

- F) This entire section of Jesus' testimony about Himself is a clear claim of His complete equality with God the Father. Much in the same way that you cannot separate the light from a flame, you cannot separate Jesus and God (cf. Hebrews 1:3, "He is the radiance of His glory...").

#### 4) The "Defense" Testimonies

- A) Jesus notes that it is not just His own word which contributes to His defense (5:31-32), but there are others.
- B) First, there is the testimony of John the Baptist (5:33-35). They knew John's testimony (remember John 1:19-34?), and even respected, but eventually rejected it (5:35).
- C) Second, there is the testimony of Jesus' works, his "signs" (5:36). Jesus poses the obvious rhetorical question, "if this is not from God, then who is doing these things?"
- D) Third, the testimony of God the Father through the Word of God (5:37-38). Jesus makes several points about the Jews 'darkened' understanding of Scripture:
- i) That the Scriptures provide eternal life, instead of the who the Scriptures speak of, the Messiah (5:39-40).
  - ii) While they claim to be focused on Scripture, they actually glory in the acceptance and approval of men. This is proven by their lack of love and acceptance of Jesus, and their love and acceptance of each other (5:41-44).
  - iii) The testimony of the "hero" of the Jews, Moses. If they would believe His writings (Deuteronomy 18:18-22), then they would embrace Christ (5:45-47).

# You Talkin' 'Bout Me?

Long Beach Alliance Church • October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2004 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**TRULY, TRULY, I SAY TO YOU,  
HE WHO HEARS MY WORD, AND  
BELIEVES HIM WHO SENT ME, HAS  
ETERNAL LIFE, AND DOES NOT  
COME INTO JUDGMENT, BUT HAS  
PASSED OUT OF DEATH INTO LIFE.  
~JOHN 5:24 (NASB)**

#### 1) The "Crime" Of The Paraplegic Man

- A) When Jesus healed the paraplegic at the Pool of Bethesda, it was on the Sabbath day (John 5:9). This attracted the attention of "the Jews" to the newly healed man because he was carrying his mat on the Sabbath\* (5:10).
- B) The man blames his healer for why he is carrying his mat, so the Jews ask who his healer was (5:11-12). The man does

\* Working on the Sabbath was prohibited in the 10 Commandments (Exodus 20:8-11). The Jews had taken this law and expanded it into 39 different classes of work which were prohibited (e.g. carrying your mat from one place to another), but there were several bizarre loopholes (e.g. you could put out your oil lamp on the Sabbath only if you were in fear of the Gentiles, an evil spirit or you were helping someone who was sick get to sleep. However, if you extinguished the lamp to save oil, save the wick or save the lamp you were guilty. Similarly, if you had a toothache, you could not apply vinegar to it directly (the popular cure for toothaches). However, if you ate a meal and it happened to have vinegar on it/in it, that was OK. The different loopholes and extra rules were impossible for anyone to follow (Matthew 23:2-4), and missed the point of the law entirely (Matthew 23:5-12). While working on the Sabbath was clearly forbidden (Numbers 15:32-41), and was connected to God, His creative work and covenant (Exodus 31:12-17), the Lord of the Sabbath had long been forgotten in a sea of ritual and rules. Jesus was (and is) the Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28).

not know because Jesus had "slipped away" (5:13).

- C) Jesus finds the man to share a helpful word with him about avoiding sin and Hell (5:14). The man, now armed with Jesus' name and clearly desiring to return to the good graces of the Jews, tells them about Jesus (5:15).

## 2) The "Case" Against Jesus

- A) The Jews immediately begin "persecuting" Jesus because he was "doing these things on the Sabbath" (5:16).
  
- B) Jesus counters His persecution by declaring His clear prerogative to work on the Sabbath, because His Father in Heaven is at work on the Sabbath<sup>†</sup> (5:17).
  
- C) The idea that Jesus and God are equal in any way is blasphemous to the Jews, and for the first time in the book of John, we see the Jews plotting to kill Jesus (5:18). This pre-mature indictment though, brings Jesus to "defend" His divine prerogative (beginning in 5:19).

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<sup>†</sup> It was widely accepted that God worked on the Sabbath. In rabbinical teaching, it was OK for you to lift and carry something within the same domain (e.g. pass a platter of food (prepared the day before) across the table to a family member). Since the universe was God's domain, he was not really working. God could never lift something beyond His own domain or stature, thus He was not "working." So, when Jesus declared His prerogative to work on the Sabbath, it must be that the whole of the universe is His. Jesus is not arguing that the Jews have misinterpreted the Sabbath, but that they have missed that whatever justifies God working on the Sabbath also justifies His working on the Sabbath. Is it any wonder they begin plotting His death because He was claiming equality with God (John 5:18). Various sources, esp. D.A. Carson, *Gospel According To John*, Pages 246-250.

## 3) The "Self-Defense" Of The Son

- A) Jesus begins His defense by pointing out that He is simply behaving like a son should, doing what He sees His father doing (5:19). All of this is rooted firmly in mutual love between father and son (5:20). The idea of a carpenter (father) and his apprentice (son) are an appropriate manner to view this aspect of Jesus and God's relationship.
  
- B) Jesus takes His relationship with God to an even deeper level by explaining that He gives life as God gives life (5:22). The Jews considered life and death to be exclusively the domain of God, this was a second clear claim of equality with God.
  
- C) With a certain irony, the one who is being judged by the Jews (Jesus) points out that God has given Jesus the responsibility for all judgment (5:23). The Jews considered judgment to be exclusively the domain of God, this was a third clear claim of equality with God.
  
- D) Jesus makes clear that to know Him and honor Him, is to know and honor God (5:23-25). Just in case there was some confusion as to His claims over life and death, Jesus notes that life itself is "in Himself" (5:26). Jesus is life, everything else is judgment (death). This is Jesus' fourth clear claim of equality with God.
  
- E) Jesus makes clear that the day of judgment is coming (immanently) and those who have believed (trusted) in Him will have life, and those who have not believed will have judgment (death -- 5:29).



## Small Group Bible Study Questions

- A) The Jews mixed up a great deal of tradition with the words of Scripture. In your experience in the church, in what ways does the church (generally speaking) mix tradition with the Bible? Is this dangerous or helpful?
  
- B) One of the helpful/dangerous elements of mixing biblical teaching with applications which people can follow is that it places “handles” onto the Scriptures which help/hinder us from living them out. For instance, Ephesians 5:4 says that Christians should avoid “silly talk and coarse jesting.” How does that work itself out in real life? If a church were to have some “guidelines” for speech and conduct, what could they be? How can this kind of teaching be helpful or hindering?
  
- C) When I was a young teenager, it was popular for my teachers to say, “Don’t drink, don’t smoke, don’t go to movies, don’t dance and don’t hang with people who do...” What is the good and the bad of advice like this?
  
- D) Jesus actually points out that the Jews had become so focused on their traditions, they had completely missed who He was! How can “rules and regulations” in the church obscure Christ? Can you see how ‘adding’ traditions (even good ones) to God’s Word can actually obscure how we worship God? Share your personal experiences with your group.
  
- E) The Jews came to Jesus in John 5 to judge His actions and His works. Instead, Jesus turned the tables on them and explained that it was He who would be judging them. They had rejected Him, and that would lead to judgment for them. But, for those who believed and trusted in Jesus, there would be eternal life (John 5:24-25, 28-29). Are there some areas of your life where you are trusting in traditions and habits rather than Jesus Christ? Share with your group at least one way you could experience God in a more vibrant and fresh way this week. Pray together for Christ’s strength to accomplish His goals for each other’s lives!

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