

“The Testimonies About Jesus”

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### **Opening Prayer**

Good morning and welcome to KUMC/PCUMC. If you are visiting us this morning for the first time or the first time in a while, a special welcome to you. We are thankful you are here with us, and we pray that you would find our church to be open, friendly, and most importantly God-fearing. We are in the middle of the Lenten season at the moment, and we are using the Gospel of John to guide our lessons as we focus in on the person of Jesus. Most of the year we are concerned about what we are called to do, during Lent our focus is on who it is that is calling us. On Wednesdays we have been looking at the miracles of Jesus and on Sundays we are looking at some of His major teachings. This morning we are going to read about the testimonies Jesus gives. Simply this morning we are looking at the evidence Jesus shares with the people of His day about who He actually is. The sharing of these testimonies for us is important because it is just another piece of evidence showing that our faith is in fact real.

If you were here on Wednesday you heard the background for today’s message. Jesus had been in Jerusalem and had dared to heal someone on the prescribed day of rest, the Sabbath. This was a major no-no at the time, and when Jesus was confronted about healing the man Jesus’s response was that the Lord is always working... and so was He. John 5:18 reads “For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.” To equate yourself as equal with the Lord was punishable by being stoned to death according to Jewish law, so there were serious accusations leveled against Jesus. Jesus’s response to these accusations that He was equating Himself with God is to give the people some proof. The portion we read today almost plays out like a court case, with Jesus giving evidence from several different sources. Specifically He calls on the witness of John the Baptist, the witness of His miracles, the witness of the Lord, and the witness of scripture. With these four different witnesses/testimonies Jesus gives an ironclad defense that He is who He says He is... the Son of God.

Verses 31-32 read “If I alone testify about Myself, My testimony is not true. There is another who testifies of Me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true.” The first witness that Jesus calls upon is a guy we looked at two weeks ago: John the Baptist. Verse 33 read “You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth.” If you were here when we started our Sunday Lenten sermon series, you heard John the Baptist’s testimony about Jesus, which was (in John 1:34) “I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God.” John’s testimony was very powerful, and most of the surrounding area of Judea believed that he was a great prophet. Even the Jewish leaders had sent out messengers and had come to

listen to John the Baptist, so for Jesus to be testified as the Christ by John was pretty good evidence. Of course Jesus doesn't stop there, fully recognizing that the Jewish leaders in particular didn't like John the Baptist because he spoke the truth. That and it is easy to deny one human's testimony. Therefore Jesus's second witness that He calls is one that they cannot easily deny, which is the works that Jesus performs.

In John 5:36 Jesus says "But the testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish... the very works that I do... testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me." Up to this point in the Gospel of John Jesus has performed several great public miracles. He has turned water into wine (an act of creation), He had told a Samaritan woman about her sins which she then testified to (a showing of omniscience), He had healed a nobleman's son from afar (an act of omnipotence and omnipresence), and He had healed a man who had been ill for 38 years simply by speaking to Him. (Another act of omnipotence.) All of these actions were clearly in the realm of God-given miracles, and they were all very public. By the time the Pharisees really begin to question Jesus about His claims to be the Son of God likely hundreds if not thousands of people had seen first hand His power. To claim miracles like this were hoaxes was not possible, and to claim that Jesus was doing them out of evil was very doubtful considering their righteous impact. (Remember even a Pharisee named Nicodemus had recognized that Jesus was special.) Combined with the testimony of John the Baptist, Jesus's argument that He is the Christ is pretty sound. He doesn't stop there though, He also goes on the offensive and cites the witness of the Lord... attacking the credentials of the ones who were accusing Him.

John 1:37-38 read "And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form. You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent." I don't know if you caught what Jesus actually said to the religious leaders there, but if we were to phrase it in our vernacular it would go something like "God sent Me, and He has made that clear. The reason you don't understand is because you don't know God and you don't even listen to Him." I don't know if you have ever tried to tell a teacher that they don't know what they are talking about in the subject that they are teaching, but it usually doesn't go well. Multiply that by a thousand for calling a religious teacher, a pastor or a priest, out on the fact that they are operating without knowing the Lord. Truthfully though, what Jesus is saying is true. The religious teachers who are questioning Him are not listening to what He is saying, they aren't noting His miracles, and they are frankly doing their religious duties for self-gain. So at this point Jesus has already shown that a credible human witness backs Him up. Jesus has shown that His miracles, His actions, testify that He is the Messiah; and He has correctly called into question the validity of those accusing Him. He isn't done yet though, as He has one last testimony that He calls on that is the knockout blow above all the others. He calls upon the witness of scripture, which shows again that Jesus is who He says He is.

Verses 39-40 read “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.” If you have been in our churches before then you have probably heard me talk about Old Testament prophecies and how they relate to Jesus. Here are just a few scriptures from the OT that foretell who Jesus is. Micah 5:2 “But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.” (Jesus was born in Bethlehem.) 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 7:12-13 “When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.” (Jesus was a direct descendent of David, and His kingdom we know has no end.) Isaiah 53:5 “But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed.” (Jesus was crucified/killed for our sins. Even without the obvious spiritual implications He obviously did die upon the cross.) With scriptures like this (and MANY more) Jesus proves without a doubt that He is who He says He is to the Pharisees. With these four testimonies Jesus proves who He is to the Pharisees, He shows that He is God in human flesh. Unfortunately, most of the people who He was speaking to in His day did not listen. Thankfully, even though it is thousands of years later, all four of these testimonies still apply for us. God willing we will listen.

In our lives the testimony of John the Baptist is akin to hearing another person we trust speak about Jesus. A trusted family member, friend, coworker, etc. can testify to us that Jesus is real and that He is Lord. The testimony of works in our lives would be the things that we see God’s people doing. A changed life, a moral person, church attendance, scripture reading, etc. all show by action that God is at work in that person’s life. The testimony of the Father for us would be seen in our prayers and our personal walk with the Lord. Often we can tell just by being around someone that they walk with Jesus. The final testimony of scripture works for us the same way that Jesus used it. Scripture, the stories, the prophecies, the teachings, they all testify to who Jesus is and how we are supposed to follow Him. It is our guide in what a Christian should look like and how we should act. Following it is a confirmation to the world that we are His.

In coming to a close with this message, it is important that we address the world we live in right now. If you are reading this near the time it is written, then you know stress. The coronavirus pandemic has taken the world by storm. The political and theological divides that exist in our lives are major concerns as well. These three things all sit on top of whatever issues and problems we individually are facing. Basically, Beloved Congregation, in a time like this we need reminders that our faith is real. The above examples Jesus gives and how we use them in our lives are crucial in reminding us that the Lord is in control even when the world seems to be falling apart at the seams. The Lord’s words to us “I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20) and “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Deuteronomy 31:6) should

ring especially true when we are afraid. No matter what this world throws our way He is still in control. We do not serve a Creator who turns a blind eye or is unable to help. Rather we serve a Lord who will see us through if we but cling to Him. Beloved Congregation, cling to your Lord today. Be reminded that the faith you hold is real. Be assured that in the midst of many scary things that all things will be made ok through Him who died for us. The Lord is in control.

Let us pray,

**Closing Prayer**