



Summary

In John chapter 5, we encounter a profound lesson on the nature of Jesus' authority and His relationship with the Father. The central story revolves around Jesus healing a paralyzed man on the Sabbath, sparking controversy with religious leaders. This incident unveils deeper truths about Christ's divine identity and mission. We're challenged to examine our own understanding of God's law versus human traditions. Are we, like the Pharisees, sometimes so caught up in our interpretations that we miss the heart of God's message? The passage reminds us that true faith isn't about rigid rule-keeping, but about recognizing and embracing the life-giving power of Christ. As we reflect on this, let's consider how we might be clinging to our own 'religious paralysis' instead of embracing the freedom and healing Jesus offers. This message invites us to move beyond surface-level religiosity and into a transformative relationship with the living God.





Points

Title: Jesus' Authority and Witnesses: Confronting Legalism with Divine Truth

Sermon Summary: This sermon explores Jesus' encounter with religious leaders in John 5, focusing on His claims of divine authority and the witnesses that testify to His identity. The pastor delves into the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees over Sabbath laws, highlighting the contrast between legalistic interpretations and God's true intent. The sermon emphasizes Jesus' equality with God, His role in judgment and salvation, and the importance of recognizing Him as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies.

Key Points:

- Jesus claims equality with God, causing conflict with religious leaders
- The purpose of the Sabbath and the problem of legalistic interpretations
- Four witnesses to Jesus' authority: John the Baptist, Jesus' works, the Father, and Scripture
- The inability of the law to save and the necessity of faith in Christ
- The danger of rejecting Jesus and choosing to believe lies instead of truth
- The importance of having a living relationship with God's Word through the Holy Spirit

Scripture Reference:

- John 5:15-47 (primary passage)
- Deuteronomy 18:15-22
- Isaiah 7:14, 9:6, 44:6-8
- Matthew 12:31-32
- Galatians 3:19-25
- 1 John 4:1-6, 5:7-13

Stories:

- The healing of the paralytic man at the pool of Bethesda
- The rich man and Lazarus (mentioned as an illustration)
- Brief mentions of Jesus raising the son of the widow at Nain, Jairus' daughter, and Lazarus from the dead



Scripture

Here are the scripture references mentioned or alluded to in the sermon, listed in standard notation:

1. John 5:15-47 (main passage being discussed)
2. Deuteronomy 18:15-22
3. Psalm 2:7-9
4. Isaiah 7:14
5. Isaiah 9:6-7
6. Isaiah 44:6-8
7. Mark 2:27-28
8. Exodus 20:8-11 (Ten Commandments - Sabbath law)
9. Colossians 1:17
10. Luke 16:19-31 (Rich man and Lazarus)
11. Ephesians 4:8-10 (alluded to)
12. 1 Peter 3:19-20 (alluded to)
13. Daniel 7:13-14
14. Luke 7:11-17 (Son of widow at Nain)
15. Mark 5:21-43 (Daughter of Jairus)
16. John 11:1-44 (Raising of Lazarus)
17. John 6:38-40
18. Matthew 5:17
19. Matthew 12:31
20. Revelation 22:18-19
21. Matthew 3:16-17 (Jesus' baptism)
22. Galatians 3:19-25
23. John 14:6
24. 1 John 4:1-6
25. 1 John 5:7-13
26. John 1:1

Additional relevant verses that align with the main themes:

1. Romans 10:9-10 (Salvation through faith in Christ)
2. Ephesians 2:8-9 (Salvation by grace through faith)
3. Matthew 5:17-20 (Jesus fulfilling the law)
4. Romans 3:20-22 (Righteousness through faith, not law)
5. Hebrews 4:12 (Power of God's Word)



Quotes

John chapter 5 is when Jesus first comes into conflict with the religious leaders of the Jews. And that conflict, which began here, is what eventually led to Jesus' crucifixion over the fact Jesus, being a man, made himself equal with God.

The problem for them, should have been, and it should be today, that there are many other places that declare when the Son of God comes that he will be God, the man God, and not a man, a human being.

And the great problem in John 5 is the remainder that we have to study, is the religious establishment, and think of it, the religious establishment of Jesus' day had no desire to be made well.

How can you even begin to believe you honor the Father when you disbelieve all or even part of what Jesus does or says?

The purpose of God's law was to show you how in need of a personal savior you are, not to study it and keep it to the nth degree.

Jesus knew they would not be made well, choosing rather to remain in the lofty, prideful position of religious paralysis, their faith in God's word, the truth of God's word, totally atrophied by hundreds of years of it always being this way.

Jesus said, I am the way, I am the truth, and I am the life, and no one comes to the Father except through me. There are no exceptions.



Discussion Questions

How does Jesus' healing of the paralytic on the Sabbath challenge our understanding of religious laws versus God's intent? What might this teach us about legalism in our own faith practices?

In what ways does Jesus' claim of equality with God the Father challenge or affirm your view of His divinity? How does this impact your relationship with Christ?

How do the four witnesses Jesus presents (John the Baptist, His works, the Father, and Scripture) strengthen or challenge your faith in Him as the Messiah?

What does Jesus mean when He says 'the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live'? How might this relate to spiritual rebirth?

How does Jesus' statement that He can do nothing apart from the Father illuminate the nature of the Trinity? What implications does this have for our understanding of God?

In what ways might we, like the religious leaders, be guilty of studying Scripture without truly coming to Jesus for life? How can we avoid this pitfall?

How does Jesus' explanation of the purpose of the Law as a 'tutor to bring us to Christ' change your perspective on Old Testament commandments?

What does it mean to 'honor the Son just as they honor the Father'? How might this challenge interfaith dialogues or our interactions with those of different beliefs?

How does the concept of personal choice and free will factor into Jesus' appeal to the religious leaders? What implications does this have for our own faith journeys?

In light of 1 John 4 and 5, how can we 'test the spirits' and discern truth in today's world of competing religious and philosophical claims?



Small Group Guide: Jesus' Theology and Witnesses

Opening Prayer:

Begin with a prayer asking for God's guidance and wisdom as you discuss the sermon.

Key Takeaways:

1. Jesus' conflict with religious leaders began over His claim of equality with God.
2. Jesus presents four witnesses to validate His claims: John the Baptist, His works, the Father, and Scripture.
3. Legalism can blind people to the true intent of God's law and the person of Jesus.
4. Understanding Jesus' identity and believing in Him is crucial for eternal life.

Discussion Questions:

1. How did Jesus' healing on the Sabbath challenge the religious leaders' understanding of God's law? How might we sometimes misinterpret or misapply Scripture today?
2. Jesus presents four witnesses to His identity. Which of these do you find most compelling, and why?
3. The sermon mentions that "it is never legalistic to conform your life to God's law." How do we balance obedience to God's commands with avoiding legalism?
4. How does Jesus' statement "the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do" (John 5:19) inform our understanding of His relationship with the Father?
5. Discuss the concept of "religious paralysis" mentioned in the sermon. How can long-held traditions sometimes hinder our spiritual growth or understanding of God?
6. The sermon emphasizes personal choice in responding to Jesus. How does this idea of free will impact our view of salvation and our approach to evangelism?

Practical Applications:

1. This week, read through John 5 and reflect on Jesus' claims about Himself. Journal your thoughts and any new insights you gain.
2. Examine your own life for areas where you might be holding onto legalistic views. Pray for God to reveal His grace and truth in those areas.



3. Share your testimony with someone this week, focusing on how encountering Jesus has changed your understanding of God and His Word.

4. As a group, discuss ways you can support each other in studying Scripture with both reverence for God's law and openness to the Holy Spirit's guidance.

Closing Prayer:

Close the session by thanking God for His Word, asking for His help in applying these truths, and praying for each group member's spiritual growth.





Daily Devotional

Day 1: The Son's Authority

Reading: John 5:19-29

Devotional: Jesus reveals His divine authority and oneness with the Father in this passage. As you read, reflect on the profound implications of Christ's words. He claims the power to give life and execute judgment, demonstrating His deity. How does recognizing Jesus' authority impact your daily life and decisions? Consider areas where you might need to surrender more fully to His lordship. Pray for a deeper understanding of Christ's power and a willingness to trust Him completely in all circumstances.

Day 2: Witnesses to the Truth

Reading: John 5:30-47

Devotional: Jesus presents multiple witnesses to His identity and mission, including John the Baptist, His miraculous works, the Father's testimony, and the Scriptures. In a world full of competing voices and claims, how can we discern truth? Reflect on the evidence for your faith. Are you allowing God's Word to shape your beliefs and actions? Ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate Scripture and strengthen your conviction in Christ's truth claims. Consider how you might bear witness to Jesus in your own life today.

Day 3: The Purpose of God's Law

Reading: Galatians 3:19-25

Devotional: Paul explains that the law was given to reveal our need for a Savior, not as a means of salvation. How have you experienced the law as a "tutor" leading you to Christ? Reflect on the freedom we have in Christ, no longer bound by legalistic observance but empowered to live by faith. Are there areas in your life where you still struggle with legalism or self-righteousness? Pray for a deeper understanding of God's grace and the courage to live in the liberty Christ provides.

Day 4: Testing the Spirits

Reading: 1 John 4:1-6

Devotional: John warns believers to discern between true and false teachings, particularly regarding the nature of Christ. In our pluralistic society, how can we maintain a firm commitment to biblical truth while showing love to those who disagree? Reflect on times when you've encountered teachings that didn't align with Scripture. How did you respond? Ask God for wisdom to recognize His truth and grace to stand firm in your faith while engaging others with compassion.



Day 5: The Witness of the Father, Son, and Spirit

Reading: 1 John 5:6-12

Devotional: John emphasizes the united testimony of the Trinity to the truth of salvation in Christ. How have you experienced the witness of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in your own life? Reflect on the assurance we have in Christ – eternal life as a present possession for all who believe. If you struggle with doubt, bring those concerns to God in prayer. Thank Him for the gift of salvation and ask for a renewed sense of His presence and love. Consider how you can share this good news with someone in your life today.

