



Sunday, January 25, 2026

John 5:16-30

This morning we're going to look at the remainder of John chapter 5, keeping in mind that from verse 16 all the way to verse 47 is one entire discourse, where Jesus is explaining to the religious leaders of the day - including the Pharisees - that He is, in fact, the Messiah, the Son of God.

Now, it's been a few weeks, so it's important that we understand the beginning of chapter 5, because everything that follows is now a response to what has just transpired.

In the first part of chapter 5, Jesus heals a lame man by the pool of Bethesda. This isn't just a random location though. This is all very strategic. This man is sitting at what was believed to be a place of healing, surrounded by five porches - five structures that, for many readers, echoed the five books of the law - and yet, no matter what he tried, he could not fix himself.

So Jesus comes to this place of healing that isn't working, surrounded by the law that was powerless to save, and He now steps in to do what this man and the Law were powerless to do and makes this man whole - both physically and spiritually.

Now, for you and I on the other side of history, we know that this act is foreshadowing redemption itself on a much larger scale. The law could reveal what was broken, but it could not restore what was broken. So Jesus steps in as the Word made flesh to do what the law and humanity were powerless to do - He brings life where there was once only death.

But the Pharisees and the religious leaders of the day could not - would not - see this. And so when they find out that Jesus healed this man, and that He did it on the Sabbath, this miraculous healing is sidelined as they come after Jesus for breaking the law. They had been watching this Jesus character for a while, and for them this was the straw that broke the camel's back. From here on out, they set their hearts and minds to pursue Him and put Him to death.

And without skipping a beat, Jesus responds by adding fuel to their fire. He claims that He is doing the will of His Father in heaven - thus equating Himself with God. Now, to the Pharisees, this was height of blasphemy. It's one thing to be a teacher with special abilities, but to now call God your Father and equate yourself with Him was absolute blasphemy and ultimately is what drove them even deeper in their pursuit to put Jesus to death.

We pick up the story in verse 16 and if you have your Bibles with you this morning I'd like to invite you to turn with me to John 5:16-30

John 5:16-30 (CSB)

'Therefore, the Jews began persecuting Jesus because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.

17 Jesus responded to them, "My Father is still working, and I am working also." 18 This is why the Jews began trying all the more to kill him: Not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal to God.

19 Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, the Son is not able to do anything on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father[e] does, the Son likewise does these things. 20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing, and he will show him greater works than these so that you will be amazed. 21 And just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so the Son also gives life to whom he wants. 22 The Father, in fact, judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son, 23 so that all people may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.

24 "Truly I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not come under judgment but has passed from death to life.

25 "Truly I tell 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. 26 For just as the Father has life in himself, so also he has granted to the Son to have life in himself. 27 And he has granted him the right to pass judgment, because he is the Son of Man. 28 Do not be amazed at this, because a time is coming when all who are in the graves will hear his voice 29 and come out—those who have done good things, to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked things, to the resurrection of condemnation.

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

So Jesus heals the man on the Sabbath and all the religious leaders can see is the fact that He did this on the Sabbath. And Jesus' whole discourse acts now as a response to their anger. But as I stated earlier, Jesus doesn't try to subdue their anger here, He actually fuels it.

From verse 17-47 Jesus is now speaking directly to the religious leaders of the day. And the purpose of this entire section is to declare to them that He is in fact God, that He is the Messiah and more, that ultimately He is God.

Over the next few weeks, I'd like to walk through the words of Jesus here, because although His message is simple, I want you to notice that He takes 30 verses to explain it - so there is a depth here that is absolutely worth digging through to see exactly how He makes His point.

As we start off in verse 17, Jesus says, 'My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.' Essentially Jesus is refuting the claims that the Pharisees made about Him working on the Sabbath by now, saying that He has divine authority over the Sabbath - just like God - which by the way, He calls Dad. Which made their blood boil and eyes literally pop out of their heads. Who is exempt from the Sabbath? Only God. He is the only one. He established the Sabbath for humanity - not because He was tired - after all, Psalm 121 says that He never slumbers nor sleeps - but instead, He ordered it for us - to give us a model of rest and rhythm.

God Himself, is exempt from having to stop work on the Sabbath because we need Him constantly to uphold the universe. We need God to always keep things in orbit and sustain life, and the Jewish worldview at that time completely understood that. So, when Jesus says, 'The Father is working until now...' they all would have been like, Yes, of course - but then Jesus takes it a step further and says, '...and I am working.'

And they knew exactly what He meant. Jesus was saying that what He was doing was what God was doing. That His work was God's work. And if God alone is Lord over the Sabbath, then Jesus is not just saying that He is like God - He is making the bold declaration that He is God in the flesh.

So if you're paying attention, what we're beginning to see is that Jesus intentionally heals on the Sabbath in order to reveal who He is and foreshadow His reason for coming - to rescue humanity from death and to restore life. This wasn't accidental. This wasn't random. This was all designed intentionally to confront the religious leaders of the day with the truth and reality that Jesus wasn't just a teacher with unique abilities but that He was God Himself, in the flesh.

And so, all throughout the rest of His 30 verse discourse, Jesus uses similar language that continues to reveal who He is. But you'll also notice that not once does Jesus ever use the specific language - 'I am the Messiah,' or 'I am God in the flesh.'

This is interesting and something that people from other religions have picked up on as well - often times using this as a reason to discount the divinity of Jesus. Their argument would be that because Jesus never explicitly said, 'I am the Messiah,' or 'I am God in the flesh,' He must not have meant it. Otherwise, surely He would have said it plainly.

But Jesus' language is intentional. So is His timing and so is context. And these three factors significantly shape how He revealed who He was, how He responded to critics and how He responded to those around Him in the early days of His ministry.

Think about it, if Jesus had walked into first-century Israel and publicly declared, 'I am the Messiah,' or 'I am Jehovah,' how do you think that would have gone over? It would have been a complete mess. First and foremost, the crowds understood the Messiah as a political liberator who would free them from Roman oppression. They were desperately looking for that kind of Messiah, and based on the miracles Jesus was performing, they would have tried to crown Him king on the spot.

The Romans would have crushed the movement. And if the Romans didn't kill Him first, the religious leaders would have moved to do it immediately because of what they would have seen as blasphemous claims.

And all of this would have happened long before the cross, long before the appointed time, and long before Jesus had finished revealing what kind of Messiah He truly came to be.

So instead, Jesus reveals who He is through what He says and what He does, forcing people to wrestle with who He really is. His actions, His authority, and His teaching all pose the same question: Is this the Messiah?

And I think that, that wrestle is ultimately the point. The journey of faith is a journey of wrestling - wrestling with who Jesus is and wrestling with what that means for your life.

For many, that journey is a wrestle of dying to selfish desires and embracing godly desires. Jesus invites people into a journey where they see His works, hear His words, and are confronted with the question, 'Who do you say that I am?'

And the answer to that question reveals far more than what you think about Jesus - it reveals who you really are, what you truly worship, and who you are willing to become.

And Jesus doesn't leave that question hanging here in chapter 5 though. He continues to explain - using His own words - who He is and how He relates to the Father.

In verse 19, Jesus makes one of the most profound statements in all of Scripture about His relationship with God. He says something that sounds humble on the outside, but is actually one of the strongest claims to His divinity in the entire Bible.

Vs. 19 says: '...the Son is not able to do anything on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing.'

When Jesus says this, He's not saying, 'I lack power unless God gives it to me.'

No - He's simply saying that He does not act independently of the Father. Or to say it more precisely: there is no separation between what the Father does and what the Son does.

Jesus says it another way later on in John 10 by saying:

John 10:31

'I and the Father are one.'

So, notice again the language that Jesus is using here - He's saying he's God without explicitly saying that He's God. He's using Jewish family language that was deeply significant to His Jewish audience.

For example, in Jewish thought, a son:

Bore the identity of the father

Acted with the authority of the father

Represented the will of the father

So by comparing His relationship with God to the Father/Son relationship in Jewish culture, they would have had no doubt that again, Jesus was not just claiming equality with God, but He was using their own language and culture to show that He was in fact God - now in the flesh. He didn't need to say, 'I am God.' His words, His works, and their Scriptures were all saying it for Him. They just couldn't - wouldn't see it. Remember the missing the trees for the forest comment from last week?

But then Jesus goes even further - throughout the rest of this section, He claims to give life; He claims to have the authority to judge the world and He claims to have the power to raise the dead. In other words, He reveals that He doesn't just speak for God - but He does what only God can do.

And vs 23-24 are really the focal point here. Because in these verses, Jesus actually makes no room for error in His identity as the only way to life and life everlasting.

John 5:23b-24

'that all people may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. 24 "Truly I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not come under judgment but has passed from death to life.

Jesus is now clearly articulating that if you claim to honour the authority of God the Father but refuse to honour the Son (Himself), in the same way, then you cannot claim a relationship with God because there is no access to the Father apart from the Son.

Jesus would affirm this later on in Chapter 14 by now saying:

John 14:6

'Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'

So the question of whether or not you honour Jesus as you honour God is a deeply personal and eternal one. This is not just a word for Jewish people in the first century - it is a word for every religion, every worldview, and every person today.

Judaism rejects Jesus as Messiah. Islam views Him as a prophet but denies His divinity. Hinduism and Buddhism do not worship Him as Lord. And many secular people admire Him as a moral teacher or inspiring historical figure.

But John reminds us again that:

1 John 5:12-13

'The one who has the Son has life. The one who does not have the Son of God does not have life. 13 I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know

that you have eternal life.'

So what does this mean for you and me today?

It brings us back to one simple, profound question - the question Jesus asked those closest to Him, and the question He has been asking us all throughout this message: 'Who do you say that I am?'

Is Jesus Lord - or is He the Lord of your life? Did you catch the difference? It's one thing to acknowledge Him as Lord of the universe. It's another thing entirely to submit to Him as Lord of your life.

Because the Christian walk is not an easy one. The wide road is easy, but it leads to destruction. The narrow road is challenging, but it leads to life. And at the end of the day, you sacrifice for what you truly value.

If Jesus is Lord of your life, that sacrifice will not just be endured - it will be embraced, because He is worth it. And in Him, you find life.

So the question isn't just what you believe about Jesus - the question is how close you intend to follow Him. After all, in the Gospels Jesus describes Himself as a shepherd whose sheep recognize His voice. That's close. That's relationship. That's following.

Blessing

May the Lord Bless you and Keep you
May He cause His face to Shine upon you
May He be gracious towards you
Lifting up His countenance towards you
And may He give you peace
In Jesus name, Amen.

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