

John Ch 5:16-47

“All Work And No Rest”

We left off last time with Jesus exhorting this man whom He'd healed unto the reality that with repentance comes responsibility. and How once you've been given new life, you're not to retreat to your old ways, and we see the exhortation there in vs 14 where Jesus says, “Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.” Or another way to understand what Jesus is saying there is, “Look, this work that I've wrought in your life, this healing that you've experienced, this new life that you've been given, will be of absolutely no benefit to you if you just go back to doing those things that you were doing before I came into and touched your life.” Don't fall into the mindset of, “Once whole, always whole,” Jesus is saying, “You can undo that which I've done for you.”

Now Jesus won't do that, He's not going to somehow penalize him, and undo what He's done for Him, but He won't violate that man's decision to lead his life however he sees fit to lead it. and If it's after the manner of the non-believer, then he'll receive the reward of the non-believer, J.B. put it like this, “*Bear fruits worthy of repentance.*” Matt 3:8 The point being that if you lead the lifestyle of the non-repentant, don't be deceived you won't reap the reward of the repentant no matter how you may choose to honor God with your lips. (You have your finger there in Ezek 33, look at vs 12-17) What's not fair is that Jesus would touch your life, bring healing and wholeness into your life, and then you would turn your back on Him and retreat into the nuances and patterns of life that you led before He changed your life. So we're not to take for granted the work of Jesus Christ in our life, with repentance comes responsibility, sin no more lest a worse thing come upon you.

Well, the religious authorities had inquired as to who it was who commanded this man to take up his bed and walk because Jesus had healed him on a Sabbath, and rather than rejoicing that his life had been made whole, they were ready to prosecute him for breaking their interpretation of the law. and So he told them that it was Jesus who had made him well, even as Jesus is the One who makes each and everyone of us well, and we read in vs 16.

Vs16

As we mentioned last week to violate the Sabbath was a crime that was punishable by death, but what we need to understand is that Jesus is no way desecrated the Sabbath, but rather they'd distorted the Sabbath. Because the reality is that the Sabbath wasn't so much about inaction as it is about satisfaction. What do you mean? God created the heavens and the earth in 6 days, He then looked at all His creation and seeing that it was good, He was satisfied with the work and so He rested from the work. But don't you know that the Sabbath that God enjoyed wasn't exactly a perpetual, or for that matter even a long lived ordeal. Because as soon as Adam sinned, the Lord's Sabbath was technically over, He wasn't satisfied any more, mankind had fallen into the ditch of sin and He's been working ever since to get us out.

Now He instigated and initiated a Sabbath rest for man, but again the point wasn't inaction as much as it was satisfaction, ceasing to do our own thing that we might rest in Him and be in union with Him. In other words the Sabbath rest spoke of utterly abandoning oneself to the will of God at the expense of one's own will. and That's what Jesus is doing here; He's abandoned His will to be in union or unity with the Father. The Pulpit Commentary says here, "Sabbath keeping is the great symbol of such entire satisfaction with God. The activities from which man has to cease on the holy day are man's own, man's self-centered labors." and Jesus here his busy, not about His own thing, but about His Father's thing, later Jesus would say, "*Which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?*" Luke 14:5 The answer is every one of them would, they'd set their personal agenda aside for the greater good, and Jesus is saying that's what the Sabbath is all about, not doing my own thing, but doing the right thing, the Father's thing.

That's why Jesus said, come unto Me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest, rest from our own efforts, our own agendas, our own vain labors, and we rest in Him and His will for our lives, He becomes our perpetual Sabbath as we rest in Him, even as the He's at rest in the Father.

Vs17

You see, If it's right to help an animal on the Sabbath, how much more a man who's fallen into the ditch of sin should we seek to help them out? The bible says that Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. and The bible is clear regarding the work ethic of God, Isa 40:28, "*The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary.*" and Again, "*Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.*" Ps 121:4 Or to understand that another way, God never takes a day off. Can you imagine what this world would be like if every Sabbath Day God just shut down? The universe would just spontaneously combust because He's the One who holds it all together. Or what if He just stopped working in your life, or my life every Sabbath? Our lives would be a mess, because I don't about you but I need Him working in my life every second of every minute of every hour of every day or I'm going to blow life bad. and So Jesus is just saying here, "Look, it's not me doing the work, I'm just a mirror reflecting the heart of My Father, and as My Father works so I work."

Notice that this time Jesus didn't say, "Our Father", or "The Father", but rather He said, "My Father." Implying that God was His personal Father, in other words He's claiming deity here, making Himself equal with or placing Himself on a level with God. and If you thought there was a problem with the breaking of the Sabbath traditions, this one jumps off the scale.

Vs18

It blows my mind how some people assert that Jesus never claimed deity, never claimed to be God, that's the entire point of John's gospel, to unveil the deity of Jesus. Liberal theologians or various cults may not see it, but the people who were standing there that day knew exactly what Jesus was saying.

That's why they became so outraged, later on when we get to ch 10 we'll see another heated encounter and they'll all pick up stones to stone Him, and Jesus says, "I've done a lot of good works around you guys, for which one are you stoning Me?" and They say, "*For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.*" John 10:33

It was real clear to them that Jesus made claim after claim of deity; it's woven all throughout this chapter. and Here we read where they understand that He's made Himself equal with God but the question is how can one be *equal* with God with out *being* God? Because you're either God, or you're not, and it's impossible to be equal to God *with out* being God, how can you be the same, and yet not be the same? and Of course enters the doctrine of the trinity begins to burst in here because the bible is clear, "*Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God.'*" Isa 44:6 and Again, "*Is there a God besides Me? Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one.*" Isa 44:8 and Yet Jesus is saying that His Father is God, and that He's exactly the same as His Father, which makes Him what? God.

Now He goes on here to further blow their minds, and this is all in response to His authority to heal on the Sabbath, and the short answer is because He's God, therefore He's Lord of the Sabbath, but the exhaustive answer that He gives here, is that He can do this because it's what His Father wants Him to do and He's utterly abandoned His will and is only doing what His Father would have Him to do.

Vs19

He's saying, "What I do doesn't *contradict* the heart of God, it *compliments* the heart of God." Jesus is saying that He's merely a reflection of the Father and so it's not Him that's doing the work, it's the Father through Him doing the work, and that's what He's seeking to get them to see.

That's why He says here, "The Son can do nothing of Himself." It's not that He's any less deity than the Father, or has any less authority, or credentials, or power, but when He became a man, the book of Philippians teaches us that He completely emptied Himself of those privileges (not of His deity but of His divine prerogatives) that He might become completely dependant upon the Father. So all the miracles that He did, all the power and holiness that He displayed weren't of His own accord, they were the overflow of His dependence upon the Father and the power of the Holy Spirit in His life. Now this is important because He led His life in such a manner as to teach us what it meant to be completely dependant upon God and submitted the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, He voided Himself of all of His divine prerogatives.

You say, “Wait a minute Jeff, you’re actually saying that it’s possible for us to lead a Christ like life, if we’ll but completely void ourselves of our own will, our own agenda, and be totally dependant upon Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.” That’s exactly what I’m saying, Jesus Christ (though deity) was as completely human as you and me, and He modeled the type of life that’s available to us all if we’ll but empty ourselves of our self, and depend upon Him and the power of Holy Spirit in our lives.

Which leads me to say that we need to realize that everything that Jesus was to the Father, that’s what we’re to be to Him, outside of deity. What was Jesus to the Father? As we just stated a minute ago 1st of all He was a reflection of the Father. The book of Hebrews tells us that He was the express image of His person, we’re to be the express image of Christ, people are to look at you, to look at me and see Christ, not me, we’re to decrease, He’s to increase.

Jesus was a reflection of the Father, (and these are just a few things I thought of as I pondered it for a few minutes, there’s doubtless more), but Jesus was in submission to the Father. Allowing Him to work through Him by the power of the Holy Spirit in His life, Jesus said, “The Son can do nothing of Himself.” What did Jesus say to us? “*Without Me you can do nothing.*” John 15:5 So even as it was the Father working through Jesus, it’s to be Jesus doing the work through us. He was in communication with the Father, dependence upon the Father, a voice for the Father, in harmony with the Father, and of course a pure vessel to be used by the Father. and We’re to be all these things in our relationship to Jesus, a reflection of Him, in submission to Him, in communication with Him, we’re to be dependent upon Him, a voice for Him, in harmony with Him, and a pure vessel to be used by Him. Not in anyway contradicting Him, but complimenting Him, leading our lives in line with Him.

You see when man ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, his relationship with God was immediately severed. and Jesus is displaying what a restored relationship is to be like, because when man came into that knowledge he immediately didn’t sense the dependence upon God that he once did, he “knew” what was right and what was wrong. and So, “I don’t need to seek the Lord on that detail.” and Rather than fostering dependence it developed an independence, and Jesus is saying when you’re life is where it needs to be, you’ll be back in that place of running every detail by the Father, not doing anything unless His stamp of approval has been placed upon it.” It won’t be, “I know what to do here, or what needs to happen there.” It’ll be, “Father what’s your will in this situation, Lord show me your desire in this circumstance, I’m not sure which direction to go here, You lead me, You guide me, You show me where to go and what to do.” I’ll be doing nothing of myself, but only that which the Lord directs me in; I’ll be abandoned of my own will, and surrendered to Him in totality. and When I get to that place, He’ll begin to use my life in radical ways.

Vs20

Not that they'll believe, but that they'll marvel, He knows they won't believe, but He says, "You think this man walking is amazing, you ain't seen nothing yet."

Vs21-23

So in vs 17 Jesus claimed to be on the same *par* as God, in vs 21 He claims the same *power* as God, in vs 22 He claims the same *prerogative* as God, which resolves in vs 23 in the fact that He's worthy of the same *praise* as God. They're a package deal, I mean if you can't see His claim to deity all over the place here, then you have a major issue. He says, "I do what My Father does, I have the authority that My Father has," even as the Father raises the dead, I can give life to who I choose to, to whom I make that judgment call, because I have the prerogative of judgment. Now of course those are all divine qualities, who can raise the dead but God? "Well, is He talking physically or spiritually?" Doesn't matter He'll do both, and of course judgment is the prerogative reserved for God alone, Ps 9:8 says, "*He shall judge the world in righteousness, And He shall administer judgment for the peoples in uprightness.*" Yet here Jesus says that the Father has committed the prerogative of judgment to the Son, why? (Vs23 1st ½)

Well, if their minds weren't blown, you can count on it now. Jesus claims the same right to respect, and honor and worship, and praise as the Father. Now Isa 42:8 says, "*I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another.*" So now what do we do? Simple, we acknowledge the deity and the Godhood of Jesus Christ God alone is worthy of all honor and praise, worship and adoration, and so if we're to reconcile these two vs, Isa 42:8 and John 5:23 we have to concede to the fact that Jesus is God. As a matter of fact Jesus takes it one step farther and says, "If you *don't* give Me the same honor that you give to the Father, you don't honor the Father at all." They're a package deal, we learned Wednesday evening that to despise God's Word, and not give honor and obedience to God's Word, is to despise God Himself, and not give honor or obedience to God Himself. Of course Jesus is the Word (John Ch 1), so to not honor the Son, is to not honor the Father.

One of the earmarks of a cult is their refusal to give Jesus the honor and priority that are His. The Jehovah Witnesses want to say that Jesus is Michael the archangel, not equivalent to the Father; He's a created being. The Mormons want to say that Jesus and Satan are brothers when the bible says that Jesus is God's *only* begotten Son, not to mention that reduces Jesus to an order of creation as well instead of being the Creator.

Some people say they don't have a problem with God (and by that they're referring to the Father) but they don't really see the necessity for Jesus and they just have a problem with Jesus. Well then you have a problem with the Father because they're one, and he who doesn't honor the Son, doesn't honor the Father who sent Him. You can't have relationship with the Father apart from the Son, Jesus is the way, the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father but by Him, it just won't happen.

This word “honor” speaks of attaching a value, Jesus is to have the same value in your eyes as does God the Father. and If you don’t value the Son the same as the Father, than you don’t value the Father at all, because He’s purposed that we’re all to honor the Son just as we would Him.

Vs24

I tell ya this is another one of these vs that I just don’t know what to do with it in order to make it any simpler to understand, there’s no clearer way to state it. He doesn’t mention anything about baptism or any other work of the flesh. 2 Things necessary to pass from spiritual death into life, to be born again. #1 To hear God’s Word, and #2 Believe in Him, now this word, “Hears” is in the present tense, and it’s active which means that it suggests a moral as well as a physical hearing.

Which basically means going beyond a mental assent having heard with my ear, but that I allow the Word which I hear to penetrate my heart and my nature so that I allow it shape and mold me, and I act accordingly. Or to understand it another way, you’ll know those who are going beyond listening to really hearing the Lord by the way they lead their lives, by their fruits you’ll know them.

Vs 25-27

and Of course we all who know the Lord bear witness to the fact that the hour still is when the dead are hearing the voice of the Son of God and living. We were all dead in sin until we heard His voice and were raised up into the newness of Life, and Jesus can grant life because He has life in Himself, which is to say He’s the very source and well spring of life even as the Father is. He’s not a participator in the life; He is life itself, the way, the truth, and the life

We see here why the Father has granted that the Son should be the Judge of man, it’s because He Himself is the Son of Man, because He can identify with man. He can personally identify with the weaknesses and frailties of humanity being in all ways tempted as we are yet with out sin. The bible says, “*We do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.*” Heb 4:15 So because He’s God, He executes Judgment, because He’s man He understands our position as humanity, it’s the perfect justice system. We can’t say, “Well, you’re God, how can you know what it’s like to go through *this*, or be tempted by *that*, of course you can sit there and condemn me, but if you went through what I went through you’d have done the same thing.” Because He’ll say, “Been there haven’t done that.” He’s proved that it’s possible to be human and make the right decisions, live your life in submission to God and to the power of the Holy Spirit and should we choose to succumb to temptation and lead our lives in rebellion to Him, it’s not because we had no choice, we made that choice.

Now obviously as He’s speaking to them, they’re freaking out at what He’s saying about Himself (how that the dead will live at His word, spiritually and otherwise, that the judgment of the world has been committed to Him) and so He says here.

Vs28-30

Question; do you seek your own will, or the will of Jesus Christ for your life? Remember He's given us an example that we should do as He has done, and because His agenda is not to serve His own interests, He's qualified to be the Judge, it's not about what He can get out of the deal, it's about honoring His Father. and He speaks here about 2 resurrections one unto life, the other unto condemnation, and of course those who come to the light and receive Jesus Christ as demonstrated by how they lead their lives will experience the resurrection unto eternal life. and Then this 2nd resurrection here is speaking of that Great White Throne judgment seen in Rev Ch 20. When all those whose names aren't found written in the book of Life due to their rejection of Jesus Christ will be cast into the lake of fire, suffering the condemnation of their own choice day and night forever and ever.

Vs31-35

Now if your bible says that John was a light, it should read, "Lamp," Jesus is the Light, John was a light bearer. Just as we're to be bearers of the Light, but Jesus is that light that we bear, or that shines through us. and Jesus says, "Look, I understand that in a court of law it's by the mouth of 2-3 witnesses that every matter is established. So to witness of Myself, you won't see that as valid." Then He alludes to the Father's witness, but calls to their attention J.B. 1st. Why, because they saw J.B. as a valid prophet sent from God, and John bore witness to Jesus that He was the Son of God, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, he spoke of the eternal nature of Jesus as one who came after him (John) physically but was in reality before him eternally. He says, "Now I don't need his testimony to validate Me, but I'm reminding you guys who placed stock in the legitimacy of John as to what he said about Me."

Vs36

"If you won't believe My Words, then verify My Works." All the things that Jesus did, giving sight to the blind, bringing healing to the lame, and life to those who were dead, everything He did was for the benefit of others, never did He do a miracle to somehow benefit Himself. and Ultimately the work of His own resurrection, the work of redemption that He's been sent to finish, He says, "These things bear witness of the reality of who I am."

Vs37

Of course we think of the Father testifying of Him at His baptism and upon the Mt of transfiguration and various places, but this is actually a reference to the volume of the book. The Father bore witness to the Son in all of the scriptures, but He's saying, "You haven't seen it or heard it."

Vs 38-40

Now remember he's speaking to teachers of the best theological seminaries there are. and He's saying, "You've reviewed the Word thoroughly, but you've never received the Word." This is why the bible says we're to, "*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.*" Col 3:16

We're not here merely to review God's Word, we want to receive it, James said, *"Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls."* James 1:21 and So you know the one's who've received it because they believe in Jesus Christ and Notice there in vs 40 Jesus didn't say, "But you're not part of the elect so tough luck." He says that if they were willing, they could come, but they weren't willing. But life is in the Son, so if you "will" not to come to the Son, you can't have life and it just doesn't matter how familiar you are with this book. It's not simply about knowing the word of God, but rather the God of the Word.

Vs41-47

Bottom line, it's not a head problem, an intellectual brick wall, it's a heart problem, Vs 42 the love of God wasn't *in* them. and So they won't receive Him, now they'll receive another, namely the A.C. but they won't receive Jesus Christ if you refuse to believe the truth you'll be given over to the lie. Moses wrote the truth about Jesus Christ he told them that God would raise up a prophet like himself, all the OT sacrifices pointed to Him, the tabernacle itself along with all the ceremonial rites spoke of Him. They were the shadow of which Christ is the substance, but if you reject the witness of Moses, then there's no way you can receive the witness of the greater than Moses, Jesus Christ All this sprang from the fact that Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath, God isn't about neglecting His creation, He's about the work of redemption. The call goes out to all who are weary and heavy laden to enter into the finished work of the cross, Jesus will give you rest. So wherever this finds you today, let me encourage you to quit trying to work things out on your own, striving to make this happen, or laboring to see that happen. Just rest in Jesus, He's already done the work, and He'll take care of your life.

Perhaps you're here and you've never receive Jesus Christ into your heart and into your life, He may be all work and no rest, but He wants you to know that you can have an eternal Sabbath, and rest perpetually in Him. But you have to be willing to come to Him that you might have life, and quit trying to work it out for yourself but rather trust in the work He's done for you. God loves you so much, and He laid down His life for you in the person of Jesus Christ that you might have everlasting life, so if Jesus is knocking on the door of your heart, let me encourage you to respond to Him and open the door of your heart and let Him in. He'll wipe your slate clean and make you a new creation, I'm not saying all your problems will be over, but your main problem will be, and you'll be forgiven for everything you've ever done, or even thought about doing. Don't reject Jesus Christ receive Him.