

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to John 5

We are in the portion of John's gospel where Jesus had begun challenging the religious rulers of the day.

The religious rulers were upset that Jesus had broken one of their man made laws.

He dared to heal a lame man on the Sabbath.

So Jesus knew their hearts, and He begins to challenge them.

And He did it in a way where He began to reveal to them who He is.

You see church, the claims that Jesus Christ made in our study last week, were the claims that only God could make.

He makes it clear that He is God's Son, in fact, He makes Himself to be equal with God.

He claimed that His works are in complete harmony with the works of the Father

The Father's will is His will – **"I can of Myself do nothing"**

He claimed that the name of the Lord Jesus is above every other name.

And that one day, at the name of Jesus, every single knee will bow.

So the question for the religious rulers of the day and the question for all of here this morning is –

Do you we take these claims of Jesus – at His word.

Do we believe what He said to be true?

Because many people then – and many people today, are still guilty of unbelief.

In our study this morning, Jesus is going to provide these religious rulers and the world today, with witnesses that give evidence to the authority and identity of who He is.

Let's pray...

A couple of weeks ago, you might remember at the end of chapter four –

Jesus had an encounter with a nobleman

And the nobleman had a heavy heart, he had a need.

His son was sick back in Galilee – and Jesus was in Cana.

So the nobleman went to see Jesus and wanted Jesus to return back to Galilee with him to heal his son.

And Jesus turned to the nobleman and said, **“Go your way; your son lives.”**

And the nobleman believed what Jesus said to him and he went back home.

And it wasn't until the next day, as he was on his way back home – that he was greeted with the evidence that his son was made well.

Faith is us believing and then seeing.

Now, this is opposite to the way the world thinks – where people say, I need to see first then I will believe.

In Christianity, we believe and out of believing, we see.

That is why the author of Hebrews tells us in Heb 11:1

That faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Faith becomes the evidence – because we believe it and then we see it.

Now, for some people it is harder to believe than for others.

Some people are more intellectual - they need evidence, some people need to see, and then you have other people who will simply believe without questioning it – they will have a blind faith about things (and again, not everyone is like that)

I believe that our study this morning, in itself - is evidence that God isn't expecting us to believe blindly.

God doesn't want us to take our intellectual side and put it away and follow Him blindly.

You see, God wants us to be able to give an answer to all people about what we believe.

That means we have to defend what we believe to ourselves, first.

As a pastor, I don't want you to come in here and believe everything I say – blindly.

“You must believe everything I say or else you are going to go to hell”

Church, that is indoctrination – that is not the scriptures.

The bible teaches us that we are to examine it – to seek out the truth that God reveals to us in His Word and then do it.

We are still going to have to step out in faith

We are still going to have to trust in what we find in the scriptures, but in doing so; we now have a solid foundation for us to set our feet on.

That is what Jesus is going to do in our text here in our text –

Here is the foundation / the evidence of what I just told you – so that you may believe.

And the amazing thing is that He is going to do it His enemies – to those who purposed in their hearts to kill Him.

He is not speaking to Peter, John and the disciples – He is speaking to those that opposed Him.

Those who cared more about their rules than seeing what God had done to deliver the lame man from his condition.

He is speaking to the very same individuals who in a few months – they are the ones that are going to bring up the false charges against Him that will lead to the cross.

He is speaking to those who don't believe and giving them the evidence so that they will believe.

[Jhn 5:31-47 NKJV] 31 "If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.

Jesus, in essence is saying here, anybody can say or claim anything.

Throughout history, hundreds of people have made the claim that they were the Messiah.

However, just because someone says it – it doesn't mean it's true. There needs to be evidence.

Now, keep in mind that Jesus is speaking to the religious rulers –

And according to Mosaic Law -

[Deu 19:15 NKJV] 15 "One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.

So, Jesus is saying – don't take my word alone for it.

Your law demands 2 or 3 witnesses. I am going to up the ante and give you more evidence than the law requires –

And the evidence will establish that I am the Messiah – and I am doing this so that you may believe.

Again, Jesus is telling them, “You don’t have to believe what I said – even though it’s true”

I am going to call my witnesses – one at a time – who will prove I am who I say I am.

32 "There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true. 33 "You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. 34 "Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. 35 "He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.

So the first witness that Jesus calls up is John the Baptist.

Now, the religious rulers knew John the Baptist.

He was a witness that they could understand / they could relate to him because he was human just like them.

They knew that he dressed kind of weird and that he ate weird things

But many of them also acknowledged him as a true prophet.

Yet from the beginning, John had made it clear he was NOT the Messiah; he was only the forerunner.

[Jhn 1:15-16 NKJV] 15 John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.' " 16 And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.

John made it clear that Jesus was the One he'd been speaking of.

John pointed Jesus them

19 -"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

Now, Jesus didn't depend on the testimony of John – but he provides the testimony of John so that these religious rulers may be saved.

I had you make a note that Jesus points out that John "was the burning and shining lamp"

Now, it could be that John at this point had already been arrested and probably already killed – that is why Jesus refers to him in the past tense.

But I want to focus on the word for shining lamp.

Because word that is used here is much different than the word that we will see Jesus use for Himself later on in the Gospel of John when He says that He is the Light of the World.

John was a lamp – but Jesus in contrast is the Light

John, the lamp, depended upon another source for its light

It speaks of a lamp that probably had a wick that went down into the oil.

So unless the lamp had a fresh supply of oil, the lamp would eventually burn out.

And John's witness was costly to himself.

Because if you are a lamp that has a wick, the more you burn, the more you burn out

And eventually that wick will be no more.

Church, that is the essence of ministry for you and for me.

That if we would be a lamp in this generation – it will be costly for us to burn for Jesus Christ.

It will cost us personally, it will cost us in our minds, it will cost us in the abuse that we may receive from others, but we will burn for Jesus Christ.

We don't have any light in of ourselves, we don't draw attention to ourselves

We simply say, "Hey, I am a lamp and the source of my light comes from Him.

Like John, when we are asked what we are doing –

I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Make straight the way of the LORD,"

Who is the LORD? Jesus Christ

Church, we need more people like John the Baptist in the world today.

We need more people behind the pulpit like John the Baptist.

People who will burn out for God

Let's continue –

Jesus now brings up His second witness -

36 "But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish--the very works that I do--bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.

In John 3, Jesus had an encounter with a Pharisee by the name of Nicodemus.

Do you remember why Nicodemus came to see Jesus by night?

Let me remind you?

“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.”

So far, John has shown us some of these signs that have shown to us who Jesus Christ is

He has turned water in to wine

He healed the nobleman's son

He healed the lame man

Nicodemus got it –

He knew that Jesus was sent from God

But his fellow religious rulers didn't.

And the sad part about church is – they showed have known

Because the scriptures pointed to a day when the One that was written of in the prophets would one day fulfill the scriptures.

Turn with me Isaiah

[Isa 61:1-2 NKJV] 1 "The Spirit of the Lord GOD [is] upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to [those who are] bound; 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn,

So Isaiah clearly states that this person is going to come.

And when this person comes, these are the things He is going to do.

In the New Testament – in His early ministry, Jesus in the synagogue is given a scroll of Isaiah to read – and He opens it to this portion and said to them – these is being spoken of Me.

All the signs He did, the fulfillment of scriptures, even going to the cross

This was evidence of who Jesus Christ is.

They verified who Jesus was

37 "And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. 38 "But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe.

Jesus back in verse 32 and beginning here in verse 37 – He brings up His main witness, God the Father.

And He tells the religious rulers the three main reasons that they have failed to believe in the identity and authority of Jesus Christ.

1. **The first reason** – they had failed to hear His voice at any time.

These religious rulers were claiming to be the true followers of Moses – but unlike Moses who heard the voice of God – who the scriptures point out in Exodus that God spoke to him face to face , as a man speaks to his friend – they never heard His voice.

Turn to John 17

[Jhn 17:8 NKJV] 8 "For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received [them], and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.

Jesus is speaking about His disciples – they heard Him and believed.

These religious rulers were questioning Jesus' identity.

They were rejecting God's word by not receiving it.

2. They had failed to see Him – In Genesis 33, we see Jacob wrestle with God. And Jacob / Israel makes the statement, "For I have seen God face to face.." Here these religious rulers, they are in the presence of Jesus and because the hardness of their hearts, they have failed to see that they are face to face with God. We saw the verse last week where Philip tells Jesus to show them the Father - Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"
3. The third reason that the religious rulers had rejected the Father's witness was because they did not have His word abiding in them.

[Psa 119:11 NKJV] 11 Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.

Church, these three things that the religious rulers had failed to do are the marks of a believer.

They have heard God's voice

They have seen His form

They have His word dwelling in their hearts – it is not a chore to read the bible every day – it is that God's word has taken root in their hearts and they want to know what God's word for them is today.

Now, why were the religious rulers not able to respond in these three ways?

The end of verse 38 tells us.

because whom He sent, Him you do not believe

They couldn't do these things because they had a veil of unbelief over their hearts.

Turn with me to 2 Cor 3

[2Co 3:12-16 NKJV] 12 Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech-- 13 unlike Moses, [who] put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. 14 But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the [veil] is taken away in Christ. 15

But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. 16

Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

When is the veil taken away –

When one turns to the Lord

Why did the religious rulers still have the veil over their hearts – unbelief.

Jesus now presents His 4th witness.

39 "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.

The Jews were proud of their Scriptures.

They should be.

But their view of Scriptures was such that they felt that just having them and reading them and memorizing them would be bringing eternal life:

Jesus makes it very clear to the religious rulers, that the single unifying thread that ties all of Scripture together was Him.

Everything pointed to Him

And by not believing in His identity – they were rejecting the evidence of that the scriptures provided.

40 "But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life. 41 "I do not receive honor from men. 42 "But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. 43 "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. 44 "How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that [comes] from the only God?

The religious leaders were not willing, even though they had all the testimony – they had all the evidence one could have wanted.

They were only concerned with man's honor, not the honor that comes from God

At the end of verse 43 – I believe that Jesus is going further than simply stating that the Jews had a tendency to follow the wrong person –

He knew that in their hearts, they were rejecting Him, despite all the evidence He had provided.

He tells them that they are going to follow others – who don't have the credentials that He has given.

I believe that He is hinting about a person yet to come – the antichrist.

You see church,

For their entire pretense at godliness, they had no real desire to know or honor God.

They were merely trying to look good in front of one another.

It was empty religious posturing.

They might be able fool one another and make each other think they were pious, but God knew it was all just a religious game – of them trying to outdo each other in their religiosity.

These religious rulers had simply worked out a pattern of religion and were now seeking to fit God into it.

The religious rulers, believed in God, they expressed a love for God but the real issue was that God's love was not in their hearts.

They loved their ideas about God but never loved God Himself.

Verse 44 is the key to why many, many people refuse to come to Christ and have everlasting life.

Because they care more about what other people think than about receiving the only glory that comes from God.

Think about the two thieves that were crucified next two Jesus

45 "Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is [one] who accuses you--Moses, in whom you trust. 46 "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. 47 "But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

The religious ruler – took pride in demonstrating their adherence to the law.

And Jesus concludes His dissertation to them by telling them – that everything they held so dearly to – all the sacrifices, all the festivals, the Tabernacle – all the things that Moses wrote about – they all pointed to Jesus Christ who was standing write in front of them.

They memorized what Moses wrote, they taught what Moses said, yet they rejected Moses' Savior.

"Since you do not believe what Moses wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?"

The religious rulers were holding court – accusing Jesus Christ of violating the their rules and traditions –

Their star witness – Moses.

Jesus, calls up Moses to the stand and demonstrated to the religious rulers that He was not the one that was on trial – it was them.

And as we read ahead, we find that the religious rulers didn't respond to the evidence that Jesus provided for them – because in John 9 – we find them accusing Jesus of healing a blind man on the Sabbath.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I

accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word

and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

As believers, we are all witnesses

The question becomes – how good of a witness are we.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'



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