

## The Jesus Series: You are well! Sin no more.

Sunday, July 8, 2018

### John 5:16-18, 21-29

Last week in **John 5**, we saw Jesus purposefully go to a location in Jerusalem - the pool called Bethesda - where a **multitude** of the sick gathered in belief that at the right time, the water in the pool could heal them. Jesus seemingly goes there and set his sights on one individual who **had been an invalid for 38 years**. And Jesus has great compassion on this man and with the declaration of His powerful word, **at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked**. And John says that Jesus then withdraws from that place, away from the crowds; but at a later time He seeks this man out again - saying, **"See, you are well. Sin no more that nothing worse may happen to you."** We discussed last week that this **'nothing worse'** indicates that there is a fate that is *far more terrible* than being a physical invalid your entire life. And that would be to enter into eternity as a *spiritual* invalid. Jesus told this man, you are physically well now work on righteous living; Sin no more. Did Jesus have compassion on this man because of his physical situation? Absolutely. And this is shown all the more in Christ pursuing Him a second time to deal with his sin. As we have talked about the last two weeks, sin is the root cause of death and decay. Where sin is present in our life, destruction will come sooner or later. And without dealing with this man's sin, the healing Jesus gave him was nothing more than a temporary pain killer that would eventually run out. Something far worse awaited this man, without spiritual intervention. *Aw Tozer* once wrote, *"God's first concern for His universe is its moral health. Not only is it right for God to display anger against sin, but I find it impossible to understand how He could do otherwise. God's wrath is His utter intolerance of whatever degrades and destroys. He hates [sin] as a mother hates the [disease] that would destroy the life of her child."*

The bible uses a few different words to define a life apart from sin. One of those words is righteousness. The basic idea with the word righteous is *right-living* or *conforming to a standard*. The standard biblically is God himself, who the bible says is righteous (**in all his ways Psalm 145:17**). So living righteously is living by the standard of godliness, in character, person, being. To desire righteousness, is to desire a life that is free from the governance of sin and its inevitable destructiveness. **Matthew 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied**. Blessed means divine favor. It is a sign of the favor of God on your life, IF you hunger, thirst, yearn for righteousness, godliness. And if you have this desire, you will be satisfied, the yearning will be met. The question then is how? Someone might expect that the answer is you earn it, or achieve it. But the biblical answer is that you will be satisfied because God will provide. **[God] satisfies...the hungry soul. Psalm 107:9** And for those who long for righteousness God satisfies that longing - and He does so in and through Jesus. This is what John has been showing us, a foundation he laid out in the very opening words of this book.

He says of Jesus, **John 1:12 To all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God**. So notice the wording - How does a person become a child of God? They are born NOT

of blood, which means not as a birthright. It is a common teaching by some, I read an article yesterday that attributed this to the Pope of the Catholic church I believe, that “*every human is a son or daughter of God*”. Now you have heard me say many times that I believe every person is created by God and therefore they belong to God and they are in the image of God and have inherent value that MUST be respected. But in scripture, no one is a child of God because they are born on the earth. **It is not the children of the flesh who are children of God (Romans 9:8)**. You are not physically born as a child of God. Furthermore, you do not come to belong to God by your ability to do good, not by trying really hard - **not by the will of the flesh or the will of man**. So how? It is a **right given** to all who **receive Christ**. So to those who receive Him, **he gave the right** - TWO HUGE words.

Perhaps some of you, grew up in a home where it was communicated that there were certain expectations and responsibilities that went along with being a member of the family. In this family, we DO these things or we DO NOT do these things. As you carry the family name, you are responsible for the family name. This is true of the Family of God as well, and there are many facets to this, but we are just focused on one in particular today in this idea of sinning and righteousness. **1 John 3:8b,10 The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. 10 By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil; whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God...** The key word is **practice**. That word means *to be devoted to, to celebrate, to act with earnestness*. So this passage asks of us: Are you devoted to pursuing righteousness? Do you celebrate righteousness? Children of God are evident by their earnest desire to act righteously. Please know - this is not a demand for perfection. Nor is this a demand to earn godliness. It is all about Christ, not you; Christ has completed what must be done; **Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil** which is the practice of sinning; Jesus does that not you. **For our sake he (God) made him to be sin who knew no sin (Jesus) so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21)**. You only become the righteousness of God through faith; But the result of becoming the righteousness OF God, is that you hunger for and pursue a life of righteousness before God. I think this becomes evident in the next part of **John 5**.

There is after this healing of the invalid, a confrontation brewing between Jesus and the Jewish authorities. Jesus did this work on the Jewish Sabbath (a day where no work(s) were to be done; and Jesus answers their persecution saying, **John 5:17 “My father is working until now, and I am working”**. Jesus’ response is an assertion of authority. While the OT command of the Sabbath was modeled after the day God rested, it was made for man, not for God. God is the Lord of the sabbath and Jewish rabbis agreed that God works continuously upholding His universe because it is His to govern. In saying this, Jesus declares equality with God; not a competing God; but equality as Father and Son. This was far more serious than working on the Sabbath, and **v18** indicates they were already **seeking to kill him**. But undeterred Jesus further expounds on this equality: **John 5:21-29, 21 For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. 22 For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, 23 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. 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. 25 “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. **26** For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. **27** And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. **28** Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice **29** and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

So a few observations about Jesus' claim of equality with God: First, **Jesus raises the dead to new life** (21). In the OT there was only one God who could make alive those who were dead (**Deuteronomy 32:39**). God is sovereign over the act of giving life, and Jesus claims to be able to do the same; both new spiritual life now and physical resurrection after death. This is clear in (25) where Jesus says **the hour is coming AND is now here**. Eternal life is both a present and future possession that is given to believers, As they hear the voice of Jesus call out, and they receive Him as Lord; and as this occurs you know that He has purposed and planned your rescue. He gives life to whom He will.

(22) **Judgement belongs to Jesus**. Again, in the OT judgement was the exclusive work of God (**Gen 18:25**). This may not be the typical picture we have of Jesus - as the judge. As a matter of fact you may remember **John 3:17**, "For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him". The same Greek word is used in both John 3 and John 5. In **John 3**, Jesus was not sent to condemn (judge) and in **John 5:22** All judgement has been given to the son. The same word, but that word can be rightly used both ways: Either to discriminate between people or to condemn (judge adversely). But these verses do not contradict, they complement. The purpose of his 1st coming was to seek and save the lost (a time period that is still continuing through the church). But Jesus has also been given the task of judge, as in 5:22. Which means that God the Father has purposed that at his second coming, Jesus will have the final say over everyone's life. To those who receive Him, they will be judged as righteous. To those who reject Him, they will be judged as sinners.

(23) **Jesus is to receive our worship**. Jesus says he is to be honored **just as** the Father is honored. In the OT Glory belonged only to God, He did not share it with anyone (**Isaiah 42:8**). But this relationship between God the Father and God the Son is eternally unique. Jesus is one with God, in honor. He is not a mere ambassador to the earth. To glorify Jesus is to glorify the Father. So Jesus then teaches, if you dishonor him you dishonor God the Father. It is therefore completely wrong for any person or religion to revere Jesus as a good man, or a prophet only. To a watching world, and to our culture that seeks to reinvent Jesus at every turn, He leaves no choice: Receive Him as God or did not receive him at all. **He alone overcomes the consequences of sin**. (26) **As the Father has life in himself, he granted the son to have life in himself**. Which is why He is able to call out to the dead (spiritually and physically) and they rise to life. His work is atoning. Death and decay are the consequence of sin against a Holy God. As Jesus has shown, and as He will show further, he has the power to heal decay and He has the power to raise the dead. **There is life in Christ**. Life today and Life to come.

Finally (28-29) **Jesus is the universal God of all**. What I mean, is that based on v28-29 on the final day, everyone in the tomb, will hear the voice of Jesus and come out. He will call all people out of the physical grave and they will obey. But not everyone is resurrected to the same fate. Notice the wording:

Those who have **done good** go to the resurrection of life; and those who have **done evil** go to the resurrection of judgement. Those phrases should not rattle us. The scriptural emphasis is primarily on which family do we belong to. If we are born of God through faith in Christ, we are children of God. And we will do good works. If we are not born of God, then we belong to the family of this world, which is controlled and ruled by God's enemy and who suppresses truth and does evil deeds.

I want to be really clear on this point: The gospel is that you and I are lost in our sins, controlled by the nature of our flesh and governed by the god of this world. The Father has planned the rescue of His people from this fate; He has sent His son to seek and save the lost and give life to who he will. (**John 5:24**) **Whoever hears and believes**, will not come unto judgement of eternal death; **but rather they have already passed from death to life**; and there they will remain with Christ forever. This is the good news. You are given the right to be a child of God, not by birthright or by willpower - but by Grace; unmerited kindness. Your deeds do not save you. Your deeds are not creating salvation in you. But, hear me, your deeds do matter. I believe Jesus chose these words - that those who DO good go to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil go to the resurrection of judgement, to teach us that deeds done in the body matter.

For those submitted to Christ, Sin should be followed by conviction, repentance, and cries of Help that Jesus might destroy **every remnant of the work of Satan still present in us**; so that we might glorify God through the deeds done in the body. When Jesus gives life, he says to us as he did to the invalid at the pool of Bethesda: **"See, you are well. Sin no more"**. The first statement is one of declaration: I have made you well. You did not earn it. I sought you out. I pursued you. I called out to you. I healed you. I gave you the right to be a child of God, now sin no more: Practice righteousness. Will we hear and believe? Will we be made well, and sin no more?