

A summary of John 5:30-47

- 1. The fourfold testimony of the Son (Jesus): v. 31-40.** Jesus gives us four ways to know Him. Each of these four ways is applicable to our living. Together, they can cause us to grow in our revelation of Jesus Christ.
 - a.** The testimony of John the Baptist who prepared the way for Jesus and introduced Him (chapter 1). If only Jesus had testified about Himself, His testimony would not have been true (v. 31). This is the testimony of someone other than Jesus, the testimony of a servant of God. Therefore, we need to listen to the servants of God (many brothers and sisters) to receive revelation concerning Jesus Christ. Such a testimony may burn (affect) us and shine (convict) us so we can be attracted to Christ. This was John the Baptist's main function, and the function of every servant of God.
 - b.** The testimony of the Son Himself (v. 36). This testimony is greater than John the Baptist. This testimony is His works or deeds or labor (according to the Greek word). These works are the works commissioned by the Father that the Son accomplished in His earthly ministry (healing, raising from the dead, feeding the 5000, casting out demons). These are also the works today that we may experience in our lives as He takes care of us humanly so that we may eventually believe in Him and be saved. Many brothers and sisters can testify that they came to salvation through a "miracle" or some event that occurred to cause them to believe.
 - c.** The testimony of the Father (v. 37-38). This was the Father's declaration at the baptism of the Son in Matthew 3:17, Mark 1:11, Luke 3:22, and John 1:33. This testimony is even higher because the Father does not testify concerning the Son's works but concerning the Son Himself, and His sweet and intimate relationship with Him ("in whom I am well pleased"). The Father, in this third testimony, sends the Son so that we may believe in Him, not just in His works. This testimony may cause us to grow from merely hearing other brothers and sisters testify, to experiencing salvation through a miraculous work, to believing in and knowing Him through the Father's revelation through His word abiding in us (v. 38).
 - d.** The testimony of the scriptures (v. 39-40). Eventually, we grow to searching the scriptures or His word to know Him through the word, not just through others' testimonies, not just through His works in our lives, but through His word (logos in v. 38) becoming rhema (in v. 47). For this, when we come to the word, we must come to the Lord Himself (v. 40). We should never separate the Lord from the word.

- 2. Testifying:** We tend to emphasize prophesying in the church meetings (speaking for and speaking forth God). But we often speak without testifying or witnessing. We may like to become Bible teachers, explaining the Bible, but with no testimony. In the church meetings, the most important thing is to testify for the Lord. Acts 1:6 and 1:8 give us an example. In Acts 1:6, the disciples wanted to know when the Lord would restore the earthly kingdom of Israel. This shows that they had no idea of the Lord's purpose, just like Peter earlier who, because of his ignorance of the Lord's purpose, denied the Lord. In Acts 1:8, the Lord enlightens them by telling them that they will be His witnesses (or martyrs). This is His purpose. We need to become His witnesses, not just in word, but in our living, to live a crucified life, a life of a martyr.
- 3. How to testify:** We have a few guidelines in the New Testament. In Romans 1:9, Paul is one with God so God is his witness. In Philippians 1:8, God is again his witness. In 1 Thessalonians 2:5, God is once again his witness. Paul was one with God in his living. In our living, we must avoid false testimony. When we testify, are we one with the Lord? Are we one with Him in our living? John 5:41-44 is a warning to us. Many times, brothers and sisters encourage us to testify. Even the Lord, and the Bible, encourage us to testify (Deuteronomy 19:15). But we must realize that we are sinners. We like to receive glory from one another (especially if we serve well with some good results). We do not seek the glory that comes from God alone (v. 44). Yes, the Lord encourages us to testify, but not for our own glory. Therefore, whenever we testify, and whenever we hear a testimony, we must come to the Lord directly. We are surrounded with a great cloud of so many witnesses (in the Bible and throughout history, and today in the church life). Yet do we come to the Lord ourselves?

4. What to testify: We may testify how much we love the Lord, or how much the Lord means to us, yet never use a verse from the Bible. Our testimony needs substance. Otherwise what we are touched with may not stay with us but disappear when there is a trial or a test. Is there a verse in my testimony that I can point to and say that this particular word caused me to act in such and such a way? For example, Matthew 18:12 touched a certain brother and caused him to leave Montreal at a particular time when the Lord was blessing the church there (i.e. to leave the 99 sheep), and to go to another locality to seek the lost one on the mountain. There was a struggle. Should he go or not? Eventually, the logos word became rhema word to him to cause him to be clear to go, and even to give him the conviction to go the next time there is such an opportunity.

5. Reading the Old Testament in order to believe Jesus' words: v. 46-47. The Old Testament gives us concrete examples that cause us to understand or grasp many truths revealed in the New Testament. It is often helpful to read the New Testament in conjunction with the Old Testament. Without the Old Testament, part of the New Testament may be abstract or far away from us. When we read the Old Testament, we also need to find Christ, to see how Christ is revealed. If we believe the Old Testament, we will believe Jesus (v. 46). Eventually, we may see that much of Jesus's speaking can be realized in our living by concrete examples in the Old Testament.