

V. Thy Word is Truth in Biblical Perspective
The Supremacy and Sufficiency of God's Word
“What Does the Son of God Say About the Word of God? – ‘It Witnesses Me’”
John 5:30–47
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March 15, 2015 – Morning Sermon

This is our fifth study in our series the supremacy and sufficiency of God's Word. On Sunday evenings we're looking at our theme for the year, the truth of God's Word and what it says about the end times. We will look at Revelation 13 and the two beasts who are there to serve Satan and his opposition to Christ and the church. There is also a third ally that Satan will use in the end times and that ally is found in Revelation 17. Now in John 5 Jesus has healed a paralytic at a pool and the lawyers and teachers of the Jews had come with charges against Him where He was breaking the Sabbath and calling God His own Father making Himself equal with God. So Jesus begins to answer these charges.

John 5:18 says [18] *This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, God's Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

The illustration I am going to begin with is one that those who are under 45 years of age will have to look on the internet for or a cable station to see, called TV Land. I'm talking about the show Perry Mason. I think it may be one of the greatest television series ever put on television. Some of you know the feelings you felt when you turned on to watch the lawyer Perry Mason and Hamilton Burger, the prosecuting attorney, who spent his whole life trying to embarrass Perry Mason and put innocent people in jail. Burger's henchman was Lieutenant Tragg who would cook up an incomplete case to put innocent people in jail but those innocent people would get Perry Mason and they also got the indomitable Paul Drake, the heartthrob of every woman who turned on the television series. Paul would always find the true evidence and get it to Perry Mason. All of this would be arranged with what today we'd call a personal assistance or para legal, who was called a secretary and her name, was Della Street. I can still remember all these characters today over 50 years ago.

This is what I loved about the program. When it was almost time for the program to be over and it looked like the innocent person was going to be put in jail but Paul had gotten the information to Perry where Della had done the research and at a certain point in the trial Perry Mason would say “I have a witness!” The camera would pan to the surprise star witness that was about to be called up to the dock to testify. As soon as everyone turned their head, Hamilton Burger's face would go down, and Lt. Tragg would start looking for the retirement plan because they knew that witness was going to undo everything on that case. The witness was crucial, the star witness, the surprise witness.

In John 5 Jesus has healed a paralytic and He told him to take up his bed and walk. When He did they descended on Jesus because one, He was responsible for the man breaking the Sabbath and two, Jesus had broken the Sabbath by healing on the Sabbath. Now nothing in the Bible says that either one of those are breaking the Sabbath

for those were the traditions of the lawyers and teachers. So they now want to bring a capital offense against Jesus and they have two charges against Him. When Jesus answered the first charge He made it clear that I and the Father are One and with this they charge Him with Him claiming to be God and equal with God as He claims to be the Son of God. They say He is claiming deity and therefore that's blasphemy so He in their minds is worthy of death and it would be an accusation.

Jesus answers them that He and the Father are One and that He has come to seek and save the lost. Jesus says I am the Way, the truth and the life and no man comes to the Father but through Me and now Jesus devotes Himself to a series of taking God's Name – I Am – and identifying I Am with a series of statements. I Am the way. I Am the truth. I Am the life. I Am the bread. I Am the gate. I Am the Great Shepherd. He is taking all these attributes and what He has done and identifying Himself in full deity and as the One and only Savior of sinners who can save sinners from their sin. What a glorious testimony! But is it true?

It is not hard to say those things. How do you know if someone is not bearing false witness? In Biblical jurisprudence Your testimony was not enough for there had to be corroborating testimony and at least two or more witnesses to what was true. We have been in a series of sermons on the sufficiency and supremacy of God's Word and our theme for the year is Thy Word is truth. We have adopted that theme because it is crucial for whatever the culture brings to you that you can't believe or do then you'll bow to the culture. Will the Scripture be supreme or will you conform to the world? Will your mind be transformed by the Word of God as supreme in our lives or will the Word of God be a helpful entity but we're more conformed to the world than we are transformed in our minds and lives? In other words, a lifestyle is directly related to your life view and your life view is either framed from God's Word or from this world.

Do you believe in the supremacy and sufficiency of God's Word? When Paul said that all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and training in righteousness that the man of God may be adequate and equipped for every good work, do you believe God's Word is sufficient to make you adequate for every good work?

Our opening studies on this theme, has been what the Son of God says on the Word of God. The first thing we pointed out was Jesus said to sanctify them in the truth for Thy Word is truth. Jesus isn't say the Word of God is truth about man but it's God's truth to man and it's singular for it's not truths but it is truth. Everything in it coalesces into the truth of God's Word. The second thing is that God's Word is unbreakable. It will bear the weight of your life and your soul in God's glory. Thirdly, God's Word is readable. It was designed to be preached but it is readable. Jesus says 'Have you not read?' Fourthly we found out that without God's Word we can't take Jesus to the world. To take Jesus to the world you have to take God's Word.

Now we come to another one in this study. What else does Jesus say about His Word? We find out that Jesus is both the accused and He is His own defense attorney. We tell people not to do that but if you're Jesus you can do that. Jesus now defends Himself against these accusations, specifically if He is the Son of God, the Messiah and therefore the Savior of sinners. Let's look at our text for this study.

John 5:30 says [30] *"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."* So

Jesus came to do what the Father sent Him to do and the Father will send the Holy Spirit. So there is the unity of the Trinity. Jesus is not working freelance here but the Trinity is working in concert. Now notice what He says.

John 5:31 says [31] *If I alone bear witness about myself, my testimony is not true.* The Bible says to confirm a fact in a fallen world requires two or more witnesses. So Jesus' testimony is true but it is not deemed to be true unless Jesus fulfills what He has in His own Word that you need multiple witnesses to the truth of who He is, the Son of God and Savior of sinners. So here is where we are. We are going to call out some witnesses, five witnesses to be exact. So going back to Perry Mason, the camera has just panned to witness number one and there are five unimpeachable, star witnesses that He is who He is and He has come to do what He says He has come to do.

Before we go through this, years ago there was a very famous lawyer named Simon Greenleaf and he wrote A Treatise on the Law of Evidence which were made up of three volumes. He set out to disprove that Jesus was the Christ. After his efforts to impeach the claims of Christ, he not only did not impeach the Christ he went out to destroy but he was converted. So now I want to give you five unimpeachable witnesses that Jesus brings forward to affirm what He has said about Himself.

Witness number one is God the Holy Spirit. John 5:32 says [32] ***There is another who bears witness about me, and I know that the testimony that he bears about me is true.*** Remember when Jesus said, 'I must go away so that I can send to you another helper'? That was a phrase He loved to use about the Holy Spirit. So He is saying that the Holy Spirit is here as a witness to Me. The Holy Spirit has come to bear witness of Me. Acts 1:4, 5, 8 says [4] *And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; [5] for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. [8] But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."* The Holy Spirit has come to bear witness of Christ and to empower His people to bear witness of Christ. The ministry of the Spirit is to bring people to Christ, to bear witness to Christ, to affirm Christ and to empower us to speak of Christ and He is witness number one.

The second witness is John the Baptist. John 5:33–36a says [33] *You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. [34] Not that the testimony that I receive is from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved. [35] He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. [36a] But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John.* By the way, the Holy Spirit is a witness from heaven and He is greater. He is not the power but brings a power and now here is a witness from the earth, John the Baptist. John's job was being the forerunner of Christ. Jesus is baptized by John the Baptist. Jesus goes for 40 days in the wilderness and comes back. As He comes out of the wilderness and John has all of his disciples around him, John says, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world" and he bears witness of Christ.

People come to John and say "Are you the Christ?" and John says "No, I am not the Christ, behold the Lamb of God." The very next day Jesus comes out again and John's disciples start to follow Jesus but John the Baptist is not jealous for he says "He must increase and I must decrease" and again he says "Behold the Lamb of God!" So

two times John verbally confesses and his whole life ministry is to bear witness of Jesus Christ as well as him verbally doing it.

The third witness is signs, wonders and miracles. John 5:36 says [36] *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.* When Jesus says ‘My works’ He is referring to His miracles, the very thing that caused them to bring a charge to Him – when He healed the paralytic, raised the dead, made the blind to see and the lame to walk. Why are there miracles? Miracles are done by God for a purpose to either affirm His work of redemption or to affirm an agent of revelation or someone that He has sent. That’s why miracles cluster around Moses in the Bible when he is taking them out of Israel. They cluster around Elijah and the Prophets. The miracles cluster around Christ and the Apostles who are taking the Gospel to the Gentiles and finishing the Word of God. That’s why Paul said in II Corinthians 2:12, [12] *The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works.* The Bible says in Hebrews 2:4 [4] *while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.*

By the way, if you claimed to be a prophet and couldn’t pull off the miracle you were stoned for they were the credentials if you were speaking for God. It was also the credentials for the Apostles. Now Jesus is pointing out His works and that He is not doing this as a religious side show. Why do You heal this one and not that one? He says that everything He has done the Father has ordained to bear witness. The miracles bear witness and the key is in the phrase in the Bible – signs, wonders and miracles. Miracles are supernatural acts of God. The natural is suspended for the supernatural that is done for a purpose. Then God pulls back out and all the natural laws start back up again. It’s God showing up doing what God alone can do with His creation therefore it is supernatural and beyond our explanations. It is not beyond our observation but our explanations because only God could pull that off. There is the Incarnation, the virgin birth, which are miracles. Let’s work the phrase backward – signs, wonders and miracles. A miracle creates wonder to establish a sign. God is signifying something. Jesus’ miracles were given to Him by the Father for a specific purpose, to signify He is the Son of God who has come to save sinners.

Witness number four is God the Father. John 5:37–38 says [37] *And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen, [38] and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent.* Even the Father who sent Me has witness to Me and He is referring to the fact that while you can’t see Him, He has spoken. He spoke twice. Once was at the baptism of Jesus when the Father said “This is My Son in whom I am well pleased.” Secondly He spoke at the Mount of Transfiguration and Jesus said that some of you weren’t there to hear it but He spoke and said “This is My Son in whom I am well pleased, listen to Him.” Peter, James and John were there so ask them for they can bear witness. He spoke. Ask all of those who were at My baptism. He spoke. Both times the Father declared by verbal witness that He was the Son of God and the Redeemer.

The fifth witness is the Scriptures, the Word of God. John 5:39–40 says [39] *You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they*

that bear witness about me, [40] yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. He is not talking to people who don't like the Bible. These are Bible students He is talking to here. He says 'You *search* the Scriptures...' They knew the Bible for they had created codes, phrases, possible acronyms for they were utterly devoted to the study of the Bible but while they knew all the trees they missed the forest. They didn't see Jesus. He said they searched the Scriptures but you missed Me, even though they bear witness of Me. You didn't believe in Me. The Scriptures bear witness of Christ.

I know I'm in the field of possible job loss when I go after bumper stickers but here is one I go after all the time. The bumper sticker says 'God said it, I believe it and that settles it.' Wrong! With all due respect to the intention that is the height of arrogance. God does not need me to believe it to settle it. God said it and that settles it. Now do you believe it? When God said it He put it together with 66 books, over 40 plus human authors over 1600 hundred years and He did it to declare the preeminence of Christ. As the Scriptures bear witness, it is the majesty of the triune God revealed in Christ as our Creator, our Redeemer and our Sustainer.

So what does the witness of Christ declare and why is it that we would say 'it is the Word of God' or how is the Word of God a witness? I will answer this through a series of statements. It is here and it bears witness to Christ because it consistently points to Christ. It is the glory of the triune God revealed in the preeminence of Christ our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. How did everything come into existence? God the Father created everything through Christ and for Christ whether visible or invisible and that includes you and me. This space, time and matter are not eternal for God created them. The eternal God through Christ created everything including me and you. How do I get saved? God the Father saves us through Christ and His work on the cross by His grace and mercy. How did the Holy Spirit get to me? It is because Christ sent the Holy Spirit to me. How am I sustained? The majesty of God through the preeminence of Christ as our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer for it is in Him that you live, move and have your being.

People ask me all the time 'when do we stop heroic measures?' and then we'll walk through the Biblical things of when you do "let someone go." Just because you're young doesn't mean you're going to live a long life for the plug could be pulled at any moment but it's because of Him that you live, move and have your being. That is why Jonathan Edwards preached that sermon about you being the spider dangling on the thread over the flames of hell. The only thing that keeps the thread in place is the grace of God. God is ready to save you from those flames but only through Christ. Your life is not sure because of Wall Street or that you're an American or that we have a great military or that you have an IRA but it is in Him that we live and move and have our being. So when His people realize that then they know they see the glory of God revealed in the preeminence of Christ who is our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

Then all you have do is start working through the Scripture. Go back through the Old Testament and see why the offerings and sacrifices were there. Why is there the description of the temple and the tabernacle? Why is the information about the ark there? The ark is pointing to Christ. The offerings and sacrifices are pointing to Christ. The temple and tabernacle are pointing to Christ. Moses, Elijah and David are all pointing to Christ. All of those promises in the Old Testament are yes and amen and are all pointing to Christ. Everything there is pointing to Christ. Why is that phrase 'the angel of the

Lord' pointing to a pre-incarnate ministry of Christ in the Old Testament? It is all pointing to the Incarnation of Christ in which He becomes flesh for all eternity and is now glorified in that flesh having redeemed us from our sins. Why does all of the Old Testament find its fulfillment in Christ? It is because the Scriptures bear witness of Christ.

Then we get to the New Testament and it reaffirms that. You see in Luke 24 when two disciples are walking on the road to Emmaus and are questioning what just happened when Christ was crucified. They thought He was the Messiah, He was crucified, buried, put in the grave and now women come tell them that He has risen and they don't know what to think. They are downcast and Jesus comes along side of them and beginning with Moses and all the Prophets He explained Himself in all the Scriptures. Later they said 'was not our hearts burning within us while He explained to us Himself in all the Scriptures.' Later these disciples went to the Upper Room and tell everyone what happened to them and they don't know what to make of it. Then Jesus appears to them in the Upper Room and says "Was it not written that the Son of God had to be crucified, buried and rose on the third day' and then it repeats that with Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms that all things were fulfilled in Him.

Fast forward to Paul where he is about to leave and he is putting the mantel of ministry on Timothy. II Timothy 3:10–15 says [10] *You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, [11] my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. [12] Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, [13] while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. [14] But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it [15] and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.* What Bible was Timothy raised on as a child that was able to lead to wisdom that leads to salvation in Jesus Christ? It would have been the Old Testament.

The Old Testament is the Lord Jesus concealed, being revealed and the New Testament is the majesty of the Lord Jesus revealed. All of the Scriptures bear witness of Him. Here is what we've learned. The Scriptures are true, readable, unbreakable and the Scriptures are essential to fulfill the Great Commission. According to Jesus and what we've studied to today, it bears witness of Me. If you want to know Christ you have to know your Bible. You can know your Bible and not know Christ for they searched the Scriptures but they didn't know Jesus but you can't know Jesus without the Bible. It bears witness of Christ. If you want to study the Bible go find Christ. Meet Christ in that Bible.

They didn't do that and I'll tell you why. John 5:41–47 says [41] *I do not receive glory from people. [42] But I know that you do not have the love of God within you. [43] 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. [44] How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? [45] 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. [46] For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. [47] But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

You don't have to have a lot of discussion about who wrote the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament. Jesus just told us that Moses wrote them. Secondly, if you were a Jew in those days who would have been the three that you utterly loved and delighted in? They loved to be known as the children of Abraham. They are looking for another King David but top of the list would have been Moses. Jesus said if you had believed Moses you would have believed Me. Here is why they don't believe Him. It is because you would rather have glory from men than the glory that has come down from heaven to you. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory. You search the Bible to be known as a Bible student and you think what you do with the Bible will get you glory but you search the Bible to find out that you fall short of the glory of God but God has come down from glory, with glory to save you. Until you give up on yourself you won't rejoice in Me.

So here's the takeaway. Many claim to believe in the teaching of Moses but they refuse to believe in the Savior of Moses. The simple fact is that Jesus is the Author of your Bible, the Subject of your Bible, and He is the Object of your Bible. He is the Author and that's why we say it's infallible and inerrant. He is the Subject and that's why we say it is saving. He is the Object and that's why we say you can be saved when Jesus who is revealed in the Bible, by faith becomes your Lord and Savior. Why is it that we don't hunger for God's Word preached, or have a hunger to read it or we don't search God's Word? It is because we seek glory from men. Why is it when we do study the Bible we don't see Jesus? It is because we seek the glory of men.

When we seek God's glory, we love to meet Jesus who has come down full of glory and grace for you and me. You cannot know the Son of God as Lord and Savior without knowing the Word of God. Without hearing and reading the Word of God you cannot know the Son of God as Lord and Savior. Now you can know the Word of God and not know Him but you cannot know Jesus as Lord and Savior without knowing the Word of God. I have said this before but I want to say this again.

I believe there are Christians in liberal churches and I believe there are solid churches in liberal denominations but liberalism is the most antithetical religion against Christianity. It attacks all five of those witnesses. It attacks the Holy Spirit's ministry. Liberalism attacks the historicity of John the Baptist, the miracles of Jesus where they vacuum them out of the Bible saying they can't possibly have existed and attacks the Father's affirmation of Jesus at His baptism and the Mount of Transfiguration. It attacks the Bible as not being trustworthy because it knows to believe Christ as Lord and Savior you have to come to the Word of God to know the Son of God as Lord and Savior.

Let me say one other thing for all the conservatives. You can know the Word of God and not know the Son of God as Lord and Savior. You won't know Him as Lord and Savior until the Holy Spirit does His work and His glory is what you relish. You don't seek glory from men. You seek glory from the Father. Then you want to reflect that glory back to Him for He is your Savior and your Redeemer. John 17:3 says *[3] And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.* So how do you know Him? It is when the power of the Holy Spirit moves upon your heart and you search the Scriptures to meet Him. When you meet Him, hallelujah, what a Savior! Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. Thank You Father for the grace upon grace and mercy upon mercy that You grant to us. It is overwhelming, extraordinary and it is life changing. Today, if you are reading this and God is moving in your life and you're seeking, you can't know Jesus without the Bible but the purpose of the Bible is not simply just to know the Bible but to know the Word of God to know the God of the Word. Jesus the Son of God is revealed as the One who made you, who went to the cross to save you, has upheld you and has even brought you here so that you might come to Him. Jesus, I'm helpless, I'm hopeless and I give my life to You that I might have eternal life because I know You as Lord and Savior. If you made that prayer or want to make that prayer contact me at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200 for I would love to talk with you. What a glorious privilege! Now Father, receive praise for we're grateful for Your Word. It's true, unbreakable, and understandable and it leads us to Christ for I pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Power Point

CALLING OUT THE WITNESSES TO JESUS

1. God the Holy Spirit
2. John the Baptist
3. Signs, Wonders and Miracles
4. God the Father
5. The Scriptures – Word of God

THE WORD OF GOD AS A WITNESS

LIFE TAKEAWAY

Many claim to believe in the teaching of Moses, but they refuse to believe in the Savior of Moses.