

Looking To Jesus
Why Jesus Matters Forever
John 5:17-30
HBC Naples, March 5th, 2017

When we open God's Word, what are we expecting?

- I want some surprising inspiration?
- I want to have some mystery revealed- like reading the declaration of independence in national treasure, the pastor has some kind of special glasses to read the secret writing?
- I want a power encounter, for God to blow me away?

Or are we opening God's Word saying like Psalm 119:105, God may your word be a lamp to my feet and a light to my path? Show me what I need to see for my next step, for the path I am traveling today, right here, right now.

Is there a teachable, humble spirit as you open His Word? I say this because here we are 3 months into life as a new church as we are only in John 5, and John keeps pounding the same truths, in greater depth and complexity, but pounding nonetheless. And the temptation is to get bored.

"Move on! We know this, tell us something new and interesting." I feel this temptation as a pastor when the world around me is bombarding me with new and creative information. We are way overstimulated by life in our digital world and it is easy to find ourselves distracted and fidgety from the discipline of sitting at the feet of Jesus and listening. Like trying to get the attention of a three-year-old at the carnival.

God doesn't simply want you to hear and know something. He wants you to follow and obey. Matt 28:20 teaching them to obey... to observe, to do everything I have commanded you. So you may know some/all of these things, but are we doing everything he commanded, that's a different metric, a much higher bar. So as we continue in John, can we ask him to help us be teachable?

In John 5, we have entered a new phase of Jesus' ministry. There is growing opposition from the Jewish leaders. (4:44) A prophet is without honor in his hometown or country. There is a deeper polarization of opinion going on, you love Jesus or you hate him. In 5:16 it says the Jews were persecuting Jesus because he was doing these things (healing) on the Sabbath. And in 5:17 (take a look at it) it says, Jesus **answered** them. John doesn't give us the question or charge that Jesus was answering, it simply says Jesus answered them, but it is clear by the next 30 verses they wanted to know by what authority he was doing these things. It mattered to them... look at 5:18 "This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath,(He threatened their world view and the superstitions that supported their superficial faith, he was a light exposing their darkness and like bugs under a board they ran from the light) v 18 again... but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God."

This was the bigger deal. They were persecuting him for breaking the Sabbath but now they wanted to kill him because of his clear claim to be equal with God.

vv.19-47 are Jesus' answer to their objections and questions of "*who are you that you can say and do these things*". This week 5:19-30, next week the rest of the chapter.

Here is our outline:

Why Jesus Matters Forever.

1. **Why Jesus?** Read 5:19-23. Truly, Truly. Each point is highlighted by this introduction. It is the way Jesus emphasized what he was saying, hear this! You can count on this! I really want you to hear this clearly...

Q: Why Jesus?

A: Because he is God.

Response: Marvel!

The basis of Jesus' authority to say and do the things that he did was absolutely based in the reality of who he was and is. His identity. The religious leaders had correctly interpreted Jesus statement in v.17 when Jesus called God "My father". This was a Jewish no no. God is "Our Father", that's how you referred to him, you did not say, "My Father". That's when the alarms went off! You can't say that- it means you are claiming to be equal with God.

Now Jesus could have answered, "Oh, you misunderstood me, let me clarify what I mean by that so you don't wrongly think I am claiming to be equal with God." That's not what he does. Instead he makes it even clearer... Not only is he equal with God- not in some kind of... -alternate God, competing with the Father kind of way- but that he is in fact God, that He and the Father are one.

This is the mystery that we call in theological terms, the Trinity. God is one being in three persons, The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. I call it a mystery because it is beyond our ability to comprehend how God can be one being in three persons... but Scripture makes it clear this is the reality of who God is.

This is not some obtuse belief pieced together from various Scriptures. Let's look at what Jesus is saying in this text directly. v.19 Jesus does nothing on his own. His actions are directly tied to God the Father. Whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. **Evidence #1:** Whatever God does or can do, Jesus does and can do. Like Father like Son. It is a claim to be God. **Evidence #2** v.20 How can the Son do whatever the Father does? "For the Father *loves* the Son and *shows* him all that he himself is doing."

Want more, **evidence #3:** v21 "For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the son gives life to whom he will." Talk can be cheap, anybody could say these things but Jesus backed them up. He had just healed a man paralyzed for 38 years. He gave life to whoever he wanted to, he picked the man out of the multitude of people laying by the pool and said, Get up, take up your bed and walk." Don't get all caught up in this referring only to physical healing or bringing the physically dead to life, Jesus does that to demonstrate his power, but the real gift and power is the spiritual life Jesus wants to give you. Your body will eventually wear out, any testimony to that here?? But spiritual life is forever, alive to God!

Evidence #4, v.22 "For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they

honor the Father.” Your opinion of God will be directly judged by your opinion of Jesus.

This was a huge leap for the Jews. And it is a huge leap for many people today. Our culture *wants* to have a high view of Jesus, but not that He is God. We are glad to see him as a good moral teacher, maybe even a prophet, but Jesus doesn't give us that option. This is the classic, **Lord, Liar or Lunatic argument**.

Do you know what that is, articulated by CS Lewis in Mere Christianity. Jesus claims to be God- right here, clear as day, you cannot say “no he didn't”. If Jesus claimed to be God it is either true or not true. If it is not true, he either knows it is not true, which makes him a liar. Or he doesn't know he is not God which makes him a lunatic. If he is a liar or a lunatic he cannot be a good moral teacher. It's not an option! But if it is true that he is God, then he is Lord. There's no middle ground. You can't say nice things about Jesus and not worship him as God. Jesus doesn't give us that option. I meet people all the time who do not worship God but they think Jesus was a great person. They have no idea who he is and who he claims to be. We have to obliterate this false idea that Jesus somehow shows people a way to God. He is the way, the truth and the life!

Acts 4:12, There is no other name, under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. It is Jesus! It's not the virgin Mary, it's not the apostles or any saints, not angels, not a priest or the pastor.

If you or someone you know is looking for God, there is only one answer, Look to Jesus! Point them to Jesus, bring them to Jesus, talk about Jesus. In 1:18 John says, No one has ever seen God, but Jesus has made him known. In John 14:9 Jesus tells

Phillip, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father... I am in the Father and The Father is in me.”

How do I respond to this? Look at vs. 5:20 ***“The Father shows the Son all that he is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel!”***

God wants you to be amazed, to marvel, with wonder at how amazing Jesus is! Has familiarity with Jesus bred contempt in your life. You’ve grown up knowing Jesus, that should be a gift, but it can often lead to complacency, taking for granted, and not standing back and getting a fresh perspective of who Jesus is. God in the flesh, think about it and marvel. ***Are you gripped by the greatness of God in Jesus?*** If not, why not?

Are you looking, but has a superficial faith and superstitious religion blinded you like it did the Jewish religious leaders? They couldn’t see the marvel of Jesus’ miracles and healing, they just got tied up in a wad over the fact that Jesus broke one of their rules.

Why Jesus? Because he is God. There is no other name, be amazed, in awe that God would reveal himself to you this way, marvel at it.

2. **Why Jesus Matters?** Here’s another Truly, Truly, pay attention! Read 5:24.

Q: Why Jesus Matters?

A: Because he is on a mission to give life.

Response: Hear and live!

We don’t need to spend a lot of time on this one because John has pounded this truth home for these 5 chapters pretty well. John 3:16. Good news, God loves You. Bad news.. all are

condemned and face this perishing, judgment. The urgent news, Jesus is the only way. You must believe, receive the gift, hear his word, trust him alone, be born again. John has described the same thing with many terms: Look to Jesus, accept his gift by faith, and you will be given eternal life. 5:24 If you believe...you will not be subject to the judgement you deserve, death. But you will pass from death to life. V.21 The son gives life to whom he will, who does he give it to? Him who hears and believes. Faith in Jesus unlocks this treasure. And notice what John says to those who hear and believe, that person has passed from death to life. Not **will** pass, **has** passed. Eternal life begins when you believe not when you die! Jesus' claim here is stunning! Whoever hears my word and believes has eternal life. Why Jesus matters? Because he is God and He alone saves! Our response should be hear, believe and live!

3. **Why Jesus Matters Forever?**, final truly... Read 5:25-30
Musicians come...

Q: Why Jesus Matters Forever?

A: Because your response to him has eternal significance.

Response: Believe Now!

Faith in Jesus is not simply some remedy for how to have a better life. Following Jesus will have huge ramifications for you in this life, eternal life begins when you believe not just when you die. But the significance of this life is forever and will show itself most clearly on that day when Jesus will actually judge all those who have lived and died.

Philippians 2:10-11 says that one day “at the name of Jesus every knee should bow... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Jesus answers the religious leaders who want to kill him by saying, *“Yes, I am God, you got that right, I have come to bring life to those who hear and believe, and beyond that, I will actually execute the judgement of all those who have lived. I have that authority, just as The Father has life in himself, so do I. No one gave me life, I am life and I give it to those who I will. Everyone including you will stand before me and you will give an account for your life.”*

Notice in 5:28 Jesus says, do not marvel at this... Marvel that Jesus is God, marvel at the works that Jesus does to reveal his identity as God, but don't marvel at this fact that Jesus will judge the earth. Your response to this should be to believe now! Because there is no opportunity to believe after you have died. Just as man will die once and after that face judgement. Heb 9:27, You need to believe now, there is no second chance. The significance is eternal. Jesus matters forever. Your response in this life to who Jesus is, seals your destiny. It will be a resurrection to life and glory and joy and peace in God's presence. Or a resurrection to judgment, to spiritual death and alienation from God, to pain and suffering, and loneliness and regret forever and ever.

That second scenario is what we all deserve because God is holy. There is no darkness in him. Sin has cast all of us into darkness, but because God so loved the world, he gave his one and only Son, Jesus, that whoever believes in him will not

experience this perishing, this eternal judgment, but will have eternal life. The response to this mercy and grace is to believe, why would you refuse this offer?

Don't be blind and stubborn like the religious leaders Jesus addresses here. Jesus confronts them with this in 5:40 which will be in our passage next week, "Yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life." Don't refuse Jesus. Come to him, he wants to give you life. Your decision in this regard has immediate and eternal consequences. This is why Jesus matters forever. He is the way the truth and the life. Its why sharing the gospel with others is so urgent. You can't make people believe but you can point them to the truth.