

The Gospel of John: *Know Jesus and Live*

Part 14

John 5:31-47

I. The trial continues

- Last week we saw Jesus on trial. He was accused of both working on the Sabbath and claiming to be God. To defend himself, he argues that the reason he worked on the Sabbath and claimed to be God was because he was in fact God. These arguments are absolutely true, however, Jesus knows his audience. He is speaking to people who have been taught by God to value the giving of a true, accurate witness in a law court. God himself made the prohibition against bearing false witness a “top ten law.”
 - ❖ Exodus 20:16--*You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.*
- He is speaking to people who won't receive a testimony as truth unless it is witnessed by more than one person. We see this repeatedly in the O.T.
 - ❖ Deuteronomy 17:6--*On the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses the one who is to die shall be put to death; a person shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.*
 - ❖ Deuteronomy 19:15--*A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established*
 - ❖ Numbers 35:30--*If anyone kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the evidence of witnesses. But no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness.*
- In light of this, he begins by saying...
 - ❖ John 5:31--*If I alone bear witness about myself, my testimony is not true.*
 - To be clear, Jesus is not saying, “somebody back me up here!” He is also not saying that anything he says about himself isn't true. What he is saying is, “you wouldn't have to worry about taking me seriously if it was just me talking. However, it isn't just me talking. I've got witnesses.”

II. Jesus has witnesses

1. John the Baptist

- ❖ John 5:32-35--*There is another who bears witness about me, and I know that the testimony that he bears about me is true. 33 You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. 34 Not that the testimony that I receive is from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved. 35 He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. 36 But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John.*
 - What was it that John the Baptist said about Jesus?
 - ❖ John 1:29-30--*Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is he of whom I said, After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.*
 - ❖ John 1:34--*I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.*
 - ❖ John 3:31--*...He who comes from heaven is above all.*
 - ❖ John 3:34-36--*he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. 35 The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. 36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.*
 - This is a pretty powerful testimony. Yet, Jesus claims that he has an even greater testimony than this!? What is this greater testimony?

2. Jesus's miracles

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- ❖ John 5:36--*...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.*
 - What are these works/miracles? John's gospel records fewer miracles than the synoptics (by far) and yet in it we have already seen Jesus...
 - (1) Turn water into wine (John 2:1-11)
 - (2) Heal an official's son by his spoken word (John 4:46-54)
 - (3) Heal an invalid at the pool of Bethesda (5:1-9)
 - What do these works show? In light of what Jesus was doing Nicodemus said...
- ❖ John 3:2--*Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.*
 - Nicodemus had no idea how right he was. John 1 teaches us that not only was God with Jesus. Jesus himself is God. This is what these works demonstrate.

3. God the Father

- ❖ John 5:37-38--*And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen, 38 and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent.*
 - What does Jesus mean when he says that the Father "has himself borne witness about me?" It is not likely
 - that he means that the Father has borne witness through miracles or through the Old Testament. We can know this because Jesus describes the witness of the Father as direct, not indirect. The Father does not bear witness through some medium. The Father has "himself borne witness about me."
 - The question then is, how has the Father borne witness? There are two possibilities.
 - (1) The Father's audible voice
 - ❖ Matthew 3:17 (Jesus's Baptism)--*and behold, a voice from heaven said, This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.*
 - ❖ Matthew 17:5b (Jesus's Transfiguration)--*a voice from the cloud said, This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.*
 - (2) The Father's internal witness
 - ❖ 1 John 5:9b-12--*this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son. 10 Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son. 11 And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.*
 - I believe this is the witness Jesus is referencing in John 5:37-38. He is saying to these people that the Father revealing to many that he is the Son of God who has come to give eternal life. However, they have not heard him, they have not seen him, and they do not have his Word abiding in them. He knows this to be true because if they had God's Word abiding in them they would believe, yet they do not.

4. The Old Testament


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- ❖ John 5:39--*You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me,*
- ❖ John 5:46--*if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me.*
 - Jesus is saying two important things here
 - (1) The Old Testament scriptures are not eternal life
 - ❖ Hebrews 10:1-4--*For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. 2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? 3 But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.*
 - (2) The Old Testament scriptures tell of the one who would give eternal life. This is seen here in John 5 as well as in Luke 24...
 - ❖ Luke 24:27--*And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*
 - In the Words of Shai Linne...
 - *“Y’all should be mindful of this devout thesis: all of the Bible is about Jesus!
The Old Testament: Jesus Christ concealed
The New Testament: Jesus Christ revealed!
This truth of the Lord Christ boldly conveyed this in Luke 24 on the road to Emmaus
The Law, the Prophets and the teachings of Apostles: all of these point back to Jesus and the Gospel
So if the words of Christ is what the Word is about ultimately that should be what the sermon’s about (true!)
Forget applause you gotta let the Cross rock ya
All roads in the Bible lead to Golgotha
Whatever the text faithfulness demands that we should hear the echo of nails hitting His hands
Don’t try to be original, say the old story
And watch your people change as they behold glory¹”*

III. Jesus the prosecutor

- For a while now, Jesus has been on the defensive. Now Jesus turns things around. He confronts them over their unbelief and brings three major indictments against them.
-  **You think you know God but you don't**
 - ❖ John 5:37-38--*And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen, 38 and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent.*
 - If you were to have asked these people, “Do you know God?” The answer would have most certainly been “YES.” They are Jewish leaders, leaders among God’s chosen people. Yet, Jesus is saying to them, “The fact that you don’t believe in me reveals that you haven’t heard God, You haven’t seen God, and you don’t have God’s word in your heart! ”

¹ Shai Linne, “Expository Preaching.” From the Album, The Church: Called and Collected

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You think you understand the scriptures, but you don't

- ❖ John 5:39-40--*You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, 40 yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.*
- ❖ John 5:46-47--*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?*
 - To understand what Jesus is saying about these men, we must understand that these were Biblical scholars. These guys knew the Old Testament like Don Gray knows the Cowboys roster. Yet, Jesus says to them, "You have missed the whole point of the scriptures. You think you get it but you don't have a clue. You think it the O.T. is all about telling you how you can earn eternal life for yourself, when it is actually telling you about the one who would come to give eternal life."

The real motivations of your heart are selfish

- ❖ John 5:41-44--*I do not receive glory from people. 42 But I know that you do not have the love of God within you. 43 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. 44 How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?*
 - Verses 41-42 Jesus is basically saying, "I didn't come here to be a celebrity. But the fact that you don't believe me shows that you don't have the love of God within you." So what then is in them?
 - They are all about themselves and their own glory. The motivation of their hearts is entirely selfish. Jesus has come in the name of God and has come to reveal the glory of God yet they aren't interested in that. They are not interested in glorifying someone else. Even if that someone else is God almighty. They want glory for themselves. They want someone to come own their own name and they want to receive glory for themselves by associating with them. Jesus is basically saying to them, your hearts are desperately wicked. You are selfish to the core. God almighty's glory is being revealed and you don't have the slightest interest.