

The Gospel of John
Week Eight
John 5:28-6:6

Day One

28 "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice 29 and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned. 30 By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.

v. 28 – Jesus referenced the first resurrection in the verses immediately preceding this one. The first resurrection takes place when you and I put our faith in Christ to forgive our sins. In this verse, Jesus spoke about the second resurrection, which is the bodily resurrection that precedes the last judgment. Jesus would give a graphic example of this later in John’s gospel when He raised Lazarus from the dead.

That act indicated the divine power with which Jesus operated and to which He had access. He was not just a prophet, He was the Son of God who had the power not only to forgive sins but to raise the dead with the sound of His voice! Jesus had power over life and death and only God has such power! So Jesus was indicating here that He was and is God.

This is why we can put our faith in Christ not only for salvation but also for forgiveness and anything else we may need. If God can raise the dead, then He can do anything!
How can you better incorporate this power into your everyday life, for you, your family and your organization and church?

v. 29 – Notice that all will rise from the dead, both the good and the evil. They will then be assigned their eternal reward or punishment. Those will not be distributed according to good deeds done or not done, but rather by one’s position in God through Christ. Those who relate to God through Jesus receive salvation, those who refused or did not earn punishment.

I am listening to a book as I write that states unequivocally that if what I just wrote is true, then God is mean-spirited. What’s more, the writer doesn’t even believe the gospel writers actually existed. I listen to books like this so I can understand the thinking of those whom we are trying to reach with Jesus’ message.

v. 30 – Jesus was not applying some random or whimsical judgment. He and the Father were unison and acted in perfect agreement. Jesus derived His authority and credibility from being sent on a mission, and He was acting as heaven’s ambassador. He was not acting independently. Jesus’ motive in judgment isn’t anger at those being judged but rather obedience to the heavenly requirements for righteousness.

Day Two

31 "If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid. 32 There is another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is valid. 33 "You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth. 34 Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved.

v. 31 – Now we learn why Jesus had referenced the Father so often in what

Day Three

35 John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light. 36 "I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me. 37 And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, 38 nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent.

v. 35 – Jesus used the metaphor of a lamp giving light to describe John's work and testimony about Him. For a time, the Jews basked in the glow of John's ministry. After centuries of silence, God seemed to be moving in their midst and the Jews were excited, even though some did not receive John's testimony. Jesus was not backing down from controversy, but was using the attention drawn to His Sabbath miracle to make His case for who He was.

v. 36 – Then Jesus returned to His argument by going back to His divine credentials. The work that Jesus was doing was initiated in the heart of God, the very God that Israel and the Jews claimed to serve. Note that Jesus had not come to *try* to do God's work. He came to *finish* it. **Do you finish what you start?** It is a godly trait to do so.

The lazy man does not roast his game, but the diligent man prizes his possessions (Proverbs 12:27).

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith (2 Timothy 4:7).

What is the work that heaven has given you to do? How do you plan to finish it? How will you know when you have finished it?

vs. 37&38 – The Father testified about Jesus through the miracles He did. He also spoke from heaven at Jesus' baptism. The Jews did not hear the voice because they had no faith. You can only hear God's voice through faith. Not only can you hear His voice, but His word can dwell inside you, but only if you accept the One whom He sent and accept Him in faith.

Does God's word dwell in you? That means that it is alive and working in you, speaking to you in whatever you do and wherever you go.

Although the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, your teachers will be hidden no more; with your own eyes you will see them. Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it." Then you will defile your idols overlaid with silver and your images covered with gold; you will throw them away like a menstrual cloth and say to them, "Away with you!" (Isaiah 30:20-22).

The Sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught. The Sovereign Lord has opened my ears, and I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back (Isaiah 50:4-5)

What is God saying to you today? Do you know? What effect is that word having on and in you?

Day Four

39 You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. 40 These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life. 41 "I do not accept praise from men, 42 but I know you. I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts.

v. 39 – The Jews diligently studied the Scriptures. As I pointed out in earlier studies, they were eagerly studying and watching for the Messiah, yet they could not see Him even though they were looking right at Him! I have noticed the tendency for those who know the most Scripture to be the most legalistic and, in some ways, meanest of believers. The goal in studying Scripture is not to know more Scripture but to become more like Him and to do His works!

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does (James 1:22-25).

The Jews knew the Word but they didn't know the God of the Word! I am back in school and I must do a lot of Bible study. Yet I don't want to study just to have knowledge. I want to know Him more fully and completely and be able to share what I know with others more effectively. I don't want to ever be impressed with my own knowledge, for there is always someone who knows more and there is always more to know.

The Jews actually thought that their Scripture knowledge gave them eternal life. They put their faith in the wrong place, and that mistake cost them a chance to reverence the Lord of the Scriptures. They saw themselves as the Word's caretakers, which in turn caused them to oppose Jesus. The Scriptures that they studied all pointed to Jesus, but they missed the point.

If they missed the point, then it is possible for you and I to miss it, too. *Lord, help us to focus on Jesus as we study the Word. Keep us from weird doctrines and strange topics. We want to be edified and edify others as we study and learn. Amen.*

v. 40 – Jesus is the only source of spiritual life there is. He is the bread from heaven, the water of life, the Alpha and Omega, and our all in all. The Jews stubbornly refused to come to Him and receive life. They felt they already had the life they needed in Judaism. **Where do you get your life? From church? From your hobby? Your family? Your work?** Those can give you some life but they can't you the fullness of life that God intended. Only Jesus can give you that.

v. 41 – Jesus did not rely on the endorsements or praise that came from men. There were probably some who believed that Jesus was a good and noble man, a prophet even. Yet Jesus did not derive His identity from what people said or how they felt about Him. He took His identity from the Father and the mission the Father sent Him to accomplish.

v. 42 – Jesus knew the Jews and was intimately acquainted with all their ways. He knew that they had no love for God in their hearts. What a remarkable statement, and one which the Jews must have dismissed as ludicrous. Everything they did, they did for God. **How could this man Jesus say that they didn't love God?** It was preposterous to them. Yet we know it to be true.

It is possible to be deceived where your own spirituality is concerned. You can believe you are in a better place than you truly are. Paul wrote about this when he said:

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you (Romans 12:3).

**Do you have an accurate assessment of who you are and where you stand in God?
About your own spiritual progress and maturity?**

Day Five

43 I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him. 44 How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God? 45 "But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. 46 If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote

about me. 47 But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?"

v. 43 – This phenomenon also occurred among the Corinthians:

But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough (2 Corinthians 11:3-4).

Why is this? It is because we don't know how to hear the voice of God and instead accept the voice of men as our standard. We accept many who present their own credentials and those credentials are usually dramatic public results, like the crazy man who was recently ministering in Florida. He claimed to have regular angelic and heavenly visitations, while he tattooed his body from head to toe. He was and is a nut case, but people flock to see him. He divorced his wife and remarried and is "back" in ministry less than a year after his divorce. The man is a loon but he proclaims his own credentials and people receive him.

v. 44 – Ouch! I have worked to obtain this praise from others. Yet I have not been as diligent to obtain the praise that comes from God. I have very often been more concerned with what others think about me than about what God thinks of me. I have not done things that God put in my heart to do because I was concerned what others would say. *Lord, forgive me for stopping short of seeking You by seeking the praise that comes from men.* **Have you been guilty of the same thing?** Don't answer too quickly.

vs. 45&46 – Moses was the leader of the Jews and they were all his disciples, so to speak. They took great pride in being part of Moses' spiritual lineage. Yet Jesus said that Moses their leader would condemn them because Moses spoke of Jesus! I see this same dynamic in the church. People put their hope in their spiritual leader and the leader sometimes allows it to happen. They call this leader their covering. I am intrigued by that word that appears no place in the Bible. When people want me to be their covering, I tell them that I cannot stop a common cold so why would they want me to be their covering.. I can't cover or protect them. I point them to Jesus and advise that they ask Him to be their covering; He is much smarter and more powerful.

Who is your covering? Whoever it is, does this person or group over-promise what they can do for you spiritually? Do you put your faith in them, their ministry or anointing or do you put your trust in Christ? Don't answer too quickly.

v. 47 – Jesus was not winning many friends in this dialog. He accused the Jews, those followers of Moses, of not believing what Moses had written! They spent their days and nights studying and discussing what Moses wrote and Jesus dismissed their studies as irrelevant because they did not lead to Him. If what you are doing spiritually, even if it is

in and through your church, doesn't lead you to Jesus and a closer walk with Him, then it is spiritual foolishness and a waste of time!

Are you guilty of accepting someone who comes in their own name and not in the name of Jesus? If so, what are you prepared to do about it?

Day Six

1 Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), 2 and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the miraculous signs he had performed on the sick. 3 Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. 4 The Jewish Passover Feast was near.

v. 1 – John the author of this gospel abruptly ended the discourse in Jerusalem with the Jews. Next we see Jesus back home in the north regions of Galilee. The Sea of Galilee is not really a Sea but a huge lake, from which the Jordan River flows down to the Dead Sea, which is even a bigger lake. It was also called the Sea of Tiberias because the town of Tiberias is on its west shore. Tiberias was named after the Roman Emperor and was famous for its spas and hot springs, and is still a resort town today.

You can also still cross the Sea today in boats that are modeled after those used in Jesus' time. It is common to stop the boat somewhere on the Sea and have devotions. For many, it is a moving experience because this is where Jesus walked and lived. I have been to Israel ten times and it never gets old. It is always special to be there. **Have you always wanted to go to the Holy Land?** If so, then I urge you to go as soon as possible. It will be the trip of a lifetime.

v. 2 – A crowd followed Jesus, which means they would have had a convoy of boats or else they had to traverse around the Lake to the place He was going. That could have been a long journey, so I assume most took boats (the lake is huge as I pointed out). The people had seen Jesus heal the sick, so He must have been active in ministry at this time. The people didn't necessarily want Jesus, but they wanted what He had and what He could do.

Do you want Jesus or follow Him for what is in it for you? Don't answer too quickly.

v. 3 – On the north shore of the Lake is a Catholic church that superintends a hillside where this meeting with Jesus' disciples could have taken place. The acoustics on the hillside are amazing. If you stand at the bottom and speak, it is naturally amplified and carried on a hillside that could easily have held 5,000 people. I had often wondered how Jesus communicated to the crowds without a sound system. When you stand on that hillside, you know it was possible.

v. 4 – This would have been around March or April of the year, since the Passover was near. As stated earlier, all people but especially the heads of families, were to come to Jerusalem three times every year. The Lord wanted to keep them connected to the life of

the covenant community. **Are you connected to the life in your church community? If not, why not?** You cannot be a Christian alone. You must be part of a community, regardless of how difficult that may be for you. There are no exceptions allowed.

Day Seven

5 When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" 6 He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

v. 5 – A great number of people came to hear Jesus and hope for a healing touch from His hand. Since it was close to Passover, the weather would have been cooler, allowing for easier daytime travel, and the people took advantage of the conditions, probably picking up friends along the way in nearby villages. Jesus initiated a conversation with Philip, asking where they could obtain enough bread to feed the people.

I wonder why Jesus asked Philip and not the other disciples? I am sure He had His reasons. One pastor stated that when God asks you a question, He isn't looking for information. He already knows the answer. He is asking to help you focus on some important issue on which you need to focus. I would imagine, but the verse does not indicate, that Philip was struggling with God's ability to provide or do the impossible.

It is interesting that Jesus felt the need to feed the people. It is as if they were coming to His home and He wanted to provide hospitality. Yet there was a more important issue He wanted to introduce, for He used this miracle of the bread to introduce a teaching on Him being the bread of life. The Lord knows how to set the stage to teach us what we need to know!

v. 6 – Jesus wasn't testing Philip's knowledge or trying to stump him. He was testing him, as one would test precious metal, to see what was in him. Jesus knew what He was going to do. **Isn't that good news?** Jesus isn't stumbling around like I would, trying to figure out what to do next. He always knows. That is why you and I can trust Him with everything. He is never surprised or caught off guard. He knows what He will do next.

How anxious are you about the issues of life? There is no need to be, really, but I know that is easier said than done. And I know I am as guilty as the next person of fretting about today and tomorrow. When we fret, it would be a good thing to remind ourselves of what Paul wrote to the Philippians:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:4-7).

Are you rejoicing, praying and thanking? If you are, then peace will be your reward. If you don't have peace, then you are lacking in one of those three important behaviors.