



The Truth, The Whole Truth, Nothing But the Truth

Message Notes, May 15, 2016

John 5:16-47

Today John takes us from the celebration of Jesus' miraculous healing power (the official's son and the 38-year crippled man) to the hard-hearted opposition of the religious leaders against Jesus.

Vv. 16-18: The religious leaders confront Jesus' violation of the Sabbath. He replies unapologetically with bold confidence, proclaiming his oneness with the Father. They respond with arrogant resentment and begin plotting how they might kill Jesus.

Vv. 19-30: Jesus, knowing their hard hearts, elaborates on His bond with his Father. He senses that (unofficially) he is on trial before these (supposedly) righteous leaders. He responds in trial fashion with the truth.

He has clearly testified about himself before them (vv. 19-30), but Jesus knows full well that this is not sufficient for them ("my testimony is not valid"). Not that his words are untrue, but the legal protocols of the day required two witnesses to bring an accusation (and also a defense; see Deuteronomy 19:15).

Jesus rises above the standard – He brings four witnesses to testify on his behalf:

1. **John the Baptizer** (vv. 32-35): A human witness. They knew John and his preaching. They respected him "for a time" but lost confidence in him (especially after his beheading!) Do we sometimes receive the testimony of "faithful ones" God sends our way only to later lose attention to what God is speaking through them?
2. **Miraculous works** (v. 36): The witness of power. Jesus did miraculous things for two reasons: Out of kindness and compassion to meet the needs of hurting people, and to reveal his identity as the Messiah come from the Father. How did Jesus respond to John the Baptizer's own questions about him? (See Matthew 11:2-6)
3. **The Father** (vv. 37-38). Jesus is surely referring to God's proclamation of his Sonship at his baptism (Matthew 3:16-17).
4. **The Scriptures** (vv. 38-40). Here Jesus meets them on their most sacred ground – the holy Scriptures. They championed themselves as ones devoted to the study and knowledge of the Word of God. Jesus confronts their empty pride – "you diligently search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life." They missed the whole point of the Scriptures – not the performance of spiritual knowledge, but the revelation of the person of God. The Bible calls us into relationship with our Creator God and Savior. Are we ever guilty of reading the Bible as the manual (the info and rules) rather than the living Word =whereby God speaks and reveals Himself to us?

Did Jesus' accusers hear him? Were they convinced by his overwhelming "case"? John does not indicate here, but we have a clue later in his gospel – see John 7:45-52. It seems they refused to believe in him.



What of us? Do we believe in Him?

- Do we recognize the testimony of others who believe and walk with him?
- Do we recognize his miraculous help and grace in our lives?
- Do we recognize and embrace God's own testimony to us by the stirring of His Holy Spirit that dwells within us?
- Do we search the scriptures, reading them relationally, not as the rule-book, but as the living Word whereby God speaks and reveals Himself to us.
- Do we embrace these, his witnesses to us? Not out of spiritual duty but out of our longing to know Him and the life He longs to give?

Holy Spirit, help us. Stir faith in each of us as we embrace the testimony of these four witnesses. Strengthen us to believe, surrender, and walk with Jesus, the Messiah, our Savior King.