

# John 5 (Part 2) :19–47 • That all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father

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Follow me over to John chapter 5, where we're continuing our study in the gospel of John here on Sunday morning. We are just getting our fill of John, aren't we? Because we're doing John, the Gospel of John on Sunday morning, we're doing the epistles of John on Wednesday night because we finished the Old Testament on Wednesday. So, we're filling in some of the New Testament books on Wednesday night.

So it's just John, John, John all over the place, but this is our second part of John chapter 5, and we're going to be picking it up in verse 19, and then we're going to be reading down through the end of the chapter. So, follow along with me, John 5:19 to the end. Goes like this:

*<sup>19</sup>So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. <sup>20</sup>For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. <sup>21</sup>For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. <sup>22</sup>For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, <sup>23</sup>that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. <sup>24</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.*

*<sup>25</sup> “Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. <sup>26</sup>For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. <sup>27</sup>And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. <sup>28</sup>Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice <sup>29</sup>and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.*

<sup>30</sup> "I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me. <sup>31</sup> If I alone bear witness about myself, my testimony is not true. <sup>32</sup> There is another who bears witness about me, and I know that the testimony that he bears about me is true. <sup>33</sup> You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. <sup>34</sup> Not that the testimony that I receive is from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved. <sup>35</sup> He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. <sup>36</sup> But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me. <sup>37</sup> And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen, <sup>38</sup> and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent. <sup>39</sup> You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, <sup>40</sup> yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. <sup>41</sup> I do not receive glory from people. <sup>42</sup> But I know that you do not have the love of God within you. <sup>43</sup> I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him. <sup>44</sup> How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? <sup>45</sup> Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. <sup>46</sup> For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. <sup>47</sup> But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?" (ESV)

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we open our hearts to You today in the name of Jesus. Lord, would You fill our hearts with wisdom and insight? Would You grant us, Lord, grace, to lay hold of what is here in the Word? That we might take it in and grow and understand and walk it out and learn Just more of You. Father, I thank You, I thank You. In the name of Jesus Christ, we all pray, amen.

I was listening to the worship songs that we were doing this morning. Well, duh, I was listening to the worship songs we were doing. You would hope so, right? But, I mean, I was just really taking note of the lyrics and how Christ-centered they all were, and how we were singing about magnifying Jesus and who He is and so forth. And it's fitting, I think, as we're getting close to the Christmas celebration, which you know, is all about Jesus. And people struggle, people struggle sometimes, it's like, "What's Christmas? I mean, how do I really enter into the whole Christmas thing?" Because there's pressure on us to do it a certain way or to have a Hallmark Christmas or something like that, which is pretty bogus.

Christmas is Jesus and, if you're wondering how to celebrate Christmas, the best way to celebrate Christmas is just to marvel at what it is all about. And that is that God became a man. I feel sometimes like I could do that. I could just get up here and I could just say, God became a man, and just leave it there, you know? Just say, now we're just going to sit and we're going to meditate on that for about an hour because there are so many implications to that simple statement, God became a man. And there's so many dynamics, and complexities, and challenges to our understanding related to the simple truth that God became a man.

And then the relationship, when God the Son, when the Word of God made flesh, became that man and walked to the earth, the dynamic and the relationship between the Son and the Father was interesting, to say the least and challenging many times for us to understand.

In this section of John chapter 5, Jesus talks a lot about His relationship to the Father, and we struggle greatly to lay hold of it because some of the things challenge us, some of His statements challenge us, such as the way he started off here in this particular passage. Saying *"the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing,"* and so forth. And He makes other statements that are very similar to that.

And so, here's what we're going to do. Before we get in and talk about these verses, I want to start off this morning with a passage up on the screen from the Apostle Paul from Philippians. And that's what we're going to put here. And I want you to look at this and look at it carefully because Paul writes here saying that:

**Philippians 2:5-8 (NIV84)**

*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross!*

*"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider (that) equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself (and he should have said even further) and became obedient to death - even death on a cross!"*

Well, I want to leave that up on the screen just for a little bit because this contains some incredibly important insights concerning Christmas, the incarnation, the coming of Jesus, God becoming a man, and insights that are going to help us to understand what Jesus is saying here in this latter part of John chapter 5.

And I really want you to see here that what Paul is saying on the screen from Philippians, first of all, there's a very clear declaration of the deity of Jesus Christ. In other words, that Jesus is in fact God. Paul tells us in that passage that Jesus "*did not consider his equality with God something to be grasped.*" I looked up that Greek word in my dictionary, I found out that it means to snatch and carry off, which is kind of interesting. But, in this case, it really speaks of Jesus not asserting His right to that equality. It doesn't necessarily mean that He gave up that equality, it means He didn't consider, or He didn't demand His right, okay? To continue to assert that right. And, instead, Paul says that Jesus made Himself nothing. Did you catch that there? He made Himself nothing.

Now, you'll notice here that I had you read that passage out of the NIV because I like it. I like the way they worded it in the NIV. Now, the ESV, instead of the phrase "*made himself nothing,*" says "*he emptied himself.*" Which is really crazy. But whatever phrase you use, whether you use the phrase from the NIV, "*he made himself nothing*" or the ESV, "*he emptied himself.*" We're all just sitting here scratching our heads. What in the world does that mean? How can God empty Himself? And, when God empties Himself, what do you end up with?

Well, it says He emptied Himself and became a man. God had to empty Himself to be like me and you. We think we're all that, you know? And He had to become nothing to become like us. That kind of puts us in our place, doesn't it? So, we're sitting here and we're saying, what all does this mean? Well, we're not really sure. We sit in awe. You want to really celebrate Christmas, then sit in awe of what He did. Sit in awe, mouth hanging open, a typical posture of "I don't get this."

One thing we do know, according to what Paul the Apostle wrote here in Philippians is that what Jesus did is He did it to Himself. It says He emptied Himself, He made Himself nothing. And what that means is He did it willingly, He did it of His own volition. Nobody made Jesus empty Himself, nobody demanded that He become nothing, He did it of His own. And rather than clinging to His equality with the Father, Jesus subordinated Himself to the will

and purpose of the Father by becoming a human being. And that, that's a dirty word in the United States of America. Subordination, right along with submission. It's like those are the double S words. Get those out of our vocabulary. Subordination, that's terrible. Submission, are you kidding? No, we're too prideful to even entertain the definition of those words half the time.

I got news for you, Jesus subordinated Himself to the Father, not because He had to, because He chose to. He submitted Himself to the will of the Father, not because He had to, but because He chose to. And yet, while that the subordination of Jesus is clearly in view in the verses that we're looking at here, in this latter part of John chapter 5, we also see as deity in these verses. And subordination and deity are seen right alongside each other.

And this is difficult for us. See, because subordination and submission in our mind means inferiority. If I'm subordinate to you, if I'm submitted to you, if I'm in submission to you, immediately in our American, sort of a way of understanding those things, we think inferiority. So, when we hear Jesus talking about His subordination to the Father, we go, "Well see it right there. Jesus was inferior to the Father."

Have you ever had anybody use any of these verses in John chapter 5 to prove to you that Jesus is not God or at least equal to God the father? People do it all the time. See, it says right there, Jesus said, "*There's nothing I can do apart from the Father.*" See that? He's not God.

You see, that's our own American limitation of understanding. We assume subordination and submission equals inferiority. It does not. So, we get into it right away, verse 19; "*Jesus said to them truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord.*" "See, right there, you guys? He's not God. Right?" That's what people will say. He says, "*but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.*"

So, it's interesting, we're being told that expresses inferiority. It does not, it expresses subordination. But, more than that, what Jesus is emphasizing in verse 19 is that the Son does nothing apart from the Father's will. Do you remember the context of this? What? What did we study last week? Jesus healed a guy. Right? When did he heal him? On the Sabbath, that was (sound of an error, "eh") wrong, no, you don't do that. Secondly, told the man, "take up your bedroll. Go home." Don't do that, you can't do that. That's carrying a load on the Sabbath. Ya see? So, they're saying, "God gave us the Sabbath to obey, and you don't obey the Sabbath." And Jesus's response is, "I can do nothing of my own

accord. Everything I do is of the Father.” So, He's not expressing a limitation. He's expressing a connection. He's expressing a connection to the Father, right?

He's responding to the accusation that He's violating the Sabbath. “I am not violating the Sabbath and, furthermore, I do only what the Father does.

You're accusing Me of disobeying the laws of God, and I'm telling you that's not possible.” That's what Jesus is saying in that passage. In fact, He's saying I have the full approval of the Father in all that I do.

He then goes on verse 20, *“For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel.”* <sup>21</sup> *For as the father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will.”* Stop there for a minute, I really like this. He begins by saying the Father loves the Son. Now, that's an interesting statement. It's an interesting thing for Jesus to say “the Father loves the Son,” and we hear it and we're kind of like, “Yeah, that's cool. I don't really have any problem with that.” But it's actually a very revealing statement because what Jesus is saying is what drives the relationship between the Father and the Son is love. He's talked about subordination, He's talked about essentially the fact that He is submitted to the will of God, but that's not what drives the relationship, it's love.

Do you guys understand how close this resembles marriage? I tell women when they're getting ready to get married and we're talking about the role of the wife. I talked to gals about the fact that Jesus is their example in marriage. And I say, “Just as Jesus is equal to the Father, you are equal to your husband. Equal, okay? However, the Bible asks you to willingly subordinate yourself to your husband's leadership role in the home.” “Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord,” right? Isn't that what Paul said in Ephesians? (Ephesians 5: 22-23) And wives are like, “I'll never do that.” It's a dirty word, that's the S word, submit. I remind wives, “Jesus is your example.”

But what drove that submission? What was behind it all? Love, love. It wasn't this demand from this heavy-handed person going, “Submit.” Isn't that fun? Every wife looks forward to that happening in her marriage someday? No, it's a love relationship. It's her love for God and her love also for her husband.

And this is what we see is going on between the Father and the Son. It's not a master-slave relationship, Jesus says the Father loves the Son. But there's another point that He makes here about His relationship to the Father. He says that everything He's doing is what He sees the Father doing. And, once again,

this is a response to all those accusations that He's somehow breaking God's law related to the Sabbath regulations.

Then, I want you to look in verse 21, Jesus announces that *“as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will.”* Isn't that interesting? He gives life to whom He will. So, here we have another clear reference, in the midst of all this talk about submission and subordination, we have a clear reference to deity. The Father has life in Himself and gives life to whomever, and the Son has life in Himself and gives that life to whomever He will, right?

Do you understand that Jesus was talking to Jews who knew the Word of God and they knew that God gives life? That's one thing the Jews knew and understand; God gives life. We have this Sanctity of Life Sunday that we go through every year to remind us that God's the One who gives life. Well, you know what? This was just organic to the Jewish understanding; God gives life. *“Of course God gives life.”* Let me show you a couple of passages; Deuteronomy:

**Deuteronomy 32:29 (ESV)**

*“See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; (God says) I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.”*

*“See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; (God says) I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.”*

The Jews knew this, they understood this. This is stuff that's all throughout the Old Testament. Who gives life? God gives life.

**1 Samuel 2:6 (ESV)**

*The LORD kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up.*

So, you see when Jesus says here or makes this claim, *“just as the Father has life in Himself and gives life to whomever He will, so also the Son has life in Himself and gives life to whomever He will,”* He's declaring Himself to be God. Make no mistake about it, people. Right alongside subordination and submission here is deity and equality, you see that? It's really fascinating.

He goes on to talk about his role in judgment. Look at verse 22, *“For the father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son,”* Have you ever heard the

statement, we're all going to stand before God one day? Guess what? We're going to stand before God the Son. Jesus makes it very clear, He says why, *"that all may honor the Son, (look at this) just as they honor the Father."* Jesus says, "I've been given the right to judge so that, just as people honor God the Father, they will honor God the Son."

In fact, He ends that verse, verse 23 to say, *"Whoever does not honor the Son, does not honor the Father who sent him."* You see, you can't diss Jesus and say, "But I love and honor God." No, it's a package deal. You can't say I don't honor the Son, right? So, I was thinking about Jesus being the Judge, and I thought, that's pretty interesting. It's even kind of fitting that Jesus is the One who's going to judge everyone one day.

And I thought, here's why that's fitting, He's also the One who took our judgment. Ever think about that? He's the One who took our judgment on the cross, He bore our judgment on the cross. But for those who reject the work that He did on the cross, He will judge them. Do you understand that doesn't include you? Do you understand, Christians, that you will not stand before God and be judged for your sin? Do you understand that? Do you understand that's what Jesus goes on to say in verse 24.

Look at verse 24 in your Bible, there might be something here you need to underline. *"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me (Has what?) eternal life. (But look what He goes on to say about those who have eternal life,) He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life."*

Do you understand, Christians? And if you need to underline something out of there, underline *"He does not come into judgment."* Christians, you will not come into judgment. God's not going to judge you for your sin, He already judged your sin in the person of Jesus Christ. You get it? Isn't that good news?

Yes, we will stand before God related to how we have served Him in order to receive a reward, that's the only judgment you and I are going to experience. We will be judged in that sense, but that's not a judge of your sin. That's a judge of your works, so that God can reward you for those works. But He's not going to judge your sin, people. You've passed from that judgment.

If God were to judge your sins, that's a judgment of death because the wages of sin is death, right? (Romans 6:23) Isn't that what your Bible says? That's a



judgment of death, but you've passed from death to life. You're in the life category now. Praise the Lord, right?

And now, He goes on to speak about the resurrection of the dead. Verse 25, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God,”* Do you hear that? The dead are going to hear the voice of Jesus, right? *“..and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself.”* Boy, Jesus is making claims here that no mere human being can claim. None of us can say that “I have the power of life inherent in me.” I don't, I am dependent. I am dependent and started with my parents, and their parents, and their parents before them. All that had to happen in order for me to have life. And, other than that, when I was conceived, in my mother's womb, then the Lord had to breathe life into me. And so, I'm completely, just like you, dependent on God for life. I cannot say, “I inherently have life within me.” Jesus said that though, make no mistake about it. Jesus said that, “I have life in Me. It is inherent.”

It's pretty cool. Our life fades, His does not. I was reminded of that yesterday. I talked with my 95-and-a-half-year-old dad yesterday on the phone, and it's hard to talk to him these days. I have to keep my conversation entirely in the present. There is no speaking of the past or the future. But I heard yesterday in his voice just how weak he was and how the life is fading. 95 and a half, he'll be 96 in May, if he lasts that long, and the life is fading because we don't have life in ourselves. Jesus does, He does.

Verse 27, he tells us that, *“He (God the Father) has given him (the Son) authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.”* And then, He gets even more specific about His role in the last days, verse 28, *“Do not marvel at this, (He said) for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice <sup>29</sup>and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.”* Two things, we already made a point about this. For the first one, it is the voice of Jesus people will hear. But I want you, again, to notice Jesus says, *“those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.”*

Everybody is going to have a resurrection. Everybody, everybody. But not everybody's going to be resurrected to life, some will be resurrected to judgment. Now, please don't take this verse out of context and take it as if Jesus is saying that our salvation is based on good works. Because, if you look at this verse, myopically, where you're not focusing in on the rest of the revelation of God's word, it's possible to come to that conclusion. Jesus is not saying that if

you did good, you'll go to heaven, if you did bad, you won't. That's not what He's saying. He's simply acknowledging the fact that the fruit of a person's life will be the culmination of what they have believed, right? The fruit of your life will be the culmination of what you have believed. That's what He's saying.

And then, Jesus says in verse 30, *“I can do nothing on my own. (Oh, here we go. Here we go. You see, he's not equal with God. He just said here, he can do nothing on his own. He says,) As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek, not my own will but the will of him who sent me.”* I'll just tell you again, this verse is cited by people who will try to prove to you that Jesus is not God or equal to God, and they will say, “It says it right there, out of his own lips. He said, ‘I can do nothing on my own’. Oh, it's interesting because, that means, I must be greater than Jesus, because I can do things on my own and so can you.” And I regret to tell you, right now, that I've done many things on my own, apart from the will of the Father.

Don't miss what Jesus is saying here. Jesus is saying here, when he says, *“I can do nothing on my own.”* He's not saying He's physically incapable of doing things on His own. He's saying He is morally incapable of doing things on His own. Jesus is saying here that “I am so in sync with the heart and the will of my Father, that I am incapable of acting and moving in any manner that is contrary to the heart and the will of my Father. We are so connected, we are so one that, what He does, I do. And what I do, He does. We are one. I can't be other than who I am, I am God, and I cannot be other.” That's what he's saying.

He's not expressing inferiority, He's expressing oneness with the Father, you see? But people quote this and they go, “See, right there? It says Jesus is inferior.” You miss the whole point. You missed what He was saying. He's not expressing inferiority, He's saying “We are so, so one that what He does I do. And what I do, He does. I can't do otherwise. Now again, He's responding to people who are accusing Him of violating the Sabbath. He's saying, “I can't do other than the Father. You're accusing me of breaking the law of the Father. I can't do that, I cannot break God's law. I can't do that any more than you can stop breathing and keep living.”

Now, in the remaining verses of the chapter, Jesus is going to speak of the various witnesses to His deity and He says in verse 31, *“If I alone bear witness about myself, my testimony is not true.”* So He's saying here, essentially, “Anybody can make claims, right? Anybody can get up and go, ‘you want to know who I am? I'll tell you who I am.’ Yeah, who cares? Yeah. You're just making claim about yourself and that's nothing, right?” And that's what He's

saying. Personal claims are inadmissible as evidence. You have to have corroborative evidence.

Therefore, He goes on to cite four different witnesses. Let me tell you ahead of time what they're going to be on the screen. These are the four witnesses Jesus is going to talk about and there's the verses that they cover.

#### **Four Witnesses**

- The witness of John the Baptist (v32-35)
- The witness of His miraculous works (v36)
- The witness of the Father, (v37-38)
- The witness of the Scriptures (v39-47)

He's going to talk about the witness of John the Baptist, the witness of His own miraculous works, the witness of the Father, and then the witness of the Scriptures. So, we're going to go through these quickly and then we'll be done.

First, He says, *“<sup>32</sup>There is another who bears witness about me, and I know that the testimony that he bears about me is true.”* And this is an inference about the Father, but He's going to come back to that in a minute. First He says, *“<sup>33</sup>You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth.”* In other words, we read about this and the first part of John, they, the religious leaders went to John the Baptist and they said, “Who are you? You the Messiah?”

“Nope.”

“Are you the prophet?”

“Nope.”

“Are you Elijah?”

“Nope.”

“Who are you then?”

He said, “I'm just the voice of one calling in the wilderness, that's it.” But I'm telling you, get ready because Messiah is coming. And then when John saw Messiah walking by, he said, “Behold! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29) So, John testified.

Verse 34, “*Not that the testimony that I receive is for man, but* (He says, “I say these things or I mention it”) *so that you may be saved.*” John was a faithful witness. Human beings, by and large, are not faithful witnesses. I've been on grand jury all this month and I can tell you that for sure. People are not always faithful witnesses. We've had witnesses come across, as, you know, “Well, I've been on grand jury this month,” and we kind of go, after they leave the room, “yeah” (doubtful expression).

But now, He goes on to speak of the greater witness. He says, verse 36, “*But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works* (the works) *that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me.*” What works is he talking about? Remember, in our last study, there was a man laying by the pool waiting for some superstitious thing to happen where an angel troubles the water and the people have to crawl in and the first one in gets healed. We talked about that last week. That's not the way God heals people, not according to competition, but yet the people believed it. And so, here's this man who's been there for 38 years and Jesus healed the man. Got up, walked for the first time in 38 years, walked home. It's a miracle. Jesus said, “That's a witness, that's a witness. The works that the Father has done and is doing through Me. They are a witness.”

Now, it's important to note, people, miracles are not always a faithful witness, okay? They can be a witness, but they're not always the best. And they're certainly not a proof of deity, there were a lot of people in the Bible who performed miracles. I mean, the Apostle Paul, Peter, John, there were many, who performed miracles, but that doesn't mean they are God.

But there was a difference about the way those miracles took place. Have you ever noticed that? Did you ever notice Jesus never prayed for anybody to be healed? He just healed them. He never spoke of the authority of another when He healed people, but that's what the disciples had to do. You remember when Peter and John were on their way to the temple for prayer? And there was a man that was begging there, he was crippled. Remember that whole thing? And he thought he was going to get some money from him because Peter and John stopped where this man was begging. Let me show you this, Acts chapter 3.

**Acts 3:6 (ESV)**

*...Peter said, “I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!”*

*...Peter said, “I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. (But I want you to notice what he says here,) In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,*

(What that means is in the authority of, in other words, what Peter said was, “I don't have authority to do this, but I know One who does. So, in His authority, I say to you,”) *rise up and walk!*”

Now, that's significant but Jesus never used that kind of language. Jesus never spoke of authority, you know, that came from someone else. He simply spoke to people and they were healed because the authority was His own and the people recognized that authority. Let me show you this on the screen from Luke chapter 4.

**Luke 4:36 (ESV)**

*And they were all amazed and said to one another, “What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!”*

*And they were all amazed and said to one another, “What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, (That means demons) and they come out!”*

And the other people had to say, “In the name of Jesus!” and Jesus just said, “Come out, get out of him!” and they obeyed. Why? He had authority. You see the difference? And so, Jesus points to these works and says, “That's a witness. That's a witness of who I am and what I've come to do.”

Now, verse 37, Jesus moves on to the witness of the Father. “*And the Father (He says,) who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen,<sup>38</sup> and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you to not believe the one whom he sent.*” All right, fine. Interesting couple of verses here. We read this and we say, “Okay, well, witness of the father, there you go.” But here's the question we always have to ask. You have to ask questions when you read the Bible; When and how did the Father give a witness, concerning the Son?

Well, I suppose you could talk about when Jesus was baptized and there was a voice that came from heaven. “This is my beloved Son, whom I love, with whom I'm well pleased.” (Matthew 3:17)

But wait a minute. See, nobody heard that except John. John was the only one that heard that, and didn't Jesus say here, you've never heard His voice? And then, you think about the other time, when the voice of God spoke at the transfiguration, Jesus went up on the mountain. Again, “This is my beloved Son, listen to Him,” God said. (Luke 9:35) But wait a minute. That was only Peter, James, and John, who were there at the time and heard that. Just three

guys. So we have four guys here who are kind of on the inside and they heard the voice of the Lord, but Jesus isn't talking to you about these four.

He's talking to all these people, and He says there is a witness from the Father and He bears witness, gives testimony, if you will, of who I am.

And so, we're all kind of going "When did that happen?" I've always marveled at the witness of God to the human heart, and I've always marveled frankly at how much insight this scummy thief hanging guilty on a cross next to Jesus knew about Jesus when all the other people who knew the Word of God and who lived a "righteous life" had no clue who He was.

And here's this thief, and just from his words, you can tell he's had a revelation, "Lord," he says, "Lord." Who do you call, Lord? "Lord, remember me." (Luke 23:42) You don't say "remember me" to anybody who doesn't have the power to remember you. "...remember me when you come into your kingdom." You don't talk about somebody's kingdom unless they're a king. So, here's this thief on a cross, he knows that Jesus is Lord, he knows that Jesus has the power to remember him, and he knows that Jesus has a kingdom. How did he know that? The witness of the Father, to the heart that is open to receive it. The witness of the father to the heart that is open.

I get so many questions from people. "How are people going to be saved when they've never heard the gospel? What about the people living in this...? What about...? What about...?" And they all want to ask questions, "Is God going to be fair?" Listen, listen, people, God is not limited. He has no limitations at all. Somebody wants to know the truth? They will know the truth because there is a witness of the Father that reaches the human heart that wants to know. If somebody wants to know, they will know. You don't need to worry about God. He's not sitting around wondering how He can reach some people that haven't heard this or that or know this.

Listen, He reached a thief who probably had never been in a synagogue a day of his life, but the witness of the Father reached his heart in a way that the religious leaders had not yet received. Pretty powerful, isn't it? Finally, Jesus speaks of the witness of the Scripture saying, verse 39, "*You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me,*" And this statement is almost shocking when you hear it coming from the mouth of Jesus because, the Jewish leaders, they love to study the Scriptures. And we love to study the Scriptures, but we find this interesting statement that says that it's possible to study the Scriptures and miss the point of all of it, or I should say, the focus of the Scriptures.

Either way, it's Jesus. He's the focus. He is the point, right, of all of it. And we all kind of wonder, how's that possible for somebody to study the Word of God and miss the focal point of what God is trying to say? Well, it happens when people go to the Bible for the wrong reasons. And do you know that some people go to the Bible for the wrong reasons? That's very possible. Rather than approaching the Bible to meet with God, which is what we're supposed to do, there are some people who simply go to the Bible to support their arguments or their preconceived, doctrinal ideas. "I've got this in my mind, this is what I believe. Now, I'm going to go to the Bible to confirm it." That's backwards.

How should we read the Bible? The best advice I ever heard came from a former Mormon. Many of you know him or know of him, named Micah Wilder. Some of you guys know Micah, maybe not personally, but Micah is in a ministry called Adams Road Ministries. We've had them here at Calvary Chapel a couple of times. I think two or three times.

And as a member of the Mormon church, Micah was on his mission, and he had it in his heart that he was going to convert not only this pastor, but the whole church that this pastor led. And he's like, "I'm going to bring this guy to his knees." But this pastor challenged Micah to read the New Testament with the eyes of a child. It's very simple, isn't it? Handed him a Bible and said, "Read it with the eyes of a child." And Micah tells how that simple approach, when approaching the Word of God humbly and with an open heart saying, "Lord, teach me, show me. I know nothing, instruct me. I'm an open book, I'm a clean slate. Tell me what You want to tell me. I'm going to throw out every preconceived idea, every preconceived notion, and I'm just going to come to You and say, 'Lord, let Your Word show me the way.'"

And Micah read the New Testament, not once, but many times. And because of that, he gave his life to Jesus Christ and became a born-again Christian. Because that's what the Word does. When we approach it, not just to buttress our arguments, but when we approach it with an open heart, a humble heart, and say, "Lord, teach me." It transforms us. The Word will transform you if you go into it with the right attitude.

And that's the important thing to remember. And that's why the religious leaders studied and studied the Scriptures, but they missed Jesus, because they were just looking for a stick that they could beat people with. "The law, keep the law." And I know some Christians that are like that, they go to the Bible to make a stick. Just to find a stick. "Oh, this I...I'm going to underline that one. Oh man! Oh man! I'll bash you with that one." It's the way some people do, instead of just, "Lord, teach me."

And then, in these last few verses, Jesus reveals the reasons why some go to the Word and don't receive what God intended. Reason number one is given in verse 40, He says, *“yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.”* And this is one of the major reasons for unbelief. It's not the inability to believe, it's the refusal to believe. Did you catch that? It's not the inability to believe, it's the refusal to believe. We think sometimes, we witness to people and they don't come to the Lord, and we think, “Oh, well, I should have done better. I could have done, well...What could I have done?” Sometimes it's just a flat out refusal on their part. “I'm not going to do that.” And it's just stubbornness.

Reason number two is in verse 41, look with me there. He says, *“I do not receive glory from people. <sup>42</sup>But I know that you do not have the love of God within you.”* And that's another reason we don't receive from the Word; we don't approach God with the desire to know His heart, to know His love toward others. Have you ever opened up your Bible and just said, “Lord, show me Your love. Show me who You are. Just show me Your love. Just show me Your love. Fill my heart with Your love.”

And then, reason number three, verse 43 and following, He says, *“ I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you'll receive him. (He says, how in the world are you going to be able to believe in me) ...when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?”* And this is the third reason, and it's all about human pride; glorying in each other, glorying in ourselves rather than glorying, and that means to magnify, the God who created all things. The only One who's really worthy of glory. He says, “Instead, you're going around magnifying each other.” Good grief, we even have a contest now called American Idol. We want to idolize you. “How in the world are you going to believe in Me when you're so busy magnifying one another?”

And then, finally, Jesus says, *“(“Listen,”) Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: (And it's) Moses.,”* You guys, the Jews thought, “We're students of Moses. Moses was the man.” And He says, “Yeah, Moses is going to rise up and accuse you.” He says, “Matter of fact, if you say you believe in Moses and you respect Moses...listen, if you really believe Moses, you'd believe Me because he wrote about Me.” He says, “If you don't believe in his writings, how are you going to believe My words?”

Moses, oh, Moses, what a great guy. But think about all the things that God showed Moses and Moses wrote about. It was through Moses that the Jews received the sacrificial system, which points to Jesus as the final, ultimate sacrifice. It was through Moses they received the Passover celebration where



they sheltered. They learned through Moses to shelter under the blood of the Lamb. It's all about Jesus. It was through Moses that they learned so much that points ultimately to Jesus and what He came to do on our behalf. Do you remember resurrection Day? And Jesus...well, there, there was a couple of disciples, and they decided to get out of Dodge, Jerusalem, and they're going to go to Emmaus. So, they're walking and they're talking, and suddenly Jesus starts walking with them. And He's like, "What are you guys talking about?"

"Well, we're talking about what happened in Jerusalem."

"Well, what happened to Jerusalem?"

They're like, "What rock did you crawl out from under? Don't you hear what happened in Jerusalem? We thought this guy was the Messiah and He was great. He went around and did wonderful things, He did this and He did that...and then and they crucified Him. And, to top it off, some of the women went to the tomb and they said it was empty and we don't know what to think."

Here's how it ends. Luke chapter 24,

**Luke 24:25-27 (ESV)**

*And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*

Oh, I wish I could have been along for that Bible study to hear Jesus enumerate all of the Old Testament passages and how they related to Him. It is simply the final point He's making to the Jews.

Let's stand together. We're going to go ahead and close in prayer. I kind of thought as I was putting this study together, this is just really appropriate for the Sunday before Christmas, because Christmas is all about Jesus and it's all about the awe and the reverence that we have for the person of Jesus, who He is and what He did, how He came to earth and condescended to become a man. Anyway, if you need prayer after we're done come on up. We'd love to pray for you.

Father, thank you so much for Your Word. Your Word is life itself. We love your truth, we love the blessing and the richness that we get from It, and we ask you, Lord, to continue to fill our hearts with who You are, who You are. And

we ask it in Jesus' glorious, awesome name, and all God's people said together,  
amen. Amen.

God bless you. Have a good rest of your Sunday.