

Sermon Series: LIFE IN HIS NAME

Sermon Title: Testifying to Life

Text: John 5:31-47

Discussion Questions:

Have you ever heard the phrase “**in the dock**”? It means to be **on trial** - especially in a criminal case (used primarily in the United Kingdom). The expression employs **dock** in the sense of “an enclosed place for the defendant in a court of law.” For example: “The accused stood *in the dock* through the entire proceeding.”

Author C.S. Lewis wrote a book entitled “**God in the Dock**” (*actually published posthumously*) describing how we, humans, have put God on trial. It’s based on an analogy made by Lewis suggesting that modern human beings, rather than seeing themselves as standing before God in judgment, prefer to place God on trial while acting as His judge.

Discuss this—

- Do you agree with C.S. Lewis that we (*as a current American culture*) have put God on trial?
- If you were to ask the “average person on the street” here in Chambersburg who God is, what do you think they would say? How about if you posed this question to a typical 20-year-old on a state university campus - what do you think they would say?
- I believe it can also be said that we’ve put the Bible “in the dock”. I think it can safely be said that the majority of Americans stand in judgment of the Bible - rather than allowing the Bible to stand in judgment over them. Do you agree? If so, what are some ways that people stand in judgment of the Bible?
- Do you believe that the day is coming when each and every person will stand in front of God - and will be judged by Him (be honest, what do you believe)? What do you think will happen to all of our notions of being the judge of God in that moment? How might (or should) our answer to this question effect the way we live our lives in the here and now?

Examination:

- Go back and read again **John 5:24-30**.
 - What do you think Jesus meant when He said that all who hear His word and believes “has eternal life and will not be judged”?
 - Jesus says in verse 28 that a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear His voice and come out - and will give an account for the way they lived their lives. Do you really believe this? How is this truth viewed in our culture? What is the right thing to do with this knowledge?
 - Do you think there’s a difference between a kind of “believing” that won’t save people from judgment - and a kind of believing that will save people from judgment?
 - What do you think will happen to those in verse 29 who will rise to be condemned?
 - The key to understanding the fifth chapter of John is to see that Jesus is basically “in the dock” - or on trial before the Jewish leaders. These leaders have actually reached

a verdict (in verse 18) that Jesus is guilty of a capital offense (blasphemy), and believe themselves to be justified in meting out their sentence (killing Jesus) right there on the spot.

- Do you see the irony in this? Who is it that is really on trial?
- What are the Jewish leaders guilty of (if anything)?
- Is there anything Jesus could do or say that would cause these Jewish leaders to believe what Jesus is saying is truth?

• Read **John 5:31-47**.

- In this second half of Jesus' response (sermon) to the Jewish leaders, Jesus seems to acknowledge that He's on trial. What words does He use in these verses that give the impression that He's embracing the fact that this is a trial?
- Why is it that if a person testifies about himself - his testimony isn't true (v. 31)?
- Is Jesus acknowledging that everything He claimed about Himself in the first half of this sermon (verses 19-30) isn't enough to PROVE that He is the Son of God?
- Who is the "another who testifies" in verse 32?
- Why does Jesus mention John the Baptist as a "key witness" - even though Jesus doesn't accept human testimony? Why doesn't Jesus accept human testimony?
- What "works" is Jesus referring to in verse 36? Are these the "signs" that John describes?
- How are the works "weightier" than John's testimony?
- How has the Father testified concerning Jesus? What does Jesus mean by saying that the Jewish leaders haven't heard His voice or seen His form (v. 37)?
- The Scriptures (*referring to the Old Testament*) testify about Jesus. How can the Jewish leaders study the Scriptures - and yet miss the fact that they are pointing directly to Jesus?
- Verses 41-44 describe the hearts and motives of the Jewish leaders.
 - Who do they love?
 - Who DON'T they love?
 - What is their standard of acceptance?
 - What is it they are looking for - and living for?
- How is Moses the one who will accuse the Jewish leaders (v. 45)?
- What do you make of the "witnesses" that Jesus puts on the stand in this trial (John the Baptist; miracles; the Father; the Scriptures; Moses)? Are these enough to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God?
- What else would Jesus need to do or say to prove that He is God? What else COULD He do more than what He has already done?

Application:

Spend some time this week meditating on the fact that when you put your faith in Christ, you are a born-again child of God. As God's child, you have crossed over from death to life. You are free from condemnation. You will not be judged. If you haven't believed in Jesus - what are you waiting for? The moment you die - or Jesus returns to this earth - your eternal destiny is sealed. Don't wait.