



Sunday, September 27, 2020

Sermon #19 from the Gospel of John

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“Jesus Speaks About Himself”

John 5:16-29 (King James Version)

We’re continuing our journey in the Gospel of John; you’re going to need a note pad today! This book was written by Jesus’ disciple John who lived the longest; most of the others died young. John’s brother, James, was the first one to die as a martyr. John was given the privilege and blessing by God to live through his eighties, maybe into his nineties which was quite a feat for that day two thousand years ago. From living all those decades and from all his experiences with Jesus that went through his mind, John was inspired by God about fifty years later to write a biography of his Son, Jesus. John defines the reason he wrote this gospel—to be a witnessing tool to lead the world to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Over the centuries through this gospel, millions have come to Jesus.

Last week we studied the beginning of Chapter 5 where Jesus healed a lame man at the pool of Bethesda, a section of Jerusalem. This man had been crippled for thirty eight years; the pool had healing qualities, and he lay beside it all that time hoping to be healed. One day he had an appointment with Jesus Christ, the Great Physician, the True Healer, who came to him and said **“Rise, take up your bed, and walk.”** In just an instant, the man was healed—amazing! The Jewish leaders knew about this man, and as he carried his bed, they asked him who healed him. He said I don’t know; I wouldn’t recognize him. This tells us he was healed physically but not spiritually. He never recognized Jesus as the Great Physician. This still happens today; people are given healing by God after being sick a long time but they never worship Him. So the Jewish leaders finally realize it’s Jesus who healed this man. Rather than celebrate that this man’s legs were healed, rather than celebrate He was the Healer, rather than come to Him themselves as the Savior, they criticized Jesus. They pull out their law books and tell Jesus He’s working on the Sabbath day. Just the fact that you accomplished a healing is work; you’re a criminal! Verse 16 is the beginning of the plot to kill Jesus Christ. (“And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the Sabbath day.”) So what we’ll study today is a conversation between the Jewish leaders and Jesus after this healing at Bethesda. This passage is so important because Jesus is addressing Himself as to who He is—known as a “Christological discourse.” This is also where He says I Am God. This will be a lesson in theology today!

¹⁷But Jesus answered them, **My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.** ¹⁸Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. ¹⁹Then answered Jesus and said unto them, **Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.** ²⁰**For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.** ²¹**For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.** ²²**For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:** ²³**That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.** ²⁴**Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.** ²⁵**Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.** ²⁶**For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;** ²⁷**And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.** ²⁸**Marvel not at this: for the**

hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,²⁹ And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

Jesus is facing His Jewish opponents, and His opening statement (verse 17) angers them. One word made them mad: “My.” My Father—the Jewish people always refer to God Almighty as “Our Father.” When Jesus taught us to pray His prayer, it begins “Our Father which art in heaven...” Jesus is saying here “My Father”—meaning the Father and I are one. I am absolutely tied to God the Father as God the Son, and we are one. I Am God. So the Jewish leaders are stunned by His words—this was utter blasphemy! So they plotted to kill Him; we need Him out of here. He’s some kind of nut case or delusional standing here before us saying He is God. John the gospel writer knows it’s true. John writes Jesus Christ indeed is God Himself. I have been with Him, heard Him, walked in His footsteps, seen Him heal people, and seen many miracles. He’s presenting Jesus Christ as the Lord God to the world.

This conversation continues and He further surprises and infuriates them by what He says about Himself. Read verses 20-21 again. Jesus tells these religious leaders God can raise the dead; the Old Testament word is “quickeneth” as we see in the King James Version. He says I can raise up whoever I choose. For centuries, teachers of the Jewish law said there are three things God can do that no one else can: (1) He can open up the heavens and bring rain. (2) He can open up the womb and bring forth a baby. (3) He can open up the grave and raise up the dead. When Jesus said He can raise the dead He implies I am God Himself. Read verse 22. Jesus tells these great religious men that He was equal to God in that He was the one who could execute judgment in the world. To the Orthodox Jew, they believe only God is judge; they refer back to Genesis 18:25 “Shall not the Judge of the earth do right.” Jesus tells them I am that Judge. You stand before Me today, but one day you will kneel before Me as Your Judge. The Jews get madder, and Jesus continues “stoking the fire.” Read verse 23. We honor God, worship God, follow God, read God’s word, and lift Him up in power. Jesus looks His opponents in the eye and says I deserve the same honor you give to God Almighty because I am the Savior. If you don’t honor Me, you cannot honor God. You can’t honor God and leave Jesus out. This is the raw truth of who Jesus is. He is the Son of God, the Savior, the Lord of Life, and He will be the judge of all the world. He deserves the honor today because one day all of us will kneel before Him (Philippians 2:10-11). The Jews hated His words that He claimed to be God.

Truthfully, this lost world hates these words, too. Not much has changed in humanity. The world today doesn’t want to hear what I’m telling you right now. Jesus deserves the honor, glory, and worship from every single person. Eternity hangs on what every person decides about Jesus Christ. He alone is Savior. No one will come to God by sidestepping Jesus. You cannot get to God without going through Jesus Christ who is God. This is what we proclaim as the church of Jesus Christ. It’s so important to know He is the Savior. That word was offensive to the Jews of His day; it’s still offensive to the Orthodox Jew of today. It’s offensive to the person who is self-centered and selfish and says I can live my life on my own; I don’t need a Savior. I was born good the first time; I’m living my own life. They don’t want to hear they need to come to God through Jesus Christ. Jesus’ words today still offend Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons, Muslims, those with “New Age” thoughts, Islams, the Dali Lama. This truth is from the Word of God. When He says I can raise the dead, He truly meant it. The central truth of the Bible revolves around these three words: I Am God.

Verses 24-29 begin with “Verily, verily” which means what He has to say is extremely important. He describes next four resurrections. The first is in verses 24-25. When a person is lost in sin, he or she is spiritually dead. According to the Bible, people without Jesus are walking corpses in the skin of sin. When that person comes to the Lord and says I’m a sinner, but I believe Jesus Christ died on the cross, shed His blood that I might be forgiven and have eternal life. I believe in Your death and Your resurrection that I can live eternally; I surrender my heart to You. The moment that

person says these words they are resurrected to a new life of forgiveness and eternity. The first resurrection is of a lost person coming to Christ as Lord and Savior. They go from death to life; from hell to heaven; from guilt to forgiveness. The second resurrection describes Jesus' own resurrection from the grave. Read verse 26. He says the grave will not hold me. After the cross, God the Father will raise Me to life again. I will be resurrected from the grave and life is in Me. I want to give you life through the resurrection of My own grave. We don't worship a dead Savior, Amen?! We worship a living Savior who's here with us and among us today. The third resurrection is in verses 28-29. These words apply to every saved person. If Jesus tarries in coming for His church, every one of us will have his own grave site but one day we will be raised from our graves as believers in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We will share eternity in heaven. We'll be bodily raised; we won't be disembodied spirits floating around in a mist. You and I and every child of God will have a glorified, new, perfect body suited for eternity. I believe Adam and Eve had that kind of body before they sinned. When Jesus returns for us, the dead in Christ will rise up. Personally, I do believe we'll recognize each other in heaven. I believe our resurrection body will be similar to our earthly body. I think I'll know you; I think you'll know me. For example after Jesus' resurrection from the grave, He was different but in some respects the same. It's hard for us to understand. The fourth resurrection is a sad one—the last part of verse 29. Earlier in that verse when He says "...they that have done good..." this doesn't mean you lived a moral life, sat on a church pew, or were a nice person. Those who have done good will receive Jesus as Lord and Savior; those who've surrendered their life to Him. The "resurrection of damnation"—What is the most evil act you can do in life? What is the unforgiveable sin? Rejecting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; rejecting the Spirit of God to live in your heart and life. Some theologians say those who are lost will simply disappear into space and fade away. The Bible says the lost are not going to some saloon in hell and drink beer and play cards. The lost are going to be resurrected just like the saved; they will literally stand before Jesus Christ—not in joy but in judgment. Believers' resurrected bodies will never die in heaven, but it's also equally true that the lost person's resurrection body will never die in hell. It's a sobering truth! Millions of people are one heartbeat away from being lost forever. Wicked and evil people will be judged; the Word says nice, moral people will go to hell because they said I knew I needed to make a decision for Christ but I think I'll put it off one more day until I'm ____ (fill in the blank!). The day runs out; death comes; and they've never made a decision. They're just as lost as a murderer; just as hell-bound as the most evil person on earth. If death overtakes them, nice people without Jesus will be judged to hell. Some may disagree with me—bring your Bible and show me where it says that. Save your time, because it's not in there. Whoever does not come to Jesus as Lord and Savior—no matter what their life was like—if they did not come to Him and rejected Him, they will go to hell. That's the Word of God as plainly as I can state it.

Now is the time, church, to be witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ. There are people in our families, in our circle of friends, in our classrooms and work places, who've never made a decision for Jesus. No matter how good or bad they are, they're one heartbeat away from judgment to hell. What Jesus says is condemnation to damnation. Church, if there's ever a time to be busy with the gospel in the world, it's right now! The Bible teaches us we come to this "holy huddle," to study the Word of God, and get impassioned and fired up to take the gospel to the world this week. There are dying people who need to see Jesus Christ, and He is seen through us. "You might be the only Bible someone reads!" We need to be an active witness in the world this week—at our dinner tables with our little ones. I know I've given you a blast of undiluted truth—but the main truth is Jesus Is God. Jesus is the Savior; He will be the Judge. Jesus has control, and one day "every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord." But for many, it will be too late for a U-turn or a do-over, and they will live in hell forever.

Praise God, brothers and sisters, we know we're heaven-bound! If I were to die this moment, you can say "he went home." Just pick me up and drag me out! There's a reason God allows me to live today—to be a witness for Him. I am going to heaven but I need to take a bus load with me. So do you! That's why we're here today—to build up a witness

for Christ. God bless us as we witness to Him this week. Today if you've never surrendered your heart to Jesus as Lord, say I believe He died on the cross to forgive my sin, I believe He rose from the grave to give me life. Today is the day to change eternity. Give Him your heart and allow Him to save you, love you, and promise you heaven. What good news this is! I pray not one of us will put it off another day!

As we close this service, we're going to meet the Great Physician right here. If there's a need for a healing in your heart, especially that healing of sin, you come. If there's some other need for healing from the Lord, you come. The Lord God is bigger than our needs.

Let Us Pray: Father God, I know there was a lot in this sermon—there's a lot in what Jesus said in these few verses. The culmination of it all is that Jesus Is God. A lot of the world doesn't want to hear that, but we know it's absolutely true—there's no way to come to God the Father but through Jesus Christ the Son. We can never step around Jesus and get to God. That's the truth of this Word, and it's true through and through within the Bible. I pray today we who are believers, brothers and sisters in Christ, celebrate the truth that we know Jesus as our Savior. We know Him as our God, and we want to follow Him. We look forward to that day when we live with Him forever. I pray for all of us today that we leave here with a passion to share the good news we have with someone who doesn't have it yet. Help us to be the Bible someone reads, to be the witness someone sees. Help them to see something in us, Lord, by the way we live and communicate that makes them thirsty and hungry for the gospel. Give us the opportunity to speak Your name this week. If there's one who's heard this message and needs Jesus as Savior, he or she can come wherever they are and say Lord I believe You died on the cross to forgive my sin, rose from the grave to give me life—I surrender my life to You. Bless us now in this important moment. In Jesus' name, Amen.