

Season 4, Episode 11: Glorious Life (5:31-47)

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Felicity: This podcast is sponsored by 10ofthose.com. 10ofthose.com handpick the best Christian books that point to Jesus and sell them at discounted prices. You'll have heard us mention Nancy Guthrie's I'm praying for you. And even better than Eden books, you can grab them at 10ofthose.com. I was with Nancy this last weekend. It was a biblical theology workshop here in the States, and she mentioned that one was happening in London on the 28 May. If you happen to live in London, get yourself along for this fantastic few hours where you'll be tracing through the themes of the Bible and understanding how to read Bible passages in context. Really great use of time. We'll link to it in our show notes.

Sarah: Welcome to two sisters in the cup of tea My name is Sarah and I live in the UK. And this is my sister Felicity and she lives in the USA. Hi. Felicity. We're on the penultimate episode of season four. What's the biscuit of choice for such a moment?

Felicity: Well, I did think that, actually. And it is a moment in my biscuit cup as well, because this is my last packet of biscuits, thankfully. It's a classic classy chocolate hobnob. No frills, no funny flavors in there. Just straight up hobnob to go with my teapot brewed Yorkshire tea, which is very nice. I think it actually does make a difference if it's brewed in a teapot.

Sarah: Yeah, I do love a teapot. I've been really enjoying getting my teapot out more recently, actually, with different groups around our home. It's good. The teapot is good. I think you're right about the biscuit. I feel like we've kind of soared into this foreign Bitchy's world this season and tried some different slants on the digestive hobnob. And whilst it's been an interesting experiment, I think you're right to go for just that.

Felicity: I think that's it. It's an experiment which was interesting to do, but it's staying in the experiment.

Sarah: I've got two packets left of biscuits in my cupboard, but I don't really want to open them. One's, like, lemon chocolate flavor digestive and one's strawberry. And I think why I even buy.

Felicity: Them fruit and chocolate, I'm just not a fan of that. One of the best, actually, I think, was the mince pie flavored digestive. I think that was the most convincing of these experimental choices.

Sarah: Yeah, I didn't try that one. Yeah.

Felicity: Unlucky.

Sarah: Oh, wow. So, on the final stretch, we're in the last bit of John, chapter five today, and we have got one more episode coming next week. This is it. We're going to reach the end of this first five chapters of John. How do you feel?

Felicity: It feels I mean, I feel like it's been a joy to be encountering Jesus so up close and personal, and it feels very sad to kind of walk away. And I appreciate we're not walking away from Jesus as we rest John for a bit, maybe to come back to him. But it's been great, isn't it? The passage this week? As ever, hard hitting every sentence.

Sarah: Yeah, it really hits hard. Let's get into it. Do you want to read it for us and then we'll walk through it?

Felicity: Sure. Okay. So it's chapter five, verses 31 through to 47. If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true. There is another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is true. You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth. Not that I accept human testimony, but I mention it that you may be saved. John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light. I have testimony weightier than that of John for the works that the Father has given me to finish the very works that I am doing, testify that the Father has sent me, and the Father who sent me has Himself testified concerning me. You've never heard his voice, nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. You studied the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures

that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life. I do not accept glory from human beings. But I know you. I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts. I have come in my Father's name and you do not accept me. But if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him. How can you believe, since you accept glory from one another? But do not seek the glory that comes from the only God, but do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?

Sarah: Thank you. Yeah. This is a big end of the chapter, isn't it? Just the context of what we were saying last time. This is now. He's speaking to the Jewish leaders. They've been questioning him about his work on the Sabbath, isn't it? And also he's claimed to be equal with Father Father. And we walked through that last week in terms of how he responded.

Felicity: Yeah, they're definitely in a position of persecution towards Him, aren't they? This is kind of it's ramping up his antagonism all over it.

Sarah: And so this is then his kind of response really, isn't it?

Felicity: Yeah. And it is interesting, even if you were just to do the classic check what the repeated words are, you do see in those first three paragraphs, testimony and testify comes up so many times, isn't it? So it makes you think, well, this is the evidence. This is the testimony to who Jesus is. That's kind of where John's been going all the way through, hasn't it? Like, well, this is who Jesus, this Jesus is. And I feel like as we have hit chapter five, then the shift has been this is who Jesus is and this is the opposition to Jesus. Like, this is what the kind of the leaders, the religious police as such are thinking about Jesus. That seems to be in the spotlight, doesn't it?

Sarah: But before we get don't get there yet. Before we get on to that and onto them, I mean, isn't it just astounding to just be reminded by Jesus how weighty the testimony is towards Him?

Felicity: Yeah, it's interesting, isn't it? Because if I test about myself, my testimony is not true. That's just quite a statement in itself. So then he starts saying, there's actually more to this than just what I say. And this is Jesus Himself saying, I'm going to give you more. That's so gracious, isn't it? To give you more than just me standing here saying these things. And I love that. Actually, he points to John the Baptist as his first report, but he says.

Sarah: He doesn't need like 34 he doesn't accept human testimony. I think he's kind of getting it. He doesn't need it because he he is God revealed. Like he doesn't need human testimony. But I love it that he says, but I mention it so that you may be saved. Like his compassion for his people is such that he's mentioning this testimony around Him so that they may be saved, which is extraordinary in the light of them starting to edge their way towards wanting to persecute and kill Him.

Felicity: Yes, yes, absolutely. And I think it's easy to think, I guess, because John the Baptist, he only gets a short little kind of spotlight in the Gospels, isn't he? But actually remembering that he was a really big deal. And when he says, you have sent to John, that is like the religious elite of Jerusalem have sent to John is such a big deal that they are listening to John. And people did listen to John. Everyone was emptying out of Judea to come and listen to John. So his testimony is no light thing. But he says that was just a lamp that Bernie gave lights and you chose for a day.

Sarah: Yeah. And just for a while. And then he says, I had testimony weightier than that of John, which is a big deal to say that, isn't it? As he's saying, John was a big deal. He was attracting a lot of attention. He was like one of the Old Testament prophets, wasn't he?

Felicity: Yeah, yeah.

Sarah: And then, but Jesus is saying here, well, I've got testimony weightier because the work that I've been doing and that you're seeing like you're seeing it in front of your very eyes, like this is it.

Felicity: Yeah. And so immediate, isn't it? Because we've just seen the paralytic being healed at the pool. And then you go back, even just a few sentences and you've got the official sum. There's so much evidence, like the works that Jesus is doing. There's very little conclusion you can come to about that, apart from he is God because he's giving life, isn't he? Like, who does that apart from God? And I feel like then even just these people who

are standing before Him, they're seeing that and they're hearing John the Baptist. And then we've touched on the Old Testament kind of references all the way through this, all these names that are being given to Jesus, they're the experts in that. So all of this evidence is stacking up?

Sarah: Well, yes, as he says to them, you study the Scriptures diligently and, you know, he calls on the Scriptures and he calls on Moses in terms of, like, you should know, the puzzle pieces are all here for you to see. And yet you're missing the heart of what all of this points to, which is Jesus.

Felicity: Yeah, it's huge, isn't it? When he says in verse 37, you have never heard his voice, nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell on you, for you do not believe the one he said. And I think that is the crux of the matter, isn't it? Because it's not actually about the testimony and the evidence, it's about their lack of belief. And without belief, without a heart that's willing to trust Jesus, then any load of evidence is not going to be sufficient.

Sarah: Yeah, the evidence is not the problem, is it? So in verse 40, yet you refuse to come to me to have life. The word refuse is very loaded kind of word, isn't it? It's not sitting on the fence. It's not just meandering about it's refusing to come, like a toddler refuses to come.

Felicity: Yeah. Knowingly.

Sarah: Defiance though, isn't it?

Felicity: Yeah, absolutely.

Sarah: And I think that kind of refusing to come to him to have life, and that kind of bring for me, that brought back John, chapter 21, like John's purpose statement in writing that you would have life in his name. Like, listen, all this so that you'd have life, because that's at the heart of what Jesus is offering, but it's got to be through Jesus. And they're not willing if you say it's the heart that's not willing to come to Jesus for that life.

Felicity: Yeah. Is it worth just pausing here and just like, considering actually the testimony is wastey and it is true and it is valid and we can trust the evidence for who Jesus is, wherever our heart is out, actually, just to objectively see that the evidence for Jesus identity is really strong. I find that really reassuring because there's something about other people rejecting Jesus which can just unsettle me a bit, I think especially people I know or people who I think are very clever, that kind of thing. I just think this has been helpful to me as I've heard the testimony testimony, testimony. I know Jesus really is who he said he is, and I can trust that and I can stake everything on that.

Sarah: Yeah, I think we need it, don't we? We need the reminder of what we're eating and what we're believing, who we're believing in, and we need the reminder of the weightiness of the testimony behind Him, don't we? And as you say, it can really unsettle us. Of course, a number of us will have friends who walked away from the Lord or we see those kind of big public stories of that happening and I think just, yeah, we come back to this, don't we? Come back to the weight of testimony. And also at the heart of it is the heart response to that testimony, isn't it?

Felicity: I think that's it because the question that's raised is then, so why? Why are you rejecting Jesus? Why are these people in opposition to Jesus? And in fact, why is anyone in opposition to Jesus? I think the next 41 to 47 does give us quite a sobering picture of why, doesn't it?

Sarah: Yeah, so I think he's really straight up, isn't it? He says, I know you, I know that you don't have the love of God in your heart. So whilst you might be studying the scriptures diligently, there's no love there yeah, love for the Lord. And they don't accept Jesus. And yet I think what really struck out, what really stuck out for me was verse 44, which feels like the kind of climax of his argument against them saying, how can you believe, since you accept glory from one another, but do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? And I think that for me, looked like the kind of big heart issue behind the unbelief was selfglory seeking glory from others, seeking approval from others, seeking to be built up in an echo chamber and not seeking glory. The glory of God.

Felicity: Which is interesting, isn't it? Because the glory of God as described throughout all the scriptures that have been studying diligently, far surpasses any glory that any human can give. And Jesus himself has said that. But I think in order for them to accept Jesus and to trust Jesus and to acknowledge that he is who he is, that requires an upturning.

Everything needs to be turned upside down at the moment. They are gloriously powerful in their own eyes. And to then say that Jesus is King, to say that he is God, I can see how that really does turn things on its head. And you're at risk of losing if you don't really think or if you're not quite sure that the glory of God is bigger in Jesus.

Sarah: And we saw that in Nicodemus, didn't we saw that he didn't come questioning in the open daylight, even questioning at night, like he's one of these guys questioning, thinking through, like, wrestling with what he was seeing before him and the scriptures that he knew and wonderfully. You read on in John's Gospel, and it seems that Nicodemus chose the glory of God over the glory of man. And it's wonderful to see, isn't it? But this is the battle. This is the battle of the heart. And I think I don't know, I feel so convicted by this, but I think we were chatting earlier just the importance of whilst we need to kind of recognize ourselves in the Pharisees at this point, if we're trusting in Jesus, we're not in the same position that they are right now. By God's extraordinary grace, we sit in a different position to them.

Felicity: Yes.

Sarah: Would you say?

Felicity: Yes, thank the Lord, we do. Because I think it is one of those, isn't it, where we can read this and at the same time, I feel like at the same time, I'm going, Pharisees, you idiots, come on. It's so obvious. But then the other side of me is like, oh, but selfglory, that is something that I'm pulled towards, empty towards. Yeah, absolutely. So it's really, really helpful to just remember that we are in Christ, we have rested in Him, we have life through Him. But then as we read something like this, then we are also called to have a repentant heart and to fight the fight against this particular temptation. And I think it's helpful to see that this is a deadly obstacle, like selfglory and running after that can be a deadly obstacle. That is the reason why these guys are not running to Jesus.

Sarah: So they're not having a sin alive, isn't it?

Felicity: Yeah, exactly. It's depriving them of that. So for us, as those in Jesus, it's not deadly in that our sin has been dealt with. Yeah, but we want to just be aware that it's dangerous. This is a dangerous thing, isn't it, to begin to want our glory over God's glory.

Sarah: Yeah. And I think it's just a helpful checkpoint on our hearts, isn't it? As you say, it is a dangerous thing. And actually just yeah, I just wonder whether we don't ask ourselves enough, like, actually, where am I seeking self glory over God's glory in this moment? Whether it's posting something on Instagram or whether it's the way that I'm talking about myself or others, or whether it's the way I'm seeking approval from others, which is what these guys are doing in their religiousness or in just life in general, like, yeah, it's a healthy thing to check our hearts on this, isn't it? And just kind of I think for me, just another kind of wake up of like, this feels hard on my heart, but extraordinarily, I am in Christ and I see my heart and I see that I need to run to the cross. And in John's Gospel, the cross is the kind of epitome of God's glory. And so that's where we run and we trust that he will do that work in our hearts to put to death selfglory. Yeah.

Felicity: And interestingly, even in talking about it, even in acknowledging that and wanting to push one another to run to the cross, we are giving God glory in that. That's a joyous thing, isn't it? Because in the pain of the battle, then actually we point to Jesus in that. I think one of the kind of questions on this is maybe are we seeking others? Are we seeking to do things in front of others more than we're seeking to do things in front of God? So God sees everything and our ordinary faithfulness is bringing Him glory is for Him. And I think that's been a helpful check on my heart as I've been thinking about it this week, actually, big.

Sarah: Time and big time for both of us. Come on, we're recording our conversation. We are in public, aren't we? Like, we talk about this, we pray about this so much because we're so keenly aware of the battle for our art in this and our decisions to record our conversations and what that looks like for us. And we do cover people's prayers for that, don't we? Like, yes, we really appreciate people's prayers because I feel this battle keenly when it comes to pressing record.

Felicity: Yeah. So we pray. Do you want to pray for us now, Sarah? Pray for us all in this lovely.

Sarah: Father, we just thank you so much that we come to you knowing that we need your grace, knowing that we need that cross. We need to stand at the foot of the cross each and every day and be shaped by Your love, first and foremost. And so as we bring our hearts to you with conviction of sin and with the battles that we face in seeking self glory rather than Your glory, we thank you that we can come. We thank you that we can draw near. We thank you that there is no sin that has not been dealt with on that cross. And we thank you that as we come to the end of chapter five and the end of our kind of section in John's Gospel, we thank you that You've given us a rich view of Jesus and a rich view of his wonderful, extraordinary, glorious love and lifegiving mission. And we just prayed you so much for the joy it is to dwell on his name and to dwell on Him. We thank you that in Him we have life. Amen.

Felicity: Amen. So, last one in chapter five, but we have one more episode where we're going to reflect back on chapters one, three to five and we have a guest who's going to help us do that. We've got Dane Augland, who wrote *Gentlemen and Loli*. He's just about to release a new book called *Surprised by Jesus* and we're going to get him talking about that and reflecting with us on chapters one through to five.

Sarah: Yes. Which I'm really looking forward to with enjoying his book and we and we're really looking forward to talking to him and kind of just bringing out some of the big themes that we've seen, we try and review at the end of each season, don't we? And I think it's just a really helpful discipline to actually stop and reflect and look back on what we've seen over the last few years. Yeah, absolutely.

Felicity: Without moving on too quickly, I think that's really helpful.

Sarah: Exactly. So we look forward to that. There'll be questions in the show notes as ever, along with a link to that biblical theology workshop that's Justin mentioned. And of course, do sign up to our newsletter. That's where we kind of plow in our energies during the month, really, and that kind of links to other things we're dwelling on from Josh hostel as well. And we look forward to seeing you next week.

Felicity: Absolutely. Goodbye, everyone.

Sarah: Goodbye.

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