

VII. Thy Word is Truth in Biblical Perspective
The Supremacy and Sufficiency of God's Word
“What Does the Son of God Say About the Word of God? – ‘It Saves’”
John 5:19-29
Dr. Harry L. Reeder III
March 29, 2015 – Morning Sermon

We'll begin by looking at John 5. John 5:16-18 says [16] *And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. [17] But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.”*

[18] *This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, God's Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

I confess that I wonderfully and passionately love this week, the Week of Christ's Passion before Easter. We have services set up just simply to follow the steps of Jesus. On Palm Sunday when He comes in they go before Him saying “Hosanna, the King of Kings.” There His disciples are with Him. Then there is Maundy Thursday in which He concludes the Last Supper of the Passover and institutes the first of the Lord's Supper. We do that on Thursday night of this week. On Good Friday we'll gather together for an hour to walk our way through the seven words of Christ on the cross. Then we will have our Lord's Day resurrection on Sunday Sabbath starting with our sunrise service and then our celebration services that morning and will end with the oratorio that night. Larnelle Harris will be with us on Easter Sunday. It will be a great week.

I'd like to use this week to draw out something for you. It had to be a heady thing that first Palm Sunday, what we call the triumphal entry. Can you imagine being one of the disciples there with Jesus with all the crowds shouting? What other place would you rather be than right there with Jesus at that moment? What a parade! There was Jesus and they were rejoicing and yet there will be another parade on Good Friday. His disciples did not want to be a part of that one and in fear they fled. The women who were followers of Christ did not flee for they stayed the course all the way to cross. They were the first at the cross and first at the empty tomb yet the disciples fled. That was not one parade you wanted to be in as Jesus made His way to Jerusalem that day they weren't there to be found.

I want to be up front with and I am not a prophet or the son of the prophet but I would suggest for you that the days in this country that were secured for us because of God's gracious work in the first great awakening (1735-1765) and the second great awakening (1785 to 1885) where we've been living off the benefits of that so it's kind of been a heady thing to be a follower of Jesus in this culture and nation. Unless God intervenes those days are rapidly disappearing or in fact gone. I think we're in the days of the Good Friday parade. Will we stay the course? Will we like those women in that day believe the Word of God, put our trust in Jesus and even in the difficulty of that day when an entire city was arraigned against them intimidating them with the threats of violence and death just as they were about to impose it on Christ in that day? Will we

fear and flee or will we faithfully stand firm and reach those who would even seek to intimidate? That is the parade you are in today increasingly.

Here is the way I start a wedding each time. Marriage is a divinely sanctioned covenant that God has given, one man one woman for one life. It is not something we have developed or have evolved into from creation. If we ever abandon the one man one woman for one life then there is no way that we can expect the favor of God for we have taken one of His foundations away. I would expect if we keep going as we are that in five to ten years that simple statement will probably land me in jail and you'll be having a prison ministry through me. It is happening already.

Good Friday – the days of intimidation have arrived. Basically secular humanism is a religious movement that is designed to erase any religion but specifically Christianity which is a scandal. Right now they are simply trying to quarantine it where you can do it at certain places and times but you can't take it into the public square. Forget the first amendment and forget that our confessional documents as a nation say that we're a nation under God and that we're a nation that has God given inalienable rights one is freedom not to worship but freedom of religion – the free practice thereof with worship simply being a part of that. So what will we do in that day?

That is exactly why this series of sermons has been preached and that is exactly why our theme this year is Thy Word is Truth – the supremacy and sufficiency of God's Word. Will in that day, because a city is not there to cheer you on because you are identified with Christ but is there angered, assail all that you hold dear, mock, marginalize, intimidate, the Word of God be supreme and sufficient in your life? Will that day find you faithful to Christ, standing firm, having been led by the Word of God in its supremacy and sufficient? God will never forsake His people no matter what the day will bring against them.

In our opening series we have taken what the Son of God says about the Word of God. We are articulating simply from what Jesus said seven things He said about the Bible. We have covered five of them. Number one is that He says it's truth. It is God's Truth that has been delivered to us. This is not a collection of truths or ideas of men about God but the Bible claims to be a revelation from God that is true. Secondly, it is unbreakable. The Bible doesn't become true. The Bible doesn't contain truth for it is truth. Jesus said to sanctify them in Thy truth for Thy Word is truth. You put your life and eternity on the message of the Word where you can put your trust in Jesus Christ now and for eternity and be renewed by Jesus for that is a promise from Christ in His Word and that is unbreakable.

Number three, the Word of God is readable. It is designed to be preached but given to be read. Jesus said numerous times 'Have you not read?' He expects us to read it because it is readable and by God's Spirit understandable. Number four it bears witness of Christ. He says "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life but they bear witness of Me." Fifthly, the Bible is the instrument in the hands of the Holy Spirit. Put no confidence in the flesh for it is the Spirit who gives life. We learned that His Words are Spirit and life. Jesus said the Holy Spirit is the One who gives you life, not the flesh or your resolution or your deeds or your works or your religion. It is Christ alone that gives life and the only way you get to Christ is by the power of the Holy Spirit. We are born not of flesh, nor of the will of man, nor of the blood but of the Spirit of God and the Spirit of God always works with the Word of God.

In this study we're finding out a sixth thing about God's Word and that is it saves. It is not that the Bible is the Savior but you won't get to the Savior without the Bible. The Bible doesn't save you but you won't get to the Savior as your Savior because you need One and He is the One true and only Savior without the Word of God. It's not our reason that invents Christianity. Christianity is engaged with reason but it comes by divine revelation. God's Word points us to God's Savior which is the Son of God Jesus Christ. Jesus makes this clear for us in John 5.

In John 5 this is a pivotal moment in the way John is unfolding the life of Jesus, when He heals the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda. When Jesus tells him to pick up his bed and walk the Jewish leaders then come to the man and say 'What are you doing carrying your bed for this is the Sabbath?' So they bring the traditions of men to bear upon him and he simply says "I'm carrying my bed and walking because of Him." So the leaders went after Jesus and said "What are You doing causing him to break the Sabbath?" Jesus explains to them that He is the Lord of the Sabbath and then He makes this astounding statement where He claims to be the Son of God and therefore the second Person of the Trinity.

John 5:17 says [17] *But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working."* In other words My Father is working and what you see Me doing is the work of My Father. I am working that which My Father works and My Father is working through Me. They want to kill Him all the more, not only because He has violated the Sabbath but because He makes Himself to be equal with God. Jesus clearly does not dispel them of that notion because it's true. He is the Son of God, fully God, the God Man but now He goes on to explain that to them and that is extremely astounding to them. I love this week because it's recreation week, redemption week but there is also creation week where He created everything in six days and then rested on the Sabbath.

Now they say He is working. In other words, the rest of God as Jesus is informing us is not one of passivity but He is resting from His work of creation. Now He has entered into the work of redemption, the work of grace to save His people from their sins. He has also entered into the work of providence to sustain His creation. In other words if God was passive all this stuff would fall apart. We live, move and have our being in Him. The reason we are breathing is because He gave us the oxygen. The reason we live, move and have our being is because the Father is sustaining us in His providence. God is working in grace for our redemption and in providence and He has another work that is coming called judgment. Jesus is working out what the Father sent Him to do. My works are His works.

If you have a problem with that healing that was the Father. I was simply doing what He called me to do. He goes into an explanation that affirms the doctrine of the Trinity. We get this from tri and unity. There is one God who dwells in three Persons. It is not three Gods who simply work together but One God. It is the Triune God. Now He is making another point. Not only are they united in essence but they are united in function. The Father authored creation yet all things were created in, for and by Christ and the Holy Spirit hovered over creation. The Father authored our salvation. Jesus is accomplishing our salvation and says to the Father, "Father all whom You have given Me I lose not one." Then He sends the Holy Spirit who brings us to Him so that we are kept by Him into eternity. So the Father isn't doing this and Jesus doing that and the Spirit doing this and hoping it all meets at the end.

No, the Father works and Jesus is doing His work and then the Holy Spirit will be sent to complete that work and apply it. What about providence? The Father has made the promise found in Romans 8:28 which says [28] *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.* Where is Jesus? He is at the right hand of the Father interceding for us right now. He pours forth His Spirit who comforts us and then intercedes for us with groanings too deep to be uttered to the Savior who brings it to the Father. There is this essential unity of the Trinity and a functional use of the Trinity. What He does I'm doing and what I do He has done and that's the point that Jesus is making.

In John 5 it's Jesus' discourse on the Tri-unity and how the Trinity functions in unity as well as exists in unity. The best way to go through this text is with the three 'trulys'. Three times Jesus says 'truly, truly.' In the King James it is 'verily, verily.' In the Greek it's amén, amén. In English it's amen, amen.

John 5:19-23 says [19] *So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. [20] For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. [21] For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. [22] 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."*

The Father is working and I'm working. I am doing the works of the Father. If the Father is working I'm working and if you want to know what the Father is doing just look at Me. You think this healing is something? Wait till you see the dead come to life. He is not referring to the creation where God brought life from nothing but He is referring to the dead receiving life and that will initially be seen in the dead coming to life pointing to something greater. Wait till you see Lazarus walk out. Lazarus come forth, that is the Father working through Me and I'm doing the work of the Father. Wait till you see men and women dead in their sins come forth with My Word and you need that because the Father has another work. It's the judgment but He is not going to do the judgment because He has delivered all the judgment over to Me.

So I am doing His works now and on judgment day I'll be doing His works where all men will appear. It is appointed unto men once to die and the only people who will miss that are the people who are alive when Jesus comes back. So it is appointed unto men once to die and then the judgment. Then we stand before the Lord. Conscience tells us, reason tells us there's a judgment. You hear it every time some terrible crime is committed and somebody says "I hope they are paying for it." Inside of us we know there is a justice issue, a judgment issue. We're all guilty so how will we stand there in that day? When He, the Judge of all humanity, sends all of humanity into either the glories of a new heavens and a new earth to be with Him or the unendurable yet eternal judgment of the place He Himself called the Lake of fire, Ghenna, or hell. How can we stand in that day?

In this day He is giving life and there is something there that tells you how you'll stand in that day. It's in the next truly, truly. John 5:24 says [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.* He is saying the Father gives life

through Me. The Father will judge but He won't judge for I will judge. So how can you possibly stand in that day? You may say 'I believe in God.' You can't believe in Him, the Father, and honor Him unless you believe in Me and honor Me, Jesus. He just said you can't believe in Me until you hear My Word. How can you be right with the Father? It is through the Son. How can the Father make you right through the Son? It is because the Son gives life to dead sinners. How can dead sinners come to life and trust in the Son and be right with the Father? It is through His Word.

He said to them, 'he who hears My Word and believes...' This is just a fact and I believe the Bible is true. For those who think there are many ways to God, our religions if sincerely held will get us there then you have to argue with Jesus. Jesus says very clearly that the only way to the Father is through Me. If you want to believe and honor the Father then you have to believe and honor Me. There are three choices. He is either divine and He told you the truth or He is deranged and shouldn't be trusted for anything or He is the deceiver who is intentionally deceiving. There is no room for 'I don't think He is right on this but I think He is a good teacher.' He has made it very clear so do you believe His Word? If you want to be right with the Father and honor Him you have to believe in Him but in order to do this you have to believe in Me, Jesus and honor Me. The only way you'll come to Me is when My Word comes to you and you hear and believe in Me who sent Me.

He gives us one more truly, truly in the next section. The reason you don't have to worry about that day is because you've passed from judgment into life. The Day of Judgment is just a day to display what I've done in your life. John 5:25-29 says [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.*

I am not only the Son of God but I'm the Son of Man which means I can do two things. One is I can bring life and I can give judgment. The Father has appointed Me, the Incarnate Christ, to give life. By a man came death, Adam, and by a Man comes the resurrection of the dead. There is One God and one Mediator between God and Man and that is Christ Jesus. So very clearly because He fulfills that title of Messiah and Redeemer, the Son of Man that means He can give life because He gives His life for you on the cross and pays for all your sins.

The second thing is He is now the Risen Savior who has full judgment over all humanity. The way that you pass from death unto life is to come to Him. An hour is coming and now is when the dead will come forth to life. He is not referring to Lazarus anymore. He is referring to Harry Reeder, 1969 for that's when I heard the Gospel and He gave me eyes to see and ears to hear and came to Christ. On that day God took me out of the tomb of sin and brought me to the triumph of eternal life. Every single one who has come to Christ as Lord and Savior, is because His Word called you out from the tomb of sin to Himself and the triumph of salvation. He is pointing to the week we're celebrating and I will accomplish that on the cross and that time now is.

Then He says there is another time coming that He doesn't say now is because it hasn't come yet but it is coming. That is when the Son of Man will come to judge all of humanity and we all have an appointment there. In that Day that will be a glorious day for His people but every person in Christ who legally were forgiven of their sins and gloriously He had begun a work of transformation even though no believer is perfect, on that day there will be the display that God's grace took them where they were, forgave them and didn't leave them where they were but He went to work on your life and you began to do those works not for salvation but for Him and that day will demonstrate that something happened in the life of that person. It is not their deeds that saved them but their deeds will make evident Jesus was their Savior.

Do you know how many death bed conversions there are in the Bible? There is one and we'll be referring to it this week, the thief on the cross. Some think they will get right with the Lord right before they die. First of all people usually die the way they live. Today is the day of salvation. A bishop said there is only one deathbed conversion so that none of us will be presumptuous but there is one so that you don't lose hope. I don't know how much time there was left after Jesus told the thief on the cross 'today you'll be with Me in paradise' but on judgment day that thief is saved fully through the work of Christ and not his works. There will be the evidence he was saved and all you have to do is read the account of the man who was mocking began to sing the praises of God. The man that ridiculed Jesus on the cross began to honor Christ on the cross. The man who railed against Christ on the cross then said 'I am guilty. We deserve this but He has done nothing.' He confessed the purity of Christ and majesty of Christ and then said "Remember me." Only Jesus saved him but that evidenced that he had come to the Savior. So the evidence will be there for every believer.

So where does this lead us to at this point? This leads me to the takeaway. Because salvation is through Christ alone...from Christ alone...by His Word alone... in other words there is no other way to heaven but through Jesus Christ. It is through His redeeming work on the cross. The wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life. God will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. So how can I be right with God? God made a way when there was no way. There is an hour coming in which there is a judgment. There is an hour that has already come and that was at the cross and now is the day of salvation. Do you want to stand in that hour and day that is coming, then this is the day you come to Christ. He alone is the Savior of sinners. He alone can accomplish our salvation. We are saved through Christ alone, by Christ alone and through the instrumentality of His Word.

How do you know you need a Savior? The Bible tells you so. How do you know you can't save yourself? The Bible tells you so. How do you know you're helpless? The Bible tells you so. How do you know you're religion can't save you? The Bible tells you so. How do you know you're hopeless? The Bible tells you so. How do you know that in Christ you have a sufficient, glorious, full Savior? Truly, truly He who believes in Me has eternal life and there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. How can I know today can be the first day of a forever life for me? The Bible tells you so. Without the Word of God you would never know it.

So what does that mean for us? Because salvation is through Christ alone, from Christ alone, by His Word alone, then each Christian and every faithful church must hold fast to the Word of God by, one, insisting and interceding for the faithful preaching of the

Word of God when gathered and intentionally and insistently sharing the Word of God when scattered. The key is that if the pulpit of this church ever leaves the confidence and authority of God's Word then everything else will fall apart. If I ever leave then the next man who takes my place find out what he believes about the Bible.

The Bible is God's inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God for that alone can be our foundation. That pulls the trigger on everything and it's encourages you when you come in here hurting. It is what consoles you when you come in here disappointed. It is what exhorts you, convicts you and what sets the tone for all the small groups and congregational communities. It is what equips you to stand on Good Friday in a world that would intimidate you. It equips you to keep your eyes on Jesus to know how to respond.

Here is an example using Scott Walker who is running for President. He is a professing believer. Scott was in Europe, I believe, for an economic forum. At the end of his speech on economics a media person asked him, 'Do you believe in creation or evolution?' With all due respect to Mr. Walker I applaud what he said in many ways but if would have just given me a call I would have loved to have equipped him for that moment. I'm sure his pastors are doing that. If he is going to own Christ they will come at you from every direction in the public forum. Don't tell them they are unfair question because that will be all you get is unfair questions and you better be ready for them, just like you need to be ready in your life for those kinds of questions. You will have a choice. Will you be able to stand for Christ with winsome faithfulness or are you going to be molded by the world and walk away from Christ?

If Mr. Walker had called me to ask me how to answer that question here is what I would have told him. 'I am not running for pastor of the United States of America nor am I running to be the biology professor to pontificate the origins but if your question is in running for President how do you view the people you are going to govern and take care of, do I view them as a product of a chance explosion and gathering of thoughtless mutated germs that actually mutated somewhere from a stone to a tree, from an ape to now existing or if I see the people I'm going to govern as having been designed by the hand of God and made in the image of God with dignity and respect, then I'll take the latter' and that's the way I would have answered that question. We are made in the image of God and not some mindless explosion of mutated germs crawled up from some cesspool and slim that we don't even know where that came from. I'll just take God's Word for I want to be ready in that day.

So secondly, intentionally share the Word of God when you're scattered. People are in the tomb of sin and the only thing that will bring them out is Jesus by the Holy Spirit and Jesus always uses His Word when He does it. So go and take that Word forward. The hour has come. Jesus is saving sinners. The hour is coming when He comes in judgment but the hour now is when He saves sinners. So you can go to that fraternity, that team, that school, that neighborhood, that job and thoughtfully, patiently, kindly, compassionately and courageously share with them Glorious News. Get up on the mountain and tell them Jesus saves sinners by His grace and for His glory. I have Good News and I want to share this with you. Watch all the Lazarus' come forward. You have the great opportunity to say to them 'yes there was Good Friday, yes they began to flee but Sunday has come and He has risen and you can have life evermore in Him for I know so. The Bible tells me so.' Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. I thank You that we have a King of Glory who has come to go to a cross and instead of affirming His privileges He laid them aside to take our sins so that we could put our trust in Him alone. Thank You so much for Your church. Thank You so much for the sacraments of the church. Thank You so much for the people of God and thank You so much for the means of grace but all of those exist so that we will put our trust in Christ alone. Dear Savior who can move mountains, move men and women to Christ and I pray for this church that it will pray for and insist on the faithful preaching of Your Word. I pray for this church that it will not be satisfied for the preaching of the Word when gathered but they will only take full joy in Christ when they share that Word as we scatter, in Jesus' Name, Amen.