

The Gospel of John (5:31-47)

A House Church Outline

Suggestion: Do this lesson over 2 weeks

1. Praise *(Purpose: To worship God)*

- What are you thankful for this week? *(let the group's secretary write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)*
- Song Service
 - Sing a few songs of praise to God

2. Pray *(Purpose: To carry each others' burdens and to seek the Lord)*

- What challenges did you have this week? *(write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)*
- Go into a season of prayer

3. Review *(Purpose: To learn accountability)*

- Tell us how it went with what you promised to do in last week's meeting? *(e.g. Who did you share your faith with this past week? Who did you minister to? How did actioning your I WILL STATEMENT go?)*
- *Where people have failed to fulfil what they said they would, do not be harsh with them but gently encourage them to try again in the coming week. Give them more support by phoning or joining them in the week.*

4. Give *(Purpose: To be good stewards of our monies)*

- This is the time to return tithes and offerings. If done electronically, kindly ensure that you get the bank account details of your local church from your treasurer. Don't forget to complete an envelope and to send the breakdown to him/her.

5. Discover *(Purpose: To learn to listen to God, and be obedient to His Word)*

- **Notes for the facilitator**

- Read *Desire of Ages (DA)*, p. 211-213
- Vss 31-40: "Recognizing that His own authority was not accepted (v. 31), Jesus developed His argument by an appeal to four different witnesses: (1) to the witness of John (vs. 32-35); (2) to the miracles (v. 36), which the Jews could not ignore; (3) to the witness of the Father (v. 37); and (4) to the Scriptures (v. 39) and particularly to the writings of Moses (vs. 45-47), whom the Jews acknowledged as their pre-eminent authority" *(SDA Bible Commentary)*
- Vs 38: "The Jews had the Scriptures in their possession, and supposed that in their mere outward knowledge of the word they had eternal life. But Jesus said, 'Ye have not His word abiding in you.' **Having rejected Christ in His word, they rejected Him in person.** 'Ye will not come to Me,' He said, 'that ye might have life'" (DA 212).
- "**The Jewish leaders had studied the teachings of the prophets concerning the kingdom of the Messiah; but they had done this, not with a sincere desire to know the truth, but with the purpose of finding evidence to sustain their ambitious hopes. When Christ came in a manner contrary to their expectations, they would not receive Him; and in order to justify themselves, they tried to prove Him a deceiver.** When once they had set their feet in this path, it was easy for Satan to strengthen their opposition to Christ. The very words that should have been received as evidence of His divinity were interpreted against Him. Thus they turned the truth of God into a lie, and the more directly the Saviour spoke to them in His works of mercy, the more determined they were in resisting the light" (DA 212).



- Vs 43: “Jesus came by the authority of God, bearing His image, fulfilling His word, and seeking His glory; yet He was not accepted by the leaders in Israel; but when others should come, assuming the character of Christ, but actuated by their own will and seeking their own glory, they would be received. **And why? Because he who is seeking his own glory appeals to the desire for self-exaltation in others.** To such appeals the Jews could respond. **They would receive the false teacher because he flattered their pride by sanctioning their cherished opinions and traditions. But the teaching of Christ did not coincide with their ideas. It was spiritual, and demanded the sacrifice of self; therefore they would not receive it.** They were not acquainted with God, and to them His voice through Christ was the voice of a stranger” (DA 212).
- “They had signally failed to subvert the authority of Jesus or to alienate the respect and attention of the people, many of whom were convicted by His words. **The rulers themselves had felt deep condemnation as He had pressed their guilt home upon their consciences; yet this only made them the more bitter against Him.** They were determined to take His life. **They sent messengers all over the country to warn the people against Jesus as an impostor. Spies were sent to watch Him, and report what He said and did. The precious Saviour was now most surely standing under the shadow of the cross”** (DA 213).
- **Vs 46: Moses would accuse you:** Jesus points His hearers to the startling fact that if they had rightly understood that Law, they would have seen Him revealed in it. Thus they stood condemned by their greatest prophet. – *SDA Bible Commentary*
- **Vs 46: Moses wrote of me:** This is apparently not a reference to any particular passage in the writings of Moses, unless it be Deut. 18:15, 18, but rather a general allusion to the elements of the Pentateuch that pointed to Christ, particularly to the sanctuary service and to the prophecies of Jacob (Gen. 49:10) and to Balaam (Num. 24:17). If the Jews had rightly understood these, they would have been prepared to accept Christ when He came. Instead, they saw the precepts of Moses only as the basis of a legalistic way of life; consequently, they failed to recognize Jesus as the Messiah, and thus placed themselves under the condemnation of the very writings by which they thought they were living. – *SDA Bible Commentary*
- *Read John 5:31-47. Preferably let one person read it. Let everyone then put down their Bibles and get the group to reconstruct the passage in their own words. This teaches the group to be careful in quotation Scripture correctly and to use it as the basis of their discussions.*
- **Discussion Questions** *(use only a few). The notes in italics after some of the questions below are for the facilitator, and not to be read out to the group.*
 - What is the purpose of a witness in a court of law? If you were to build a case for Christianity, how important would it be to present credible witnesses that could be believed? How is Christianity affected by non-credible witnesses? *(ask one question at a time)*
 - What are the different things Jesus points to as evidence (witnesses) that his ministry is valid and true (see vss 31-40)? Does this number meet the requirement to prove something legally in Old Testament Law (see Deut. 17:6, 19:15)? *(ask one question at a time)*
 - What was John the Baptist’s testimony about Jesus? Read John 1:7-8, 19-23, 29-30; 3:28-30. Why do you think Jesus had a forerunner to announce his coming? *(ask one question at a time)*
 - How do you think Jesus’ miracles (works) testified to His origin, mission and ministry? Read John 3:2, 10:25, 14:11. *[Up to this point in history, how many people had been turning water into wine, healing the lame, opening the eyes of the blind, and raising the dead?]*
 - What was the Father’s testimony concerning Jesus? Read Matt. 3:16-17; 17:5 and John 12:28. Why was this testimony so important? *(ask one question at a time)*

- How is God revealed through his Son? Read Heb. 1:1-3. How does this substantiate the witness of the Father? (*ask one question at a time*)
- How does Scripture testify about Jesus? Here are two examples: Isa. 53:3-9; Micah 5:2.
- How is it that Jews studied the Scriptures so diligently, and yet missed Jesus, of whom the Scriptures testify? What similar danger applies today in studying the Bible? (*ask one question at a time*)
- Why do you think the Jews hated Jesus with such intensity, even though His life and works proved a divine origin?
- Give examples of ways that people can be driven by the 'praise of men'? Why is it so dangerous for a Christian?
- How do you think Moses would accuse the Jews, who supported and defended his writings?
- **Application Questions** (*select a few depending on your time. One has to be the I WILL STATEMENT*)
 - Would you consider yourself a credible witness for Christ? Why or why not?
 - How often do you spend time studying Scripture? What book / theme are you exploring at the moment? How would you like to improve, your devotional life with God (where applicable)? (*ask one question at a time*)
 - What stands out for you in this passage, that you would like to apply in your life?
 - I WILL STATEMENT: Formulate an I will statement in response to what you have discovered in the Word. Let the group's secretary also record these in an A4 notebook. Ensure that everyone gets a chance to give their I WILL STATEMENT. You have to be specific. E.g. "I will read the first 5 books of the Bible in the next 2 months, and highlight all the places where there is a reference to Jesus. Then I'd like to share my findings with my friend Peter."

6. Share (*Purpose: To be witnesses of our faith*)

- Do you have anyone you could share today's lesson with this week? *Be specific.*

7. Closing prayer

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