

“Jesus’ Witnesses”

John #13

John 5:30-47

February 4, 2018

Scripture Reading: John 5:30-47

Introduction

Big Idea: When it comes to the things of God, it’s far too easy to miss the point.

*Alternate phrasing: Keep the main thing the main thing, jerk!

Context:

1. Healing the invalid at the pool: charge of blasphemy
2. Jesus on trial, calling on witnesses | John 5:30-31
 - a. Deuteronomy 19:15

I. Witness #1: John the Baptizer | vs. 32-35

1. John promised | Psalm 132:13-17
2. Problem 1: they stopped at a leader.
 - a. Don Carson — Both the New Testament and Josephus record that the ministry of John the Baptist generated considerable messianic excitement. His announcement that ‘the Coming One’ was near...provoked enthusiastic joy. If [John’s hearers] would remember that healthy response to John’s preaching and recognize in Jesus the one whom the Baptist announced, then John’s witness would prove extraordinarily fruitful. The sad reality, however, was that far too many chose to enjoy his light only for a time.

II. Witness #2: Jesus’ Miracles | vs. 36

1. Problem: they stopped at the miracles and works.

III. Witness #3: God’s Voice | vs. 37-38

1. Likely a reference to the voice when Jesus was baptized
2. People of Israel were defined by hearing God’s voice | Deuteronomy 4:32-33, 36
3. Problem #3: they stopped at spiritual experience.
 - a. Rodney Whitacre — Jesus’ condemnation of the opponents cuts to the heart of their own identity. Both rabbinic and mystical strands of Judaism are judged at this point. Whatever they have heard or seen, whether in Scripture or in visions, it has not been revelation of the true God, or at least has not really benefited them, for they do not recognize the truth himself when he stands before them.

IV. Witness #4: The Scriptures | vs. 39-47

1. The Hebrew Scriptures points to Jesus
 - a. Prophecy
 - b. Symbols / typology
 - c. Events
 - d. Laws
2. Problem #4: they stopped at the Scriptures. *Also, intellectual pride.
 - a. N.T. Wright — Jesus' charge against his contemporaries is thus that they have been looking at the right book but reading it the wrong way...It is easy to be attracted to the study of the text as an exercise in intellectual brilliance. The Bible is the most fascinating book, or collection of books, in the world, and anyone with a feel for literature, for ideas, for history, for great stories, can become completely absorbed in it. The academic discussions which arise from it can be fascinating, exhilarating and as challenging and stimulating as any other subject in the curriculum. And God wants the best minds to be working on this job...But it is possible to allow the study of the text, and of different interpretations of the text, to become a substitute for allowing the text to bring us into the presence of the living God. It is deceptively easy to know everything about 'the Jewish hope for the Messiah', and not to know the Messiah himself, in person. And it is all too simple—indeed, sometimes our academic institutions and seminaries encourage it—to use our knowledge and intellectual ability to gain status and prestige among our colleagues...That is as true today as it was in Jesus' day.
 - b. Spurgeon — They were great Bible-readers, great students of the letter, but they would not come to Christ; and hence the Scriptures themselves became a sepulcher in which they were entombed.

Conclusion | Do We Stop At...

1. Leaders?
2. Actions?
3. Spiritual experiences?
4. Study?

Benediction

Colossians 1:15-20 — ¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation...all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷He is before all things, and by him all things hold together. ¹⁸He is also the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰and through him to reconcile everything to himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.