

*“The Testimony of Jesus”*

September 22, 2013

Text: John 5:31-38

**In John 5:40, Jesus will make an absolutely remarkable**

**statement to the religious leaders of Israel=>** *“You are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.”*

Just think about that for a minute, & let its incredible meaning really sink in=> They were unwilling to come to Jesus that they might have eternal life—i.e., they opted for eternal death, over life.

Selling someone life should not be a hard sell, when the alternative is death.

If a doctor were able to give his patient the option between dying, & even the possibility of living, the patient were very likely choose life.

And what is it that Jesus was asking from them, for which they might receive eternal life from Him?

Nothing more than that they “come to Him” in faith.

This verse isn't our text this morning—it's next Sunday's text.

But today's text leads up to it & represents Jesus' explanation of why coming to Him and gaining life for our souls is an absolutely reasonable/logical thing to do.

What this text teaches us is that God has given us every reason to believe in Jesus X.

**I assume you're a reasonable/logical person yourself, & that you wouldn't make such a foolish mistake, as to reject X.**

But ultimately, I must ask you, if it's possible that you too have secretly/privately said to Jesus in your heart, "I will not come to You that I might have life."

I would ask you, to ask yourself, whether, at some dark level of subconscious thought, you've reacted that same way, maybe w/o even being fully aware of it.

Possibly you've thought, "Jesus asks too much of me. His demands are too great, too intrusive."

"He wants me to put Him first in my life, & there are many other things I love that I'd have to give up, if I made that kind of commitment to Him."

Or maybe you've thought, "I do intend to commit my heart/life to Him like that someday, but I've got other priorities right now."

If that's how you've been living, I would seriously ask you to face it honestly, & consciously say to Jesus X=>

"I am unwilling to come to You so that I might have life."

You might even write it down and sign it.

Tape it on your mirror to remind yourself every day where you stand w/ X.

You're prob. thinking, "That's bizarre; I'd never do that!"

But I'm not asking you to make such a statement publicly,  
just to get real w/ yourself & w/ Jesus X about your  
own attitude toward Him.

In reality, if you're living like that, how could being honest  
w/ yourself/the-Lord make it any worse?

**As we approach today's text, Jesus has been confronted by  
Jewish religious leaders, who have accused Him of  
violating the Sabbath Law.**

He has healed a man who hadn't been able to stand/walk  
for 38 years, and He's done it on a Sabbath Day.

X hadn't actually broken the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment, the Sabbath Law,  
but only their manmade rabbinical rules about the Sabbath.

But Jesus' answer to these leaders was=> *"My Father is working  
until now, and I Myself am working"* (5:17).

The religious leaders correctly interpreted this to mean  
Jesus was calling God His own personal Father,  
making Himself equal with God, & implying He too  
is God.

From that point on in the conversation, Jesus has been claiming  
that He is God, the Son of God, & that He does what the  
Father does, because He, like His Heavenly Father, is God.  
He gives life, & He will even be the Judge of all mankind  
on the Last Day.

Everything Jesus does or will ever do, is in harmony w/ and  
in submission to His Heavenly Father's will.

But make no mistake=> He is God of very God.

**The religious leaders are thinking, “Why should we believe your testimony that You are God, the Son of God?”**

**So X supports His testimony w/ 3 reasons for believing it...**

- \* Reason #1—Jesus’ testimony can save your soul
- \* Reason #2—Jesus’ testimony is actually the Father’s own testimony
- \* Reason #3—Rejecting Jesus’ testimony means one has already rejected God’s Word

**\* Reason #1—Jesus’ testimony can save your soul**

Jesus rests His own testimony about Himself on the testimony of God the Father, which declares our Lord to be His only begotten Son;

[Verse 31] (Jesus)=> *“If I alone testify about Myself, My testimony is not true.”*

**Is X saying that if He testified about Himself, He’d be a liar?**

**Absolutely not—He is God, & God cannot lie (Titus 1:2).**

He’s simply aware that, in view of His astounding claim to be God’s Son, He would appear to them to be lying, unless He had reliable witnesses to corroborate those claims.

As it turns out, He does have.

In Jn 8:14f, Jesus will acknowledge that His claims are so other-worldly, that those who challenge them wouldn’t even have any way of either proving/disproving them=>

Jesus=> *“Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. / You judge according to the flesh [human nature].”*

This is an observation about the limitations of human flesh.

People of the earth would have no way of  
determining whether a heavenly Being like X,  
who look/sounds just like them, is actually  
from heaven.

Jesus needed a qualified/reliable/credible witness to testify on His  
behalf, that He was indeed the Son of God from heaven; He  
had such a witness=>

[Verse 32]=> “*There is **another** who **testifies** of Me, and I know  
that the testimony which He gives about Me is true.*”

**Jesus is declaring that He has an unimpeachable witness,  
fully qualified to testify He is God’s Son—God the  
Father.**

That’s who the words “***another** who **testifies** of Me*” refer to.

This has to be the Father, in light of everything X has said  
up to here about doing nothing on His own initiative,  
but always/only doing His Father’s will.

That being the case, even Jesus’ testimony about Himself  
must be according to the Father’s will.

**When God the Father testifies about Jesus, to whom is His  
testimony directed? Who is the intended recipient?**

1) It is directed to Jesus Himself.

The Father not only told His Son what He was to do/say,  
He also revealed who Jesus was, to Jesus Himself.

At the age of 12, He had said to Mary, “*Did you not*

*know that I had to be in My Father's house?"*  
(Lk 2:49).

How did Jesus know even then that God the Father was His own Father?

The Father had somehow witnessed to Him, telling Jesus of His own deity/divine-identity.

No doubt Mary had explained to Jesus the nature of His own conception.

But w/o the Father's verification, that would have seemed far-fetched to as intelligent a youngster as Jesus was.

If the Father hadn't revealed to Jesus in His humanness that He was His only-begotten Son, X might have questioned that Himself.

But having received the Father's direct testimony about His own identity, & knowing that God cannot lie, Jesus could say w/ certainty=> "*I **know** that the testimony which He gives about Me is **true**.*"

2) The Father's testimony was directed to those who witnessed Jesus' ministry.

X performed miracles, & then He declared=> "*The Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner*" (5:19).

That meant the Father was working through the Son, which became the Father's testimony to Jesus' credentials as God's own Son, who was/is equal with God.

[Verses 33-34] (Jesus)=> "**You** [emphasized—referring to the Jewish religious leaders] *have sent to John, and he has testified to the **truth**.* / *But the testimony which **I** receive [again, emphasized, by way of contrast w/ the "you"] is **not** from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved."*

**The last word in verse 31 is the word "true," the last word in verse 32 is "true," and the last word here in verse 33 is "truth."**

Obviously, the issue here is truth—but more importantly, how does one learn the truth about Jesus' deity?

Jesus was making the point that He learned this truth directly from His Heavenly Father, whose testimony is unquestionably true—incontestably true.

His critics among the religious leaders of Israel didn't have access to God the Father as X did, but they did have access to one of His prophets—John the Baptist.

John had testified truthfully of "*the truth*" about Jesus, & that was a great thing.

His testimony fully supported Jesus' claim to be the Son of God, & thus the Messiah.

John had also revealed that the Jews needed to repent of their sins in preparation for Messiah's coming.

And when Jesus came on the scene, John publicly announced that He was the Messiah, saying,  
*“Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”* (Jn 1:29).

John also added=> *“I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the **Son of God**”* (1:34).

*“So of God”* is a Messianic title.

But X had received testimony better than John’s—the Father’s testimony.

This meant He had a far more authoritative/comprehensive knowledge of the truth, than John could ever have had himself or have given the Jews.

That was Jesus’ point here=> His standard of authoritative revelation was face-to-face/direct communication w/ God the Father.

The Jews’ standard of authoritative revelation was the words of a prophet like John, who was good, but was also subject to human limitations.

That being the case, why did Jesus even mention John?

It certainly wasn’t that He needed any man’s testimony on His behalf, given the fact He had God’s testimony.

Jesus referred to John’s testimony because He knew the Jews had regarded it as true.

John had credibility among them, & if they would take heed to his declaration that Jesus was truly the Son of God, they might believe in X, and become saved.

Why is it important that you/I believe Jesus' claim to be God, the Son of God?

Because knowing/believing that, we too can be saved, just as Jesus said.

**We see in this text the gracious kindness of the Savior's heart.**

Here were a gang of Jewish antagonists who were planning to kill Jesus, & He knew that.

And all He could think about was how to convince them to believe in Him, so they might become saved.

They had the ultimate Witness to Jesus' deity in Jesus Himself, & His direct/firsthand communication w/ the Father.

But if, in their human folly/foolishness, they preferred the limited human testimony of John the Baptist, that Jesus was God's Son, then X would remind them of John's testimony about Him.

\* **Reason #2** (for trusting X's claim to be God's Son)=>

**Jesus' testimony is the Father's testimony**

(i.e., the testimony of One, is the testimony of the Other).

Jesus has just said that God testifies to His claims of deity.

Now He adds that the only way to receive God's testimony is through X Himself—His words/miraculous-works.

[Verse 35] (Jesus)=> "***He*** [John the Baptist] *was the lamp that was **burning** & was **shining** and you* [again, this is emphasized] *were willing to **rejoice** for a while in his light.*"

**John was Israel's 1<sup>st</sup> prophet in 400 years, & he'd been a man of burning spiritual passion, lighting up the night of their spiritual darkness/ignorance.**

They had rejoiced in that, because it stirred up hope w/i their hearts that their Messiah was about to come to them.

They'd loved the fiery zeal of John's words, a shining lamp of God's truth, even when he exposed/attacked their own sins.

E.g. Lk 3 says he was preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Verse 7 says he laid into the crowds themselves, saying to them=> *"You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? / Therefore bear fruits in keeping with repentance"* (7-8).

The people began asking, *"What shall we do?"* (verse 10).

That sort of compliant reaction lasted for only a little while.

Then John announced that Jesus was God's Son, & thus Messiah.

With that his popularity began to dwindle/decrease even as X's increased.

But for awhile at least, the Jewish people had been willing to listen-to/rejoice-in John's straight talk.

**But even though John's testimony of Jesus was good, X's own testimony about Himself was far superior.**

[Verse 36] (Jesus)=> *"But the testimony which I have is **greater** than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish—the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me."*

**Jesus' own testimony was far greater than John's because of all Jesus' marvelous works, including His miracles.**

Those miracles were actually God the Father's testimony, verifying that Jesus was indeed His only-begotten Son.

One of those miraculous works had led up to this very discussion=> X healing the man who'd been bed-ridden for 38 years.

The importance of Jesus' miraculous works wasn't simply that they were spectacular, or even that they dramatically improved the quality of life for some very unfortunate people;

Their primary importance lay in the fact, they represented the Father's own testimony about Jesus, that God Himself had sent His own Son to earth.

They were God's endorsement of His Son.

Nicodemus had recognized the significance of Jesus' works when he said to X=> *"Rabbi, we know that You have **come from God** as a teacher; for no one can do these **signs** that You do unless **God is with him**"* (Jn 3:2).

Not only did those signs indicate that God was w/ X.

They showed that God had sent Him.

So Jesus' sign-miracles were actually God the Father's own testimony, that Jesus was His Son.

In Acts 2, Peter referred to Jesus as=> *"a man **attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs***

*which God performed through Him in your midst”*  
(Acts 2:22).

Everything Jesus said/did was exactly what the Father had given Him to say/do.

In that sense, they were the Father’s own works, but Jesus Himself referred to them as the “*works the Father has given Me to accomplish.*”

And in Jn 10 He will insist, “*the works that I do in My Father’s name, these testify of Me*” (10:25).

**Now Jesus makes the point that the Father’s direct testimony to Jesus’ deity like this, comes only through Jesus Himself.**

Through His words, & His miraculous works.

Although this may seem like circular reasoning, it is another reason why believing X’s claim to be God is so important.

Apart from God-given faith, man’s natural skepticism would make it impossible for us to really believe this.

But the H.S. enables people to do so, & thus reap the rich reward of eternal life.

The key is that only Jesus can provide direct testimony from God.

[Verse 37]=> “*And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form.*”

**\* Someone: Wait a minute! They’d heard God’s voice at**

**Jesus’ baptism, saying, “*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased*” (Mt 3:17).**

If you examine that text carefully, it seems to indicate that the only ones who actually heard/understood that voice, were John the Baptist, & Jesus Himself.

\* What about Mt 17:5 where God made that same statement again at the Transfiguration?

But no one was with X at that time, except

Peter/James/John.

The Jewish leaders certainly weren't there.

\* In Jn 12:28, God's voice came booming out of heaven in response to Jesus' prayer, "*Father, glorify Your name.*" God said, "*I have both glorified it, & will glorify it again.*" A whole crowd of people were there & heard something. But most of them thought it was just the sound of thunder. Those who were a little more discerning believed it to be the voice of an angel.

**In reality, when Jesus said in our text, "*You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form,*"** He meant that man simply isn't equipped to interact/communicate directly with God—he will always need a Mediator.

No man has seen/heard God directly, in the glory of His essence.

He told Moses that if man ever did, he couldn't survive

(Ex 33:20).

I Tim 6 says that He=> "*dwells in unapproachable light, whom **no man has seen or can see***" (6:16).

No man, that is, except X, the one Mediator between  
God/man (I Tim 2:15).

That is exactly Jesus' point=> He is the only Man who has ever  
conversed w/ God directly, seeing/hearing Him as God, in  
the realm of the spirit.

If you want the Father's testimony about who Jesus is, the  
only direct Source you have for that is Jesus Himself.  
This then is the 2<sup>nd</sup> reason for trusting Jesus' claim of deity.  
Man's only direct access to the Father's testimony  
about Jesus' identity as His only begotten Son,  
is Jesus X Himself.

And Jesus' testimony is that=> "*The **Father** who  
sent Me, He has testified of Me.*"

**Someone=> But Jesus is no longer here physically, so how am  
I to believe, w/o having even seen/heard Jesus directly?**

A: He has left behind 2 powerful witnesses for us=>

\* God's mighty Word—which tells us of X's life/works.

Heb 4:12=> "*The **word of God** is living & active &  
sharper than any two-edged sword, & piercing  
as far as the division of soul & spirit.*"

God's Word is also like a seed, which being planted  
in a receptive heart, bursts forth into spiritual  
life.

\* The Holy Spirit—who convinces us that what we read in  
Scripture about Jesus X is absolutely true.

X Himself promised (Jn 15:26)=> "*The **Spirit** of*

*truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me.”*

His testimony about Jesus is felt in our hearts, as we meditate on God’s Word.

Jesus gives us 1 more vital reason in our text for believing His testimony, that He is God, the Son of God=>

**\* Reason #3—Rejecting Jesus’ testimony means one has already rejected God’s Word**

The man who has rejected God’s Word is left w/ no sure guide for his soul.

**[Verse 38] (Jesus to the Jewish leaders)=>** *“You do not have His [God’s] word abiding in you, **for** you do **not believe** Him whom He sent”* (Jesus, whom the Father sent).

**The Jewish religious leaders had rejected God’s Word.**

They didn’t think they had, because they had spent so much time learning it, & arguing over its meaning.

But they’d never really allowed God’s Word in O.T.

Scripture to abide in their hearts, letting it settle there, & have its permeating influence.

Nor had they really obeyed it, in spirit/truth.

They had never sought to build a real relationship w/ God on the basis of OT truth about God Himself, in all His glory/goodness.

That’s what abiding in the words of Jesus does for a Xn today.

In Jn 15, Jesus said=> *“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you”* (15:7).

X's words abiding in us will impact our prayer life.  
If you don't really have a close/loving relationship w/ Jesus, get  
into the Bible, and seek Him there.

**If God's Word had been abiding in the religious leaders'  
hearts, it would have reshaped their thoughts/feelings.**

They'd memorized it, & they'd conformed to it, in their outward  
religious lives, but they'd never allowed it to lead them to a  
proper understanding of God, nor a loving relationship w/  
Him.

Most importantly, if the leaders had God's Word abiding in their  
hearts, it would have shaped their expectations about the  
kind of man Messiah would be, when He came to earth.  
They would have been expecting a humble man, like the  
one Isaiah had prophetically described in Isa 53.

A humble man, like Jesus.

The proof of their rejection of the Word, lay in the fact that when  
Messiah, the Son of God, came to earth, they didn't  
recognize Him, and they didn't want Him.

God the Father had sent God the Son, who was exactly like  
Him in essence, & they hadn't believed in Him.

Jn 1:11 says they hadn't even received Him.

They had illustrated our 3<sup>rd</sup> reason for believing Jesus'  
testimony, that He is the Son of God=>  
that rejecting His testimony about Himself proves a  
person has actually rejected God's Word.

**In verse 39, Jesus will tell the religious leaders=> “You search**

*the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me;”*

The Jews of Jesus’ time had ample reason for believing Him to be exactly who He said He was.

I hope Jesus would never say that to you.

I hope you don’t come, to hear the Scriptures taught because you’re simply looking for a few helpful insights to live by.

I hope you come sincerely seeking the face of X Himself, & won’t settle for anything short of that.

Eternal life, in all its joy/beauty, is not found in Scripture except as it reveals Jesus to a soul that looks/longs for Him.

We can read Scripture all our lives & it will never yield its ultimate, eternal benefit, until it develops in our hearts a compelling love for the One who died to save our souls.

**Jesus had a relationship w/ God the Father like no one else will ever have, because He alone is God.**

But we can have a relationship w/ Him which emulates His relationship w/ the Father because He is also a Man like us.

And our relationship w/ X becomes our own means of testifying to the world that Jesus is sent from God.

He has become our Savior, He is our Lord, He is our all,

So we can say w/ Paul, *“For to me, to live in Christ”*  
(Phil 1:21).

***“The Testimony of Jesus”***

September 22, 2013

Text: John 5:31-38

1. Today’s text represents Jesus’ explanation of why coming to Him is an absolutely reasonable, [16 logical] thing to do.
2. As we approach today’s text, Jesus has been confronted by Jewish religious leaders who have accused Him of violating the [16 Sabbath] Law.

Jn 5:17

**The religious leaders are thinking, “Why should we believe your testimony that You are God, the Son of God?” So Christ supports His testimony with three reasons for believing it...**

**\* Reason #1—Jesus’ testimony can save your soul**

**[Verse 31]**

3. Christ is aware that, in view of His astounding claim to be God’s Son, He would appear to them to be lying unless He had reliable [20 witnesses] to corroborate those claims.

Jn 8:14-15

**[Verse 32]**

4. Jesus has an unimpeachable Witness fully qualified to testify He is God’s Son—God the [14 Father].

Lk 2:49; Jn 5:19

**[Verses 33-34]**

5. The issue here is truth—but more importantly, how does one [12 learn] the truth about Jesus’ deity?

Jn 1:29; 34

6. Why is it important that you and I believe Jesus’ claim to be God, the Son of God? Because knowing and believing that, we too can be [12 saved].

**\* Reason #2—Jesus’ testimony is the Father’s testimony**

7. Jesus has just said that God testifies to His claims of deity; now He adds that the only way to receive God’s testimony is through Christ Himself—His words and miraculous [12 works].

**[Verse 35]**

Lk 3:7-8, 10

**[Verse 36]**

8. Jesus' own testimony was far greater than John's because of all Jesus' marvelous works, including His [18 miracles].

Jn 3:2

9. Jesus' sign-miracles were actually God the Father's own testimony that Jesus was His [8 Son].

Acts 2:22; Jn 10:25

**[Verse 37]**

Mt 3:17; 17:5; Jn 12:28

10. Man simply isn't equipped to communicate directly with God—he will always need a [18 Mediator].

I Tim 6:16

11. How am I to believe without having even seen or heard Jesus directly? God's mighty Word... and the Holy [14 Spirit].

Heb 4:12; Jn 15:26

**\* Reason #3—Rejecting Jesus' testimony means one has rejected God's Word**

**[Verse 38]**

Jn 15:7

12. If God's Word had been abiding in the religious leaders' hearts, it would have reshaped their [18 thoughts] and feelings.

Jn 1:11; 5:39

13. Scripture will never yield its ultimate eternal benefit until it develops in our hearts a compelling [10 love] for the One who died to save our souls.

14. Our relationship with Christ becomes our own means of testifying that [12 Jesus] is sent from God.