

Jesus: Healer Judge

John 5

Sermon

Hobart, March 17th, 2013

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John 5:1-

Jesus Heals a Lame Man

⁵ Afterward Jesus returned to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish holy days. ² Inside the city, near the Sheep Gate, was the pool of Bethesda, with five covered porches. ³ Crowds of sick people—blind, lame, or paralyzed—lay on the porches. ⁵ One of the men lying there had been sick for thirty-eight years. ⁶ When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, “Would you like to get well?”

⁷ “I can’t, sir,” the sick man said, “for I have no one to put me into the pool when the water bubbles up. Someone else always gets there ahead of me.”

⁸ Jesus told him, “Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!”

⁹ Instantly, the man was healed! He rolled up his sleeping mat and began walking! But this miracle happened on the Sabbath, ¹⁰ so the Jewish leaders objected. They said to the man who was cured, “You can’t work on the Sabbath! The law doesn’t allow you to carry that sleeping mat!”

¹¹ But he replied, “The man who healed me told me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’”

¹² “Who said such a thing as that?” they demanded.

¹³ The man didn’t know, for Jesus had disappeared into the crowd. ¹⁴ But afterward Jesus found him in the Temple and told him, “Now you are well; so stop sinning, or something even worse may happen to you.” ¹⁵ Then the man went and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had healed him.

Jesus Claims to Be the Son of God

¹⁶ So the Jewish leaders began harassing Jesus for breaking the Sabbath rules. ¹⁷ But Jesus replied, “My Father is always working, and so am I.” ¹⁸ So the Jewish leaders tried all the harder to find a way to kill him. For he not only broke the Sabbath, he called God his Father, thereby making himself equal with God.

¹⁹ So Jesus explained, “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does. ²⁰ For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing. In fact, the Father will show him how to do even greater works than healing this man. Then you will truly be astonished. ²¹ For just as the Father gives life to those he raises from the dead, so the Son gives life to anyone he wants. ²² In addition, the Father judges no one. Instead, he has given the Son absolute authority to judge, ²³ so that everyone will honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son is certainly not honoring the Father who sent him.

²⁴ “I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life.

²⁵ “And I assure you that the time is coming, indeed it’s here now, when the dead will hear my voice—the voice of the Son of God. And those who listen will live.¹

¹Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. "Text edition"--Spine. (2nd ed.) (Jn 5:1-47). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

INTRODUCTION:

A. AS THE EASTER SEASON IS ALMOST HERE

1. Let's take a look at how Jesus' life and teachings pointed to and led up to his betrayal and crucifixion
 - a) How both his actions and his teachings highlighted the problems of our dark world, and how they will be judged and solved through him, particularly in his death and resurrection

S.P.S:

A. WE ARE GOING TO LOOK AT JOHN 5 IN PARTICULAR

1. Which is one of many passages that show Jesus dealing with those who walk contrary and separately to God
2. And his role as both healer and judge.

B. PRAYER

BODY:

II. JOHN 5:1-47

A. LET'S BEGIN WITH OUR PASSAGE IN JOHN 5

⁵ Afterward Jesus returned to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish holy days.

1. This is thought to be Passover time.

² Inside the city, near the Sheep Gate, was the pool of Bethesda,* with five covered porches. ³ Crowds of sick people—blind, lame, or paralyzed—lay on the porches. ⁵ One of the men lying there had been sick for thirty-eight years.

2. In a sense this is illustrative of our lives at times, and that of human kind in general, since the beginning

⁶ When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, “Would you like to get well?”

B. THIS IS THE OFFER OF THE GOSPEL

1. Would you like to get well?

a) Would you like to live in the light, to become part of my kingdom of love and truth, of peace and the restoration of life in all its dimensions

⁷ “I can’t, sir,” the sick man said, “for I have no one to put me into the pool when the water bubbles up. Someone else always gets there ahead of me.”

2. On our own, we are incapable of even doing what is needed to be healed spiritually

a) We can’t repent or come into God’s presence on our own

b) We are unworthy and incapable

⁸ Jesus told him, “Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!”

* Other manuscripts read *Beth-zatha*; still others read *Bethsaida*.

* Some manuscripts add an expanded conclusion to verse 3 and all of verse 4: *waiting for a certain movement of the water, ⁴for an angel of the Lord came from time to time and stirred up the water. And the first person to step in after the water was stirred was healed of whatever disease he had.*

3. It is tempting for religious people to twist the gospel message to mean that we must make the first move, and effort to fix our own problems, so that God will then respond

C. WHY DO YOU THINK JESUS TOLD HIM TO GET UP AND WALK?

1. He clearly wasn't able to heal himself.
 - a) He hadn't been able to get up and walk before no matter how he tried, or what advice or help others may have offered.
 - b) So it must have been an act of faithful response to the free and miraculous healing Jesus' was offering
2. I have healed you, now live the healed life
 - a) Respond, trust me, believe I have healed you
 - b) Use the healed legs I have given you

D. WHAT IS THE LESSON FOR US?

⁹ Instantly, the man was healed! He rolled up his sleeping mat and began walking!

1. The healed man walked the new walk he was enabled to
 - a) He didn't refuse it, or sit around and neglect the opportunity.
2. Notice he was healed first, then he rolled up his sleeping mat and began walking.

9b But this miracle happened on the Sabbath, ¹⁰ so the Jewish leaders objected.

E. THIS IS A PRIME EXAMPLE OF HOW THE LETTER CAN KILL BUT THE SPIRIT GIVES LIFE

1. Jesus continually loved.
 - a) He showed that God is love, and that all the Old Covenant laws were an expression of that love
 - b) But they were given because of Israel's disobedience
 - (1) **The Sabbath regulated their week so they would mandatorily stop from their own lives for one day, and hopefully spend some time worshipping God**

2. Jesus' life was a continuous act of worship towards God
 - a) He fulfilled and surpassed the letter of the commandments by always loving God and his neighbour
3. But religious people, especially authorities like to have everyone focus on the letter of the law
 - a) Otherwise they are afraid of losing control over the people
 - b) And they thought God would be angry and punish them
4. Instead of looking at the greater good, on encouraging positive, proactive Godly living and loving relationships—they focused on negating anything that didn't fully conform to their constrictive rules

10b They said to the man who was cured, "You can't work on the Sabbath! The law doesn't allow you to carry that sleeping mat!"

¹¹ But he replied, "The man who healed me told me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.' "

¹² "Who said such a thing as that?" they demanded.

5. In other words let's not get distracted by the love and compassion, the mercy and miraculous healing, let's get to the main point
 - a) This man who told you to carry your sleeping mat is a law breaker and we need to find and punish him
 - b) So law, legalism and religious rules were the priority, not loving God and neighbour.

¹³ The man didn't know, for Jesus had disappeared into the crowd. ¹⁴ But afterward Jesus found him in the Temple and told him, "Now you are well; so stop sinning, or something even worse may happen to you."

6. This is can be difficult to understand
 - a) But the clear point is, once God has healed us and placed us in relationship with him through his Son,
 - b) we should avoid the old ways in which we walk separately from him
7. This is a statement that gets to the heart of why Jesus came

a) He came as both judge and healer in order to lead us out of the darkness and destruction of sin, and into God's light, his life of love and holiness.

8. Our calling is not to turn back to our "independent from God" lifestyle that started with Adam and Eve

a) Because everything that is against God is actually against our own lives, our mental and spiritual health and well-being, and destructive and death producing

¹⁵ Then the man went and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had healed him.

Jesus Claims to Be the Son of God

¹⁶ So the Jewish leaders began harassing [*persecuting*] Jesus for breaking the Sabbath rules.

F. SO THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN JESUS AND THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS GROW STARKER

¹⁷ But Jesus replied, "My Father is always working, and so am I."

1. What is Jesus getting at?

a) I am doing God's will.

(1) **"My Father is always working". God is always working to bring us all back into a relationship with him.**

(2) **Always, loving, always doing good things**

b) There is no law against God acting as God

c) There is no law against his Son living and working God's works

2. The problem is how people understand God, and what they see as his will and his central focus and activity

a) Is it being a ruler and hard letter of the law judge?

b) Or a loving healing, merciful Father whose heart and being is fully devoted to bringing his lost children back into relationship with him, to share his life of love?

* Or *persecuting*.

G. AT THE SAME TIME JESUS FURTHER UPSETS THEM BY CALLING GOD HIS FATHER

¹⁸ So the Jewish leaders tried all the harder to find a way to kill him. For he not only broke the Sabbath, he called God his Father, thereby making himself equal with God.

1. Not only did they wrongly enforce the Old Covenant laws against their intent,
 - a) Misunderstanding the mind and intent of their instigator,
 - b) They failed to recognise his Son. Not only failed to recognise him, they were so much at odds with his teachings and actions that they wanted to eliminate him, to kill him
2. Strange that they are quick to jump on the matter of breaking the Sabbath commandment, but are able to find an excuse for breaking the commandment not to kill.
 - a) The human mind is very clever at making excuses for ourselves, and finding ways of finding fault and punishing others
 - b) That is one of the big problems with rules and laws
 - c) Love doesn't fall into that trap

H. AGAIN, LET US PUT THIS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WHOLE HISTORY OF MANKIND, AND JESUS DEATH AND RESURRECTION

1. Because that is what Jesus is about to do
2. All mankind has gone astray and ended up devising our own rules and priorities for life
 - a) We all tend to distort things, and seek our own way, rather than what God wants, and how to love and serve others
3. As a result the world is self-condemned and reaping the natural consequences, just as a drug addict, and abusive spouse or parent, or a drunk driver does sooner or later

I. JESUS GOES ON TO TALK ABOUT JUDGMENT

1. About how the Father will use him to bring about a solution to the evils, injustice and suffering in the world

²⁰ For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing. In fact, the Father will show him how to do even greater works than healing this man. Then you will truly be astonished. ²¹ For just as the Father gives life to those he raises from the dead, so the Son gives life to anyone he wants.

2. Again, God is about reconciliation, not condemnation. He is lovingly working to heal us all, to bring us out of the way of darkness and death into his life and light.
3. Resurrection—raising us from the dead—giving new life is God’s solution to man’s alienation to him and one another, to sin, death and destruction.
 - a) A new, restored life, with him and one another, the kingdom of God

J. JESUS IS OUR JUDGE

²² In addition, the Father judges no one. Instead, he has given the Son absolute authority to judge, ²³ so that everyone will honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son is certainly not honoring the Father who sent him.

1. Besides clarifying his role as Judge of all things, Jesus also lets them know that by *not* honouring him, they are *not* honouring the Father
 - a) So in their zeal for the law, in judging Jesus for breaking the Sabbath
 - b) They are actually judging the Judge
 - c) And in rejecting and dishonouring Jesus, they are dishonouring the Father as well
2. Sadly, this is what any of us do when we reject Jesus’ and his supremacy as judge and teacher, and loving Lord and Saviour

²⁴ “I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life.

3. The answer to Israel's problems was not enforcing the law—and certainly not condemning others—but in putting their faith and trust in Jesus the Christ

a) He is the way, the truth and the life

b) He was going to save them and us through the very death they were plotting, and that we commemorate in the Lord's Supper, as Jesus commanded us

²⁵ "And I assure you that the time is coming, indeed it's here now, when the dead will hear my voice—the voice of the Son of God. And those who listen will live.

K. WE DIE WITH HIM, AND WE ARE RAISED WITH HIM

1. And as his people we listen to him in the new life he has raised us to

2. This new life we have entered into with him, even in now,

3. The new life of the kingdom that is already in existence in the church, but not yet fully here in the world

²⁶ The Father has life in himself, and he has granted that same life-giving power to his Son.

4. This is the crucial point again;

a) God is about life, and that is why Jesus came

b) To be the judge who brings life, and an end to condemnation and death and suffering and sin.

5. It is Jesus, not the law that judges us, heals us, and brings us into God's life of love

a) The law could only condemn, and restrict sin, not remove it, nor transform us or resurrect us or bring us into God's presence and life

²⁷ And he has given him authority to judge everyone because he is the Son of Man. * ²⁸ Don't be so surprised! Indeed, the time is coming when all the dead in their graves will hear the voice of God's Son, ²⁹ and they will rise again. Those who have

* "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

done good will rise to experience eternal life, and those who have continued in evil will rise to experience judgment.

6. Those who allow Christ and His Spirit to set us on our feet and walk in his ways, will rise at his return to experience eternal life

L. LET US GO BACK BRIEFLY TO JOHN 3

John 3:10-21

1. Jesus was talking to Nicodemus about being born again

¹⁰ Jesus replied, “You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don’t understand these things? ¹¹ I assure you, we tell you what we know and have seen, and yet you won’t believe our testimony. ¹² But if you don’t believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how can you possibly believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man* has come down from heaven. ¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵ so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.*
¹⁶ “For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.
¹⁸ “There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God’s one and only Son. ¹⁹ And the judgment is based on this fact: God’s light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. ²⁰ All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. ²¹ But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants.*” [or *Or can see God at work in what he is doing.*]

2. You can see how John 5, Jesus is continuing to make the same point;

John 5:30

³⁰ I can do nothing on my own. I judge as God tells me. Therefore, my judgment is just, because I carry out the will of the one who sent me, not my own will.

Witnesses to Jesus

* Some manuscripts add *who lives in heaven*. “Son of Man” is a title Jesus used for himself.

* Or *everyone who believes will have eternal life in him*.

* Or *can see God at work in what he is doing*.

³¹ “If I were to testify on my own behalf, my testimony would not be valid. ³² But someone else is also testifying about me, and I assure you that everything he says about me is true. ³³ In fact, you sent investigators to listen to John the Baptist, and his testimony about me was true. ³⁴ Of course, I have no need of human witnesses, but I say these things so you might be saved. ³⁵ John was like a burning and shining lamp, and you were excited for a while about his message. ³⁶ But I have a greater witness than John—my teachings and my miracles. The Father gave me these works to accomplish, and they prove that he sent me. ³⁷ And the Father who sent me has testified about me himself. You have never heard his voice or seen him face to face, ³⁸ and you do not have his message in your hearts, because you do not believe me—the one he sent to you.

3. They failed to understand God, and his heart and purpose. So they failed to recognize Jesus, and condemned him for healing this man on the Sabbath, and plotted to kill Jesus.

³⁹ “You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me! ⁴⁰ Yet you refuse to come to me to receive this life.

M. THEY MISINTERPRETED THE SCRIPTURES

1. They saw them as a manual for life, as a set of rules and standards, rather than as God’s revelation of himself, and his loving plan to bring us to share in his life
 - a) They put days and laws ahead of God and his way of love and mercy

⁴¹ “Your approval means nothing to me, ⁴² because I know you don’t have God’s love within you. ⁴³ For I have come to you in my Father’s name, and you have rejected me. Yet if others come in their own name, you gladly welcome them. ⁴⁴ No wonder you can’t believe! For you gladly honor each other, but you don’t care about the honor that comes from the one who alone is God.*

⁴⁵ “Yet it isn’t I who will accuse you before the Father. Moses will accuse you! Yes, Moses, in whom you put your hopes. ⁴⁶ If you really believed Moses, you would believe me, because he wrote about me. ⁴⁷ But since you don’t believe what he wrote, how will you believe what I say?”

* Some manuscripts read *from the only One*.

N. JESUS JUDGES THEIR JUDGMENT AS HERETICAL.

1. He proves their guilt
2. They will have no excuse when they end up crucifying him
3. Yet what does the Son of God, the Judge of all things say on the cross?
 - a) Father forgive them, for they know not what they do

CONCLUSION:

I. SO WHAT DO WE LEARN?

A. JESUS IS NOT A HANGING JUDGE, AS THE JEWISH LEADERS WERE

1. and to many religious people are today

B. JESUS WAS A HEALING JUDGE.

1. One that sought to lead people out of their darkness into the light
2. To rescue the lame, the blind and the oppressed
 - a) And also to turn the wicked, including the religiously self-righteous leaders, from their ways
 - b) To forgive, reconcile and raise them to new life as well

C. THROUGH JESUS' DEATH AND RESURRECTION

1. God dealt with all the evils and injustice, the hurts and suffering of human life
2. The cross is the end to evil, to the power of corrupt individuals and institutions
3. The end to sin, the defeat of tyranny, legalism, corruption and abuse
4. And the resurrection is the beginning of the healing and reconciliation of us all

- a) The lame, the blind and the mute
- b) The abused and the abusers
- c) The religiously corrupt and their followers

D. AS WE APPROACH OUR COMMEMORATION OF JESUS' GREATEST ACT OF LOVING AND HEALING JUDGMENT

1. His death and resurrection
2. We are again given an opportunity to learn more about Jesus
 - a) More about God the Father, and the Holy Spirit
3. We are reminded of the new life we have been given
 - a) How we are called to live our lives, not based on rules and judgmental attitudes
 - b) But to let Jesus share his mind and heart with us, his very life
 - c) And look to him to continually heal us and lead us in the new life of seeking to love and heal the weak and the lame
 - d) To be there for people, rather than against them
 - e) To be adding to life, rather than taking from it
 - f) To be forgiving, merciful and healing
4. And thereby participating in the building of the kingdom of God here and now, in anticipation of its fullness when God and men live together as one
 - a) We are able to share and demonstrate to our present world, a little of what it will be like when the healing judge returns to rescue all mankind

E. PRAYER
