

The Gospel of John

5:31-44

Welcome back to this week's study in the book of John.
As with this study and all bible studies, remember to pray before you start.

✠ **John 5:31-37** *If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true. You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light. 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. And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form.*

It's so easy to bear witness of ourselves. Think about when you are looking for a job, you tell the person sitting behind the desk how great you are and how much the company would benefit if they would hire you. They listen to what you have to say, but the truth comes out when they check your references. Will your former employer say all they great things you just said about yourself, or will they tell the truth, "Sure he or she is a good worker, when they are here."? It's so easy to say all the good stuff about ourselves and forget to, or leave the bad stuff out.

Jesus could have borne witness of Himself, and it would have been true, because Jesus never lied. Plus, there was nothing bad about Him. But the Jewish leaders would not have believed Him, because they didn't know Him as the Messiah.

✠ *There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true.*

Right after this verse, Jesus speaks of John the Baptist, but that's not Who He is talking about here, but rather the Father, which we will see in verse 36. But before Jesus tells them about the witness of the Father, He reminds them of John the Baptist's witness.

You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved.

What does Jesus mean when He says "*You have sent to John*"? We need to look back at the beginning of John.

† **John 1:6-9 & 19-20** *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.*

Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ."

John was questioned on several occasions whether he was the Messiah, and you just read his answer that he wasn't. And in verse 7 we read that he came to bear witness of the light, which is Jesus Christ.

✧ *He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.*

Jesus is speaking once again of John the Baptist, and we know that people came to him for a while and rejoiced for a short time, possibly because they felt clean because John the Baptist baptized them with water.

It's like a person who goes to church on Sunday to feel like they have done their duty to God, but live like hell the rest of the week, some even as soon as they step out of the church. They rejoice because they think they are ok with God, but it doesn't last long and soon they are longing for Sunday so they can get their religious fix for the week. I know this sounds harsh, but if you really think about it. it's the truth

But true salvation does not come from a Sunday fix at church, but rather a repentant heart and a relationship, 24/7, with Jesus. The people were drawn to John the Baptist because of the light that was in him. We also have this same light, which is Jesus Christ shining through us.

† **John 8:12** *Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."*

† **Matt 5:14-16** *You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*

You may notice that people are drawn to you when they are going through problems or when they are seeking religious issues, wanting to know how to be saved or what the bible may say about certain things.

It's not you they are drawn to you, but the light of Jesus shining in you. They see the peace and joy, no matter what is going on in our lives or in the world and they want that same peace and joy that we have. Just as Jesus told the parable about the light and setting it on a hill and not hiding it under a basket, so we must allow this light to shine through

us for all to see, and also show them how they too can have this light shining through them as well.

Yes, we are all witnesses for Jesus, but there is a greater witness than our own witness.

✠ *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.*

So what are these works that Jesus is talking about here?

✠ *Isaiah 61:1 ' 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.*

Jesus did all of these things and more. Remember back in the book of Luke Jesus quoted these verses to the Jews.

✠ *Luke 4:16-21 So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:
"The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me,
Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;
To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD. '
Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."*

So John the Baptist testified of Jesus, and the works that Jesus did, testified that He was the Messiah, but there was more.

✠ *And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form.*

Yes, John's witness is good, but there is a better witness, and that's the witness of purity and truth that only comes from God.

If you read on throughout the bible, you will find that there is a three-fold witness.

† **1 John 5:6-7** *This is He who came by water and blood--Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.*

Also the Holy Spirit came here to testify of Jesus.

† **John 15:26** *But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.*

Have you ever noticed times when you are speaking with someone about spiritual things, and it seems that the words from the bible just start flowing out of your mouth? This is the Holy Spirit working through you testifying of Jesus. Cool isn't it! But then there are some who do not have the word of life flowing through them.

✎ **John 5:38-40** *But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.*

Here is the heart of the gospel and that is the Father testifying of Jesus in His word.

People will read the bible searching for some type of truth, or looking for an out to the sin or lifestyle that they are living. But it only brings conviction, because it tells us all that we are all sinners and the only way to be cleansed from our sins is through Jesus Christ. People just cannot accept this, they think it's too easy and the lazy man's way out. Some even call it a crutch. I heard on Christian musician say that "*Jesus isn't a crutch but a stretcher, because you can't even limp your way into heaven.*"

People think they have to suffer or do a bunch of things to be saved. So what happens is they put the bible down and start looking to other religions that say you have to work or suffer for God to be saved, and even then, they are not sure if they are saved or even where they will go when they die. Will it be a third heaven, or with 70 young virgins, or a place between Heaven and Hell? Some say there is no heaven or hell and when you die it's all over.

But if you read the bible you realize that a lot of things and a lot more suffering was done so that we can get to heaven, and that was all completed by Jesus on the cross. Jesus suffered beyond anything we could ever imagine.

† **1 Peter 2:21-24** *For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:
"Who committed no sin,
Nor was deceit found in His mouth";
who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who*

Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.

† **Luke 24:25-27** *Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*

The works Jesus did to testify of who He is would boggle our minds.

† **John 21:25** *And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.*

But still some will even take the name of Jesus and use it for salvation, but add other things to it.

I remember someone telling me about a man they had met who started talking about Jesus, but soon he was adding Buddha, out of body experiences and all sorts of weird stuff to it. He eventually admitted that he thought that Jesus was just a messenger and not the Messiah.

People will even go from church to church searching for salvation or something that makes them feel good, or something that has the same interpretation of salvation as they do. They think, "After all, if I think salvation should be done this way, then the church I go to should believe the same thing to, right?"

Wrong! God has given us instructions in His word how to obtain salvation, why do people think that their way is better than God's way?

Did God mess up by sending His only Son Jesus to suffer and die on the cross for the world's sins? I don't think so!

God knew how man would be saved before the creation of the earth, before the creation of man, before the creation of you. Everyone's trying to make a better wheel, but if the one you have works, then why try to fix it?

If Jesus did all the work on the cross, then why are you trying to out work Jesus?

† **Gal 3:1-4 (NLT)** *Oh, foolish Galatians! What magician has cast an evil spell on you? For you used to see the meaning of Jesus Christ's death as clearly as though I had shown you a signboard with a picture of Christ dying on the cross. Let me ask you this one question: Did you receive the Holy Spirit by keeping the law? Of course not, for the Holy Spirit came upon you only after you believed the message you heard about Christ. Have you lost your senses? After starting your Christian lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by*

your own human effort? You have suffered so much for the Good News. Surely it was not in vain, was it? Are you now going to just throw it all away?

We talked about works last week and how we receive a reward for the works we do, but our works are never done to earn our salvation.

So you read God's word, go to church and hear the message and even read bible studies like this that tell you that the only way to the Father and Heaven is through Jesus Christ. Jesus even said it Himself.

† ***John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."***

Jesus also says: ***But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.***

Stop trying to do it your way and try doing it God's way!

✠ ***John 5:41-44 I do not receive honor from men. But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. 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. How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?***

Or as the NLT puts it.

✠ ***John 5:41-44 (NLT) Your approval or disapproval means nothing to me, because I know you don't have God's love within you. For I have come to you representing my Father, and you refuse to welcome me, even though you readily accept others who represent only themselves. No wonder you can't believe! For you gladly honor each other, but you don't care about the honor that comes from God alone.***

Those who reject Jesus do not have the love of the Father in them. Why, because Jesus came in the name of God the Father and people reject God continually.

Sure if they need something they call out to Him, but most of the time they are wrongly accusing Him of all the bad things that happen in their lives or on this earth.

I've mentioned in past studies of how I lost my home and was sleeping in my car, or the time when I had no money and all I had to eat was popcorn. I didn't yell at God and blame Him; it was because of my own sins that I was in those situations. God didn't put me in them, I did it myself!

We get mad because kids are killing each other and using foul language and talking bad about their parents. Child pornography is a big thing, as well as pornography in general. AIDS is a big thing also, along with cancer and many other diseases. You can't even walk down the street at night without feeling like some is going to attack you. Yes, this

world is bad, but it's not God's fault, it's our fault for turning our backs on Him and disobeying His commands.

Just think about that for a minute, if the whole USA for the next month would follow God's commands, what do you think the world would be like?

No more kids killing each other or cursing.

No more pornography or kidnapping.

No more sexually transmitted diseases.

The freedom to walk down your own street at night without being harassed.

Children obeying their parents and even getting great grades in school.

Not having to listen to cursing or seeing a bunch of naked people just to watch a good movie.

No longer being tempted to buy things we don't need, which in turn would mean no longer over spending and having money left over when your next paycheck comes.

We could go on and on, but the truth is that the world does not have the love of the Father in them, so the world is bad and people reject Jesus.

Jesus makes it so clear how this world is today.

✎ ***No wonder you can't believe! For you gladly honor each other, but you don't care about the honor that comes from God alone.***

"Give that man a plaque because he gave a thousand dollars."

"Look how He's dressed. He must be someone important."

"Wow, nice computer" or "Wow, nice car."

"She looks so good; no wonder all the men chase after her."

"Someday I want to be just like _____."

There is even a TV show today that has a woman dating and sleeping with 20 different men trying to find the right one. This we honor and say, *"I wish I could do that."*

I bet you don't even realize that you may hear the name Jesus said at least 20 or more times a day, possibly by your coworkers, neighbors, children, at the store, in schools or wherever. But the problem is that every time you hear it, Jesus' name is being used as a curse word.

Honoring the world and cursing God, that's what has happened to this world.

✎ ***John 5:46-47 For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?***

I bet a lot of people have seen the movie the Ten Commandments with Charlton Heston, and I bet a lot of people believe in Moses and the Ten Commandments and even the parting of the Red Sea because of this movie.

I would challenge anyone who believes these things because of the movie to read the first five books of the bible. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These are the five books that Moses wrote, and in them he testifies of Jesus. Yes, there really was a Moses and yes God did give him the Ten Commandments and yes God did part the Red Sea.

But the world will believe what Hollywood says, but not the bible.

I know this week's study was a hard one, and it sounded like I was on my soapbox. But I would encourage you to look around at all that's going on and read your bible and think about that if you personally would start obeying God's commandments more faithfully that your life and your family would be better people and happier.

You may not change the world, but you could have a better family and life here on this earth.

What could it hurt to try?

Well that's it for this week. Next week we will start chapter six and read about the feeding of the 5,000.

May God richly bless you in His love, grace and mercy and may you find joy in following His word.