think his evidence was good enough for them. "Whether or not we accept the evidences that Jesus presents depends largely on whether or not our hearts have been inclined toward God." Discuss.