

# THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

## JOHN 5.16-30



**T. M. Moore**

*A Scriptorium Study*

*And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets,*

*He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Luke 24.27*

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

The Gospel of John: John 5.16-30  
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## Introduction to *John 5.16-30*

The occasion of Jesus' healing of a lame man erupts in a confrontation with the religious leaders of Jerusalem. Their initial objection to Jesus – that He did a work on the Sabbath – is shortly set aside as Jesus makes a larger claim which they correctly interpret as meaning He is equal to God.

This will become the heart of the matter between Jesus and the religious leaders of the day. He will not back down from His claim of being the Son of God, having authority from God to do what He does, and being appointed Judge of the world by God. Indeed, subsequent chapters will find Him affirming those claims, in one form or another, over and over.

Trouble is brewing, and Jesus knows it. But He will not be deterred, for His claims are central to His mission, and His mission is to fulfill God's redemptive plan for His people.

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T. M. Moore, Principal  
[tmmoore@ailbe.org](mailto:tmmoore@ailbe.org)

## 1 Working Still

*Read and meditate on John 5.16, 17.*

Jesus neither denied nor apologized for the good work He did on the Sabbath by healing the lame man. The Jews had become so ensnared in their traditions that they feared violating them more than showing grace to those in need. Jesus begins to more firmly establish Himself in relation to Jewish tradition and the Law of God, and the Jewish leaders don't like what they see and hear.

*<sup>16</sup>And for this, the Jewish leaders then began to persecute Him, and they even sought to kill Him, for they argued that one ought not on the Sabbath do such things. <sup>17</sup>But He explained to them, "I work, and I must be about such works as these, because till now My Father works."*

- John 5.16, 17

*Reflect*

1. The Law of God plainly states that no one should work on the Sabbath. Jesus worked on the Sabbath, and did not deny it. What does this suggest about how we may best understand the teaching of God's Law? Complete this prayer: *I know, Lord Jesus, that You came to fulfill the Law, so as I work to understand the Law, I need...*

2. The traditions that had become established in Israel by Jesus' day provided a convenient means for the religious leaders to exercise authority over the people. Does it seem to you that these leaders cared more about people or programs? Explain. Are we ever guilty of anything like this in the church today? *Lord, I know even I get trapped in ways of doing things each day that make me insensitive to the needs of others. I'm so busy, and I have so much to do, that I often fail to show grace to others. Help me to...*

3. What rationale did Jesus give for doing this work on the Sabbath? What does this suggest about the kind of works God the Father does continually? *Help me to pay more attention to Your work, Father, so that I...*

4. Jesus said, "My Father has been working until now..." God's work involves, over and under all, His providential care of creation. How extensive is this work? How far does it reach? What is God's purpose in doing this work? *Lord, I know Your work is good and wise, and that I could not even exist unless You were still working. Give me eyes to see and a mind to remember Your works, Lord, and lead me...*

5. God's work also involves bringing redemption to the world through Jesus Christ. Jesus does this work by His Word and Spirit, in imitation of the work God does in caring for and sustaining creation. From what we've seen thus far, what kinds of things go into the work of bringing redemption to the world? Why is it lawful to do such works on the Sabbath? Bring together into one the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

*Summary*

"The Jewish elders were unwilling to be subject to the law of God, which was to prepare them for the coming of Christ. But they even blamed the Lord for healing on the Sabbath days, which the law did not prohibit. For they did themselves, in one sense, perform acts of healing upon the Sabbath day, when they circumcised a man [on that day]. But they did not blame themselves for transgressing the command of God through

tradition and the previously mentioned pharisaical law. Nor did they condemn themselves for not keeping the commandment of the law, which is the love of God.” *Irenaeus of Lyons (135-202 AD)*

We’re beginning to see that we cannot know God, or understand His will and ways, apart from looking to Jesus. And this is precisely why Jesus came to earth. Man-made traditions and religious cultures can become a snare and a yoke, even when our intentions are good. Only Jesus can free us from all such burdens. How do you expect to experience the freedom and life of Jesus today?

*Closing Prayer*

I cried out to You, O LORD:

I said, “You *are* my refuge,

My portion in the land of the living.

Attend to my cry,

For I am brought very low;

Deliver me from my persecutors,

For they are stronger than I.

Bring my soul out of prison,

That I may praise Your name;

The righteous shall surround me,

For You shall deal bountifully with me.”

Psalm 142.5-7

**Psalm 142.4-7** (*Dix: For the Beauty of the Earth*)

Lord, look to my right and see: None takes notice of my plight.

Is there refuge left for me? Is my soul out of Your sight?

Lord, You are my Refuge strong! O receive my plaintive song!

Hear my cry, Lord, I am low! They are strong who seek my soul.

Jesus frees from every foe; he will keep and make me whole!

Lord, You are my Refuge strong! O receive my plaintive song!

Out of prison lead me, Lord; thanks and praise to You shall be.

Righteous men armed with Your Word will Your grace bestow on me.

Lord, You are my Refuge strong! O receive my plaintive song!

## 2 Equal to God

Read and meditate on John 5.18.

As if working on the Sabbath weren't bad enough, Jesus also claimed God as His Father. And the Jews did not miss the significance of what He was claiming.

*<sup>18</sup>They therefore plotted how they might destroy Him, not because He broke the Sabbath only, but because He spoke these words, that God His Father was, and made Himself God's equal.*

- John 5.18

Reflect

1. What is implied in Jesus' claim that God is His Father? How did the Jews interpret what He was saying? Explain. Complete this prayer: *Jesus, You are God's Son. You can show me the Father, and help me know His will. Today I want You to...*

2. In Jerusalem in Jesus' day, to claim to be God was a capital offense – both within the Jewish community and according to Roman law. Why would both these communities – Jewish and Roman – have held such a claim to be worthy of death? *You have called me to be Your witness, Lord. I need to tell others You are God's Son. Give me an opportunity today to...*

3. At this point in his story, John makes it clear that the religious leaders of the day intend to kill Jesus. Jesus certainly knew this, and He pressed ahead with His mission anyway. How do you suppose knowing this affected John, Peter, Andrew, and the other disciples? *I know some people get upset when we talk about You, Lord, but still...*

4. Thus far in John's gospel we have seen that the Word of God – now incarnate as Jesus – *is* God, existed *with* God, was sent to earth *by* God, and is in some way God's *Son*. How would you explain this to someone who asked you your understanding of Jesus? *This is a great mystery, Lord, and I can't understand it fully. But I can understand it enough to...*

5. In our day, some people deny that Jesus ever claimed to be God. How does John's report about the Jewish leaders refute that mistaken notion? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote from questions 1-4.

Summary

“The Evangelist testifies that in calling himself God's own Son, Jesus made himself equal to God. For the Jews are not presented as saying, ‘For this cause we sought to kill him.’ Rather, the Evangelist, speaking for himself, says, ‘For this reason the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him.’ Moreover, he has discovered the cause, [in saying] that the Jews were stirred with desire to slay him because, when as God he broke the sabbath and also claimed God as his own Father, Jesus ascribed to himself not only the majesty of divine authority in breaking the sabbath but also, in speaking of his Father, the right pertaining to eternal equality.”  
*Ambrose of Milan (333-397 AD)*

The crux of the tension between Jesus and the religious leaders of His day had to do with authority. Jesus represented a challenge to their authority. They bridled at His claim about being the Son of God. They were determined to prevent Him from overthrowing their place in society (cf. Jn. 11.47, 48). Why do some people

still today see Jesus as a threat?

*Closing Prayer*

Why do the nations rage,  
And the people plot a vain thing?  
The kings of the earth set themselves,  
And the rulers take counsel together,  
Against the LORD and against His Anointed, *saying*,  
“Let us break Their bonds in pieces  
And cast away Their cords from us.”  
He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;  
The LORD shall hold them in derision.  
Then He shall speak to them in His wrath,  
And distress them in His deep displeasure:  
“Yet I have set My King  
On My holy hill of Zion.”  
“I will declare the decree:  
The LORD has said to Me,  
‘You are My Son,  
Today I have begotten You.  
Ask of Me, and I will give *You*  
The nations *for* Your inheritance,  
And the ends of the earth *for* Your possession.”

Psalm 2.1-8

**Psalm 2.1-8** (*Agincourt: O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High!*)

Why do the nations vainly rage, conspiring together from age to age?  
Earth’s kings and all of their counselors stand against the Lord and His Right Hand.:

“Now let us cast His yoke below, His Kingdom authority overthrow!  
Throw off His Law, reject His Word; no more be governed by this Lord!”

The Lord in heaven laughs in wrath at all who embark on this cursèd path.  
His angry Word to them is plain: “Yet shall My King in Zion reign!”

Proclaim the message far and wide, that God has exalted the Crucified!  
From heav’n He sent us His only Son, Who has for us salvation won!

### 3 The Works of God

Read and meditate on John 5.19, 20.

“Don’t blame Me,” Jesus seems to be saying. He was only doing what He saw the Father doing. But He was also saying, in effect, “You ain’t seen nothin’ yet.” And He wasn’t kidding.

*<sup>19</sup>Answering then He said,  
“Assuredly, I say to you, the Son  
can nothing do but what He sees is done  
by God the Father. What He does the Son  
does also, <sup>20</sup>for the Father loves the Son,  
and shows Him everything He does. And He  
will show Him greater works than these, so see,  
and marvel.”*

- John 5.19, 20

Reflect

1. Jesus claimed to be able to “see” the works the Father was doing. How was He able to do that? Should we expect to “see” the works of God? Explain. Complete this prayer: *Lord, You have made Your works to be remembered (Ps. 111.4). Show me Your works today, so that I...*

2. Do you suppose Jesus’ explanation for why He did this good work mollified the Jews at all? Did He expect it to? Then why did He make the situation worse than it was by making this statement? *I must not be afraid to talk about You Lord, even though...*

3. Jesus clearly suggests that we can know God by looking at Jesus. How can you see that? What are the implications of this for our knowing, worshiping, and serving God? *Lord Jesus, show me the Father more clearly today, as I...*

4. Jesus indicates that greater works than the healing of this lame man are yet to come (Jn. 5.3-15). What works? And in what way were they greater than this one? What did He mean by telling the leaders they would “marvel”? *Today, Lord, as I go through my day and everything I have to do, let me not lose sight of You, or of Your great works. Let Your works, Lord...*

5. For Someone Who came to earth to bring a Gospel of grace, there’s an awful lot of talk about “works.” Jesus did the works of the Father to secure salvation for us. Why should we be concerned about doing good works, as those who have received the Gospel? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote for questions 1-4.

Summary

“Now we understood that the Father does not do something separately, which, when the Son has seen it, he, too, does after having examined the work of his Father. Rather, he said, ‘The Son cannot do anything of himself, but only what he sees the Father doing,’ because the whole Son is from the Father, and his whole substance and power is from him who begot him. He had said that he does these things in the same way that the Father does, so that we do not think that the Father does some things and the Son other things. Rather, with the same power the Son does the very same things that the Father does when the Father does them through the Son.” *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

The Good News that Jesus brought to earth entails works like those of the Father. Certain of those works

were germane to Jesus' calling, while certain others are germane to our callings. How can we know the works God intends us to do, as His redeemed children?

*Closing Prayer*

My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness  
And Your salvation all the day,  
For I do not know *their* limits.  
I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD;  
I will make mention of Your righteousness, of Yours only.  
O God, You have taught me from my youth;  
And to this *day* I declare Your wondrous works.

Psalm 71.15-17

**Psalm 71.12-16, 3** (*Solid Rock: My Hope is Built on Nothing Less*)

O God, be not too far from me; my ever-present Helper be!  
Consume and shame my enemies; let them reproached and humbled be.  
A Rock of habitation be; command Your Word to rescue me;  
My Rock and Fortress ever be!

But as for me, my voice I raise to sing in hope and constant praise!  
With saving grace my voice will swell Your never-ending grace to tell.  
A Rock of habitation be; command Your Word to rescue me;  
My Rock and Fortress ever be!

## 4 Life and Death

*Read and meditate on John 5.21-24*

Jesus can't leave bad enough alone. Having justified His doing work on the Sabbath, and claimed that God was His Father, He now insists that matters of life and death are in His hands, and that He, the Son, should be honored just as much as the Father. You don't need to guess how such claims were received by those who were already beginning to plot His death.

*<sup>21</sup>For as God the Father to new life can raise the dead, the Son can, too, just as He will. <sup>22</sup>The Father judges no man, but all judgment has committed to the Son, <sup>23</sup>that all the Son should honor as they do the Father. Anyone who has no honor for the Son will have none for the Father, Who has sent Him. <sup>24</sup>Furthermore, I say to you, whoever listens to My Word, believing in the Father Who has sent Me, will have everlasting life, and shall not come to judgment nor to strife, but has passed on to life from death."*

- John 5.21-24

*Reflect*

1. Jesus seems to have taken it for granted that His hearers would understand that God the Father can raise the dead. What Old Testament examples of this might He have had in mind? What do we learn about God's power of life and death from these examples? Complete this prayer: *You can raise the dead, Lord, including all who are dead in their trespasses and sins. Give me confidence in Your life-giving power, so that...*
2. Jesus piles remarkable and dangerous claim upon remarkable and dangerous claim. He says that He "gives life to whom He will." How did the healing of the man at the pool illustrate this claim? *Thank You, Lord, that You willed to give life to me. Help me always...*
3. From giving life, Jesus moves on to exercising judgment, saying that the Father has "committed all judgment to the Son..." How would that claim have been received by those who regarded themselves as the judges of Israel? Do people today prickle at Jesus' claims to be their Judge? Explain. *Lord, it's good that You are our Judge, because...*
4. Jesus says that God intends all people to honor the Son as they would honor the Father. How would the Jews have heard this? What was Jesus saying to them about the place He should have in their religious life? How does this add to His previous claim of being equal to God? *Lord, I want to honor You and the Father in everything I do. Today especially, I hope to honor You by...*
5. Meditate on verse 24. What can we conclude from this about how we should understand all other parts of the Word of God, or any claims about having received revelation from God? What would have been the effect of Jesus' saying this on the religious traditions of the Jews? Bring together into one your prayers from questions 1-4.

*Summary*

“The Father has given judgment to the Son even from the very beginning. For when he speaks of all power and all judgment and says that all things were made by him and all things have been delivered into his hand, he allows no exception [in respect] of time, because they would not be all things unless they were the things of all time. It is the Son, therefore, who has been from the beginning administering judgment, throwing down the haughty tower and dividing the tongues, punishing the whole world by the violence of waters, raining upon Sodom and Gomorrah fire and brimstone, as the Lord from the Lord.” *Tertullian (fl. 197-222 AD)*

Everything the people of His day had come to believe about God, Jesus now began to appropriate for Himself. Many believed Him, but many more did not. What keeps people from believing Jesus?

*Closing Prayer*

The fool hath said in his heart,  
*There is* no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works,  
*there is* none that doeth good.  
The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men,  
to see if there were any that did understand, *and* seek God.  
They are all gone aside, they are *all* together become filthy:  
*there is* none that doeth good, no, not one.  
Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge?  
who eat up my people as they eat bread,  
and call not upon the LORD.  
There were they in great fear:  
for God *is* in the generation of the righteous.

Psalm 14.1-5

**Psalm 14.4, 5** (*St. Anne: O God, Our Help in Ages Past*)

None understands, none seeks the Lord; they all have turned aside.  
Deception leads them from God’s Word who have His grace denied.

The workers of iniquity consume God’s sheep like bread;  
They trust not in the Lord, and He shall fill their hearts with dread.

## 5 A Coming Day

Read and meditate on John 5.25-29.

An hour is coming, and now is: This is a very important statement, especially as it relates to coming to faith in Jesus and entering the promised Kingdom of God.

*<sup>25</sup>I say to you, that there is coming soon a day, and it is now, when all the dead shall hear the voice of God the Son, and all who hear shall live. <sup>26</sup>For just as God the Father has all life within Himself, so likewise has the Son, as God has granted Him. <sup>27</sup>And He has given to the Son authority to execute all judgment also, for He is the Son of Man. <sup>28</sup>I tell you more, and marvel not: An hour is coming when all those in graves will hear His voice, and then <sup>29</sup>will come forth, those who good have done unto eternal life, but every person who has evil done will be condemned.*

- John 5.25-28

Reflect

1. From this passage overall, how would you describe the nature of the “hour” Jesus said was coming and has already come? Of what does this “hour” consist? Complete this prayer: *Lord, I need Your perspective on my life if I’m to understand my purpose in Your Kingdom. Show me...*

2. OK, now Jesus says this “hour” is “coming” and “now is.” Reflect on your answer to question 1. In what sense is this hour “coming”? What will happen when this hour comes? Should we be preparing for this? Explain. *Let me never forget, or ever lose sight of the fact, Lord, that we are bound for a new day. Each day, help me to...*

3. Still reflecting on your answer to question 1, in what sense can we say this “hour” “now is”? What is happening *now* to indicate that this “coming” hour has already begun? Are the dead being brought to life (Eph. 2.1-10)? Is judgment going forward (Rom. 1.18-32)? What are the implications of this “now” aspect of the hour for how we should live today? *I want to live in the hour that is coming and now is, Lord. Teach and lead me to...*

4. Jesus mentions two kinds of people in this “now” and “coming” hour. In verse 29, He summarizes the great difference between them. What is it? Is Jesus teaching salvation by works? Explain. *Lord, You have redeemed us for good works. Help me to know specifically how to fulfill this purpose as...*

5. Central to this passage is the “authority” of Jesus, which has been given to Him by God the Father. For what does Jesus have authority? Where does this place Him within the great overall scheme of things? Bring together your prayers from questions 1-4 into one prayer.

Summary

“The Son of man will be the judge here. That form will pass judgment here that had judgment passed on it here. Listen and understand. The prophet had long ago said the same thing: ‘They will see the one whom they pierced.’ They will see the very form that they struck with a lance. He will take his seat as judge, the very one

who stood before a judge. He will condemn the truly guilty, the very one who was found falsely guilty. He is the one who will come and it is in the form [of man] that he will come [to judge].” *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

The claims Jesus makes in these five verses are breathtaking and staggering. One would either have to be mad to make such statements, or a great deceiver and charlatan, or else a Person unlike any the world had ever seen. How do you suppose these statements impacted those who heard Him? Are His claims any less startling and provocative today?

*Closing Prayer*

The LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty;  
The LORD is clothed,  
He has girded Himself with strength.  
Surely the world is established, so that it cannot be moved.  
Your throne *is* established from of old;  
You *are* from everlasting.  
The floods have lifted up, O LORD,  
The floods have lifted up their voice;  
The floods lift up their waves.  
The LORD on high *is* mightier  
Than the noise of many waters,  
*Than* the mighty waves of the sea.  
Your testimonies are very sure;  
Holiness adorns Your house,  
O LORD, forever.

Psalm 93

**Psalm 93** (*Trinity: Come, Thou Almighty King*)

The Lord in majesty reigns, girded and clothed in strength!  
Earth stands secure: Nor shall it e'er be moved;  
God on His throne above set it in place with love –  
His reign is sure!

What, though the floods arise, raising their voice to the skies,  
Strong though they be, God on His holy throne  
Drowns out their fearsome drone, hasting to save His own,  
Eternally.

Almighty God on high, Your Word can never lie!  
Your truth is sure – holy and just are they  
Who tread Your holy way; Yours shall they ever stay  
Lord, evermore.

## 6 Seeking God Only

*Read and meditate on John 5.30.*

Jesus had come not to do His own will, but the will of Him Who sent Him. The claim is not in the least cryptic: If you would stand with God, stand with Jesus.

<sup>30</sup>*I can  
do nothing of Myself. I understand  
the things I hear, and judge; and righteous is  
My judgment, for I seek not Mine but His,  
that is, the will of Him Who sent Me, God  
the Father.”*

- John 5.30

*Reflect*

1. What did Jesus mean when He said He could of Himself do nothing? What was He saying about His will? His heart and mind? The use of His time? Complete the following brief prayer: *Lord, let my life be consecrated to You in whole and part. Let me say with Jesus...*
2. Jesus was given authority to judge all people, and He does so on the basis of what He hears. What does He hear? Can we hear this, too? Should we? *Let Your Word speak powerfully to me every day Lord. And throughout the day, let me...*
3. Based on all that we've seen thus far, why was Jesus sent by the Father? Meditate on John 20.21. For what does Jesus send us into the world? *You are sending me out today, Lord, so that I might...*
4. How can you tell when you are seeking *your* will instead of *God's*? What should you do when you become aware of this? *Lord, search me at all times, and make sure my heart is...*
5. Jesus always judged with righteous judgment. What does that mean? That is, what makes someone's judgment about some situation or person "righteous"? Should we be able to judge this way? Explain. Bring together into one prayer the prayers you composed from questions 1-4.

*Summary*

“Christ's meaning is nothing other than this: I do not have a will different and apart from that of the Father. Rather, if [the Father] desires anything, then I do as well. If I desire it, then so does he. Since therefore no one could object to the Father judging, so neither may anyone object to me, for the sentence of each is given from the same mind.” *John Chrysostom (344-407AD)*

This passage is the centerpiece of an astonishing first public declaration by Jesus. In a nutshell, but in vast and sweeping terms, He asserts His deity, authority, infallibility, and sovereignty over the affairs of human beings and the cosmos. Does this match up with how we tend to think about Jesus today? Explain.

*Closing Prayer*

My praise *shall be* of You in the great assembly;  
I will pay My vows before those who fear Him.  
The poor shall eat and be satisfied;  
Those who seek Him will praise the LORD.  
Let your heart live forever!

All the ends of the world  
Shall remember and turn to the LORD,  
And all the families of the nations  
Shall worship before You.  
For the kingdom *is* the LORD's,  
And He rules over the nations.

Psalm 22.25-28

**Psalm 22.26-28** (*Darwall: Rejoice, the Lord is King*)

The suffering King shall eat and praise with us the Lord.  
Forever we His praise repeat and trust His Word.  
Praise God above, all you who keep His vows and who His mercies love!

All nations shall repent and hasten to the Lord;  
All those to whom His truth is sent shall praise His Word.  
The Lord is King! His sovereign rule on high now we His people sing!

## 7 Father and Son

*Read and meditate on John 5.16-30.*

John presents this story as Jesus' declaration before the people He had come to save. He has had several private interviews by this time, and one larger teaching visitation (among the Samaritans), but to His own people He is largely unknown, except for the signs previously accomplished in Jerusalem. Now He begins to assert His nature, ministry, and purpose, and He does not mince words.

*<sup>16</sup>And for this, the Jewish leaders then began to persecute Him, and they even sought to kill Him, for they argued that one ought not on the Sabbath do such things. <sup>17</sup>But He explained to them, "I work, and I must be about such works as these, because till now My Father works." <sup>18</sup>They therefore plotted how they might destroy Him, not because He broke the Sabbath only, but because He spoke these words, that God His Father was, and made Himself God's equal. <sup>19</sup>Answering then He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, the Son can nothing do but what He sees is done by God the Father. What He does the Son does also, <sup>20</sup>for the Father loves the Son, and shows Him everything He does. And He will show Him greater works than these, so see, and marvel. <sup>21</sup>For as God the Father to new life can raise the dead, the Son can, too, just as He will. <sup>22</sup>The Father judges no man, but all judgment has committed to the Son, <sup>23</sup>that all the Son should honor as they do the Father. Anyone who has no honor for the Son will have none for the Father, Who has sent Him. <sup>24</sup>Furthermore, I say to you, whoever listens to My Word, believing in the Father Who has sent Me, will have everlasting life, and shall not come to judgment nor to strife, but has passed on to life from death. <sup>25</sup>I say to you, that there is coming soon a day, and it is now, when all the dead shall hear the voice of God the Son, and all who hear shall live. <sup>26</sup>For just as God the Father has all life within Himself, so likewise has the Son, as God has granted Him. <sup>27</sup>And He has given to the Son authority to execute all judgment also, for He is the Son of Man. <sup>28</sup>I tell you more, and marvel not: An hour is coming when all those in graves will hear His voice, and then <sup>29</sup>will come forth, those who good have done unto*

*eternal life, but every person who has evil done will be condemned. <sup>30</sup>I can do nothing of Myself. I understand the things I hear, and judge; and righteous is My judgment, for I seek not Mine but His, that is, the will of Him Who sent Me, God the Father.”*

- John 5.16-30

*Reflect*

1. Imagine yourself a bystander as Jesus is talking with these Jewish leaders. Listening to Him, and watching their responses, how do you think you might respond? How would you explain what you'd heard? Complete this prayer: *Help me to keep focused on the wonder of Your love, the mystery of Your might, and the power of Your grace, O Lord, so that in my witness for You...*

2. How do Jesus' claims in this passage augment or clarify the Gospel as you understand it? *I want to be faithful and true in my witness Lord. I thank You that, through Your servant John, You have shown me...*

3. The message of Jesus is the message of newness. Things we always hoped in or depended on in the past now pale into merely relative significance in the light of Jesus. How can you see this in the story of Jesus and the lame man? *Lord, make all things new in my life. Today in particular, I ask You to...*

4. Why is it hard for some people to let go of traditions, structures, beliefs, and familiar practices, so that they can believe in Jesus? Should we modify our presentation of the Gospel to focus only on the grace of God, and not so much on what He requires? Explain. *Teach and remind me daily, Lord, not to trust in anyone or anything but You. Guard me against the temptation of...*

5. The Kingdom of God is coming, and with it, the resurrection of the dead – some to eternal life, and some to everlasting death. The judgment of Christ will be the determining factor at that time. But that time is already upon us. What evidence do you see that this “last days” scenario is unfolding around us daily? How should this encourage you as a follower of Jesus? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

*Summary*

“Let unbelievers meditate on the fact that, both by nature and sovereignty, the Son is one with the Father and that his power at work is not at cross-purposes with the Father, inasmuch as ‘whatever the Father does, the Son does as well.’ For no one can do in the same way the same work that another had done unless he shares in the unity of the same nature, but at the same time also is not inferior in the method of working.” *Ambrose of Milan (333-397 AD)*

Jesus did not hesitate to set forth all His claims, and to unfold the future prospects for all human beings in this first public statement of His ministry. Is the Gospel as you share it as broad, expansive, and specific as Jesus here suggests it should be? Explain.

*Closing Prayer*

Praise the LORD!

Sing to the LORD a new song,

*And* His praise in the assembly of saints.

Let Israel rejoice in their Maker;

Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.

Let them praise His name with the dance;

Let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp.  
For the LORD takes pleasure in His people;  
He will beautify the humble with salvation.  
Let the saints be joyful in glory;  
Let them sing aloud on their beds.  
Let the high praises of God be in their mouth,  
And a two-edged sword in their hand...

Psalm 149.1-6

**Psalm 149** (*Toulon: I Greet Thee, Who My Sure Redeemer Art*)

Sing to the Lord a glorious song and new!  
Praise Him you people, to Whom praise is due!  
Let us rejoice, let us be glad in Him  
Who has created us and cleansed our sin.

Praise Him with dance, with tambourine and lyre!  
To be so praised is God's one great desire.  
Lord, beautify Your holy ones with grace;  
Show us the mercy of Your saving face.

Sing to the Lord, exult with great delight!  
Sing on your beds with joy to God by night!  
Sing praise and take His Word into your hand;  
Publish His grace and wrath in every land!

*The Gospel of John: John 5.16-30*

*Questions for reflection or discussion*

1. Summarize the claims Jesus makes for Himself in this passage. Is this proper subject matter for a conversation about Jesus? Why?
2. Why did the religious leaders of Jerusalem take offense at Jesus? Did this cause Jesus to “tone down” His comments? Why not?
3. How would you describe the mission of Jesus, as He outlines it in these verses? In what ways is this our mission as well (Jn. 20.21)?
4. People were beginning to get upset with Jesus, enough to want to kill Him. At the same time, people were being touched by His grace and truth and ushered into new life. Still others probably just shrugged and walked off. Should we expect anything different from people today, when we talk with them about Jesus? Explain.
5. What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned from John 5.16-30? How are you putting that lesson to work in your walk with and work for the Lord?

*Items for prayer:*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

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Thank you.