

John 5:19-30

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[0 : 00] Good morning. Please take your copy of God's Word and join me in John chapter 5. You would have no idea. Perhaps maybe only my wife knows all the things we've been walking through and dealing with.

A lot going on in the life of our church. And it's not all been good, but confident it's all being worked for good. This past week at the end of the week, which we do every year, your elders had a retreat together.

We got away, got some rest, just spent some time having fun, talked through a few matters. And it was good and it was rich.

But I will say that normally I do not plan to preach the Sunday after said retreat. Just circumstances didn't allow for somebody else to do so. So here we are, John chapter 5, verses 19 through 30.

And I think what you can expect from me is a little more devotional than it usually is. Certainly good, I think, for myself and I think for you to be reminded that I am not the Lord Jesus Christ.

[1 : 35] I don't think anybody had any notion of that at all. But I am imperfect and I am frail. Maybe a little more probable, it's also good for you to know that I am not just a handsome robot.

Which is what a handsome robot would tell you. But I'm especially feeling my frailty this morning. I'm grateful that God's word is not any less powerful as we open it together.

John's gospel follows a pattern. First, he will present a miracle that Jesus performs. A sign that grabs attention. The characters in the story, they're paying attention now to Jesus.

Or it creates some kind of conflict. And it's meant to do that for us as well. Second, he will record something of great importance that Jesus says.

So we definitely want to pay attention to the sign itself. But we really want to be paying attention to what Jesus says following that sign. Last week we looked at the beginning of chapter 5 where Jesus recorded healing a man at the pool of Bethesda who had been lame for 38 years.

[2 : 55] It has to be assumed that many people would have known this man. That he could not walk. And that his newfound ability to walk.

It just would have been attention grabbing. It would have been an astounding thing to see this man healed. It certainly got the attention of the Jewish religious leaders.

Particularly because Jesus performed this miracle on the Sabbath. They had added all kinds of regulation to the Old Testament commandment to keep the Sabbath.

And they were vigilant about pointing out when people weren't keeping the Sabbath. And so Jesus did not sin in healing this man.

Nor did this man sin in taking up his mat in obedience to Jesus. But they thought that they had. And so they were looking to kill him.

[3 : 52] He was being disruptive to the religious order. If you notice verse 16 and following of chapter 5. It says, And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus.

Because he was doing these things. This healing on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, My Father is working until now.

And I am working. It's an astounding statement that Christ makes of himself. Of his deity. And then it goes on. John says in verse 18.

This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him. Because not only was he breaking the Sabbath. But he was even calling God his own Father. Making himself equal with God.

Blasphemy or profaning the name of God. Was and is a serious infraction. It would be blasphemy for me to call myself God.

[4 : 56] It would be a terrible, terrible sin. If Jesus was in fact blaspheming. Then a pursuit of justice was in order.

That needed to be correct. But he was innocent of this charge. Because Jesus is God. Who is Jesus?

Who is Jesus? Is the most important question to be asked or answered. You must take up this matter. Who is Jesus?

Who do you believe that Jesus is? Last week I mentioned the trilemma. Jesus makes some astounding claims about himself.

What do you do with what he says about himself? You really only have three options. The trilemma.

[5 : 57] You must pick one of the following. He was either a liar. The things that he said about himself just were untrue. And he knew exactly what he was doing. And spinning this yarn.

Or he genuinely believed this about himself. But it's false. And so he's a lunatic. Or what he said about himself is true.

And so it's right for us to worship him as Lord. So that's the trilemma. Is he liar? Is he lunatic? Or is he Lord?

And we encounter this kind of trilemma in life. All the time. Not nearly as weighty as the matter before us. I'll give you an example.

Did you know that there are people today who think the earth is flat? They really do. If you're in the room, I don't mean to be insulting to you.

[7 : 00] We have to do something with that. What do we do with that? These people either don't really believe this to be true. They're fabricating it because they want to bother us and get it underneath our skin.

Or they really believe it's true. Or they're right. And I'll leave you to guess which one I think it is.

C.S. Lewis wrote in Mere Christianity, I am trying here to prevent anyone from saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Jesus.

I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus would not be a great moral teacher.

He would either be a lunatic on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg, or else he would be the devil of hell. A liar, right? You must make your choice.

[8 : 01] Either this man was and is the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool. You could spit at him and kill him as a demon, or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God.

But let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. For us to reduce him to merely a teacher, Lewis is saying, is a great insult to what he said about himself.

He's either a liar or a lunatic, or he is in fact who he said he is. He's the Son of God, the Lord of the universe. The Jewish religious leaders had already decided what they believed about Jesus.

In some places, it's recorded for us that they think he is insane. In others, that he is of the devil, the father of lies. John 5.18, This is why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him.

Because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own father, making himself equal with God. And it is in response to this judgment in their minds that John records the following teaching of Jesus.

[9 : 27] It's on the heels of this, right? John has been very careful about what he's recorded for us here. Here, it's following this that Jesus is going to teach. Let me pray for us, and then we'll read the text.

Father God, we do thank you this day for Christ, your Son. We are so very glad that he is, in fact, true to all of the things that he said about himself.

But we know that we need your help this morning to rightly understand this. What a vast thing to try to wrap our minds around.

What an incredible thing to have worked down deep into our hearts that it might bring forth fruit. We thank you for your word this morning and for what it says to this end.

We thank you that your word itself is powerful to change us, and we pray that you'd work by it. Help us to believe its promises and obey its commands and have affection for you, its author.

[10 : 33] We know we need your help in doing so. So we pray that you would help us, and we pray in Christ's name. Amen. So John 5, beginning in verse 19 and following. So, Jesus said to them, those who want to kill him because of what he said about himself being God, truly, truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing.

For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him so that you may marvel.

For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father.

Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life.

He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.

[11 : 54] For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to execute judgment because he is the Son of Man.

Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just because I seek not my own, but the will of him who sent me.

All right. So words of Jesus, which are not always easy to navigate through. Sometimes he speaks in ways that can be a bit difficult for us to understand.

However, there is a literary structure found in the book of John that helps us to this end. It's there. I need to put this in your notes for you so you can see it better yourself.

[12 : 54] But this text, verses 19 through 30, is, once again, a chiasmic structure. Okay. And I'm going to show you because why? Why is he repetitious?

It doesn't feel like he's making a progressive, logical argument the way Paul writes in many places. So this, then this, then this. Right? This language seems to loop back around.

You're right. Right? That impulse in you is correct. Right? So if you're unfamiliar with the chiasmic structure, it comes from the Greek letter for X, chi. Right? There's a center point to this text.

So I want to show it to you really briefly, show you what the center of it is. It'll help us a bit as we look on. So first, verse 19 and verse 30 correspond to one another.

Right? Fairly easy to apprehend that very thing. So you've got A and A prime, verse 19 and verse 30. So Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord.

[13 : 55] You see the phrase? And then again, in verse 30, I can do nothing on my own. See how the two things correspond. They set up some bookends to this passage of text.

Next we see, so B and B prime corresponding to one another, verses 20 through 23, and then verses 25 through 29.

So larger sections. But thematically, you can notice a pattern. talk of resurrection and then judgment. In the case of verses 20 through 23, then honor.

So resurrection, judgment, honor. And in the second case, verses 25 through 29, resurrection, judgment, and reward. So honor for Christ and the Father.

In the one case, resurrection, judgment, honor. In the second case, reward for those who place their faith in him. Resurrection, judgment, judgment, and reward. Which brings us to the center of the chiasm, which is verse 24.

[15 : 00] There Jesus says, Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but is passed from death to life.

Now there is a lot to talk about in this passage. We don't want to neglect it, but if, if we had a really limited amount of time together, which is fairly limited, a limited amount of time together, I would suggest to you in this case, what you most need to hear is what's being communicated in verse 24.

It's being built up, it's being clearly communicated to us in other parts of the passage, but verse 24, if you needed to hone in on a central thing, this is the thing that you should notice.

And this shouldn't be a surprise to us. In John's structuring of Jesus' words, he's driving a point that he's going to drive all throughout his gospel, like the greatest point that he could possibly drive.

For us to have eternal life, we must go to God through Christ. Jesus is the Messiah.

[16 : 13] It's the way that we can be saved. He states the purpose of the whole book. John 20, verse 30 and 31. Now Jesus did many other signs or miracles in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book, but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

This is the point that he's driving us at. Now I will tell you at this point, there's a temptation amongst pastors, people who preach.

We don't want to get up and be boring. I just don't want to be boring. The effort that I put into preaching sermons, I want to be well received. I want you guys to appreciate what happens on a Sunday morning.

at my purest intention, I want your lives to be changed from one degree of glory to another, the praise of Christ. We want it to be effectual. We want it to actually accomplish things when we come together and the temptation is to be innovative.

The temptation is to somehow say the same thing in some new way, some thing that will grab your attention otherwise.

[17 : 34] And I think this is a grave error. I'm so glad that when that little impulse rises up in me that the response to it is, just preach the word.

People are going to have tickling ears. Don't entertain them. Just preach the word and let us be a people who never grow tired of musing about this reality.

Apart from Christ, we are due death forever. But in Christ, we have eternal life.

This ought not be a thing that grows cold in our hearts. Perhaps the Bible is so replete with it, it says it over and over and over again because we need to hear it over and over and over and over again.

So we'll spend some time in these next few moments doing that very phrase. Jesus makes three astonishing claims in these 12 verses.

[18 : 38] That's what we'll do as our outline. I want to draw your attention to three claims that he makes. The first claim he makes is that he is aligned with the Father in action.

Jesus is aligned with the Father in action. verse 19-20 and verse 30. He's upping this claim.

The Father is working and I am working. Not only that, but I'm doing exactly what the Father does. He's doubling down on this claim that he is God.

Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord but only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise.

The Father loves the Son. This relationship shows him all that he himself is doing. He's going to do greater works than healing the lame man, greater works than these will.

[19 : 36] Verse 30. He says, I can do nothing on my own. This isn't speaking to Jesus' sovereign power. It's speaking to his relationship with the Father. He doesn't go rogue with his own will.

He says, As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just because I seek not my own will, but the will of him who sent me. Jesus is God.

Jesus does the very things that God is doing. Later on, he's going to say that he comes to seek and to save the lost.

He has a purpose in the world to redeem God's people. So, what do we do with this information? Is there anything applicable to us?

Of course. Of course there is. Firstly, we should trust Jesus with confidence. If we can behold Christ, then we are seeing the Father as well.

[20 : 34] If the Son does only what the Father does, Jesus never misrepresents God. He was chapter 1. He's an exact imprint of his nature.

To know Jesus is to know the Father. There's no contradiction between them, which means that Jesus is entirely trustworthy.

If we take up his word, we can know that this is God himself speaking to us. Which means we should submit to Jesus' authority, secondly. his perfect unity with the Father means his words carry the weight of divinity.

To resist Jesus' words is to resist God himself. It's the invitation to come and believe in him that we might have eternal life. Who Jesus is matters immensely because he's aligned with the Father in action.

This should cause us certainly to marvel at his works. Jesus says the Father will show him greater works so that we will marvel.

[21 : 49] The right response to this is worship. And, beloved, let me tell you that we live in a world that is looking for signs.

the greatest work that the living Christ accomplishes is bringing dead people to life. And this is happening all the time around us.

Dead people brought to life, moved along in holiness. It's a miraculous thing when people put off the way of the world, when they deny their flesh and they take up the things of God.

Because this is not our natural inclination. Right? By nature, we were, apart from Christ, children of wrath. But now we desire to seek holiness and this is miraculous.

It's miraculous. We ought to come together at church and we ought to look around at one another and see the evidence of God and grace in our life and be moved by it.

[22 : 53] Look at the goodness of our God in your brothers and in your sisters. If you were unmoved, unmoved by that on Sunday mornings, ask that God would open your eyes to see the greatness of Christ in the people that you come to fellowship with.

Marvel, marvel at his works. Fourthly, we should pattern our obedience after Christ. Jesus sought not his own will but his father's.

And that same posture of joyful submission should mark our lives as well. And we do not have to wonder what his will is.

We have a text. It's been granted to us. We can pattern our lives after the commandments that have been given to us in the scripture. So that's Jesus' first claim that he is aligned with the father in action.

Second claim that he makes is that he has the power to grant life. Jesus has the power. As God, he has the power to grant life.

[24 : 01] In verse 26, he says, for as the father has life in himself, he is a source of life. He doesn't need any sustaining power. He is the power, so the son has life in himself.

He doesn't need sustenance but grants it to others. Notice verse 21, for as the father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the son gives life to whom he will.

Verse 24, truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment but has passed from death to life.

Verse 25, truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is here when the dead will hear the voice of the son of God and those who hear will live.

Today's passage presents us with two forms of resurrection. There is a physical resurrection that will come and every single one of us will experience it.

[25 : 12] We'll address it briefly in a moment. But here, those who hear the voice of the son of God are experiencing spiritual resurrection now.

The time is coming and is now here. Dead people will come to life. And the eternal life that we have now, we don't ever want to belittle the eternal life that comes after this temporal life, but we also don't want to neglect that we have eternal life now.

I grew up in a tradition that was constantly looking heavenward. what a good thing to do, but often at the neglect of now. I grew up in a tradition that sang the first, second, and fifth verse of every single song.

And you know what we missed all the time in our singing? The now. The eternal life now. We were constantly being told about how to come to faith in Christ, and we were constantly being told about what would await us later, but never anything in between.

The in between is rich, and it's good. it's not easy living on this side of glory, but it's good. Eternal life now, John tells us, and I can't wait to get there, because it's so very good in chapter 17, is that we know God and Jesus Christ, who he has sent.

[26 : 41] That's John 17, and verse 3. We can know God now. And that phrase, to know God, again, ought to warm us.

Those who know him have some sense of what that means. It's a good, glorious thing to know God. By faith in Christ, we can be made alive, brought to life, have eternal life now and forever more.

We see him now in a glimpse, because we still are burdened by our flesh, we still live in a cursed world. Someday we're going to behold him without any encumbrance to that reality, knowing God.

The glorious thing about the life beyond this one will not be streets of gold, crystal lakes, it's not the mansions, that's not the point.

is all that going to be there? Yeah. New heavens and new earth, it's going to be wonderful to behold, but the most wonderful thing about it is going to be that God will be there. That place will be lit by his glory.

[27 : 56] I don't know exactly what that means, but it means, I think, that he's everywhere all the time, that we will behold him forever. It's glorious.

If you can imagine a life after this, with all of the possible things you can think would be great about it, and God the Father and the Son are not there and you're okay with that, it's a problem.

The point should be that we would be with God. The judgment, the eternal destruction, is that we're not in his presence.

God's And so what are we to think of this? We should believe. We should believe now and live now.

We want to hear the words of Christ and believe in him, his person and his work, so that we would be granted eternal life, so that we would be spared judgment, that we would pass from death to life.

[29 : 03] Not just a future hope, although it is. It begins the moment that one believes, eternal life. Do not delay, respond, respond to the word of Christ today.

We can rest in Christ for our assurance. If you hear his voice and believe, you have passed from death to life.

So thankful we haven't been saved by Christ. Our salvation is secure in him, not because of some works that I do or fail to do, but because of his power to give life.

Jesus has the power to grant it to us. We also want to talk about this life giver. I'm really grateful that my full-time employment sets me to the task of talking about Jesus all the time.

Christ. When I'm by myself, I'm usually reading about, studying about this Christ, and then I get to be with people and I get to talk about this Christ. Some of you have to put yourselves to different tasks.

[30 : 15] Your day-to-day doesn't look like this, but I think there should be something in you pent up. Any opportunity you have to talk about the one who brought you from death to life.

life. The door gets barely cracked open and you kick it the rest of the way because you want to talk about this glorious Savior. If Jesus alone grants eternal life, and he does, then the world around us, which is spiritually dead apart from him, desperately needs to hear that good news.

Evangelism is not just a thing that the rare Christian does. It ought to be the lifeblood of who we are. Going out, rescue mission, carrying this message that's empowered by the Spirit to bring dead people to life.

And the last little thought here, I've mentioned it kind of already, but we ought to treasure, we ought to hold tight to appreciate deeper our life in him.

Understand what it means to know God and set ourselves to the continuing task of knowing God. What a privilege it is. Great privilege.

[31 : 35] Blood-bought privilege to know God. Last claim. Claim number three. Jesus has the authority to judge.

See this in verse 22 and 23 and then in verse 27 and 29. Here we see Jesus says the Father judges no one but has given that judgment to the Son.

The triune God at work. This is what Jesus does. He's a Savior but he's also a judge. Philippians chapter 2 verse 5 through 11.

Paul gives to us an example of the mind we ought to have which is ours in Christ. It's this mind of humility. But listen to what he says going on in verse 6 and following. Jesus who was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant being born in the likeness of Ben and being found in human form.

He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name so that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

[33 : 01] Everybody everybody one day will bow before Christ. He is Lord. I don't want to find myself bowing because of judgment.

I want to find myself bowing because of worship. Because I'm found in him. And this will be the basis of his judgment. That one is mine.

By faith in my person and work he is found in me. I am united to him. That's what grants me eternal life.

To the other not mine. I never knew him. Verse 27 says he's been given authority to execute judgment because he is the son of man.

You have to understand what this title means of Jesus. Son of man. It's his favorite way to refer to himself. He calls himself the son of man over and over and over again.

[34 : 09] And as I said I hope that you already know but just in case you don't and it's okay if you don't. This comes from Daniel chapter 7. It's found one place in the Old Testament. Jesus elicits this title over and over and over again because it is incredibly significant.

Daniel chapter 7. This is verse 13 and 14. Daniel says I saw in the night visions and behold with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man.

There's the phrase. Son of man. And he came to the ancient of days and was presented before him and to him to the son of man by the ancient of days was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all people's nations and languages should serve him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed. This is Christ.

He refers to himself this way over and over and over again. And in the establishment of this unfading not passing away everlasting dominion kingdom this thing that he's going to reign over forever that there's going to be peoples and nations and languages all part of he's going to judge.

[35 : 39] He's going to judge. He's going to cast out of that kingdom those who don't believe in him. But he's going to welcome in warmly and reign over forever those who do.

What an astounding thing. Place your faith in Christ. His person and not a lunatic. He should be worshipped as Lord. Flee from your sin, from the judgment and wrath to come.

place your faith in him. Jesus is God. Charles Spurgeon once said, this is the quotation on the back of your bulletin today, it is not possible that the man who denies the deity of Christ can be a Christian.

He deliberately refuses the only way of escape from the wrath to come. Jesus is Christ. Let's pray. God