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John 4:43 - 5:23



Gospel of John - Steve Gregg

In this commentary on John 4:43-5:23, Steve Gregg notes that Jesus testifies to the truth and that his actual hometown is Nazareth, not Jerusalem. Gregg also mentions the story of a nobleman who approached Jesus for the healing of his son, highlighting the faith the man exhibited despite not seeing any physical signs or wonders from Jesus beforehand. Finally, Gregg addresses a disputed verse about waiting for moving water, pointing out that it is not found in ancient manuscripts.

Transcript

Tonight we're returning to John 4. I think I won't do so much review tonight. Last time I spent most of my session reviewing what was in the previous session. But I'm not sorry.

I felt it was justified. So, we just won't do that now. So, Jesus stayed, of course, at the request of the Samaritan people of the village of Sychar.

He stayed two days with them. And beginning at verse 43 tonight, Now, this is an interesting juxtaposition of thoughts. Because this proverb, a prophet has no honor in his own country, is recorded in all three of their Gospels as well as this one.

So, all four Gospels have this, although Jesus quotes it in the other ones. Here, it's kind of a quote. It says, Jesus testified that this is true.

So, this is really what Jesus told his disciples. We're going to Galilee because a prophet has no honor in his own country. The strange thing is that in the other Gospels when he quotes it, his own country is in Galilee.

His own country is Nazareth. It's when he was, for example, in the synagogue of Nazareth in Luke chapter 4, his hometown. Which, after he gave his sermon there, they ran him out of time.

Actually, tried to kill him, tried to throw him over a cliff, but he escaped. There, he said, you will doubtless say to me, physician, heal yourself. But I say unto you, a prophet is without honor in his own hometown.

Or is not without honor except in his own hometown. And he meant his own hometown of Nazareth in Galilee. But now he's leaving Judea.

He has actually already left Judea at the beginning of this chapter. And he was en route to Galilee. And of course, he was detained for a couple days in Samaria.

But it says that he went to Galilee because he said a prophet has no honor in his own country. Does that mean he's going back to his own country where he expects to have no honor? If so, it seems like it was not true because it says in verse 45, so when he came to Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things he did in Jerusalem at the feast, for they had also gone to the feast. So it seems like he received honor in Galilee.

I think his statement here in verse 44 has reference to Jerusalem as his own country or Judea as his own country. Not because Jesus was born there, although he was. He was born in Bethlehem of Judea.

But that's not what he's thinking of. I think he's thinking of himself in terms of being a prophet and the Messiah. And the Messiah is of the house of David.

He is of the lineage of David, of the tribe of Judah. And his throne should be in Jerusalem. When the Messiah comes, it is Jerusalem that should be where he settles as enthroned and is received.

And yet when he came to Jerusalem, he was not received there. And so he spent more of his time in Galilee. So Jesus seemed to find more than one way in which to apply this same proverb.

His actual hometown of Nazareth, he was not received there. And he was not received in the town that should have welcomed the Messiah, the capital city of Israel, Jerusalem. Certainly if the Messiah was to be received anywhere, it should be there.

That would be his own country. And yet he was not received there either. The only place he was received was in regions of Galilee and Perea, but other than his own hometown.

Because the people in his hometown knew him too well. Or they thought they did. They had known him growing up, and that was familiarity breeds contempt.

They just saw him as another of their townsfolk and thought, why is this man getting so much attention? And he apparently didn't do many miracles there because of their lack of faith, the Bible says. So they didn't see that much to impress them either. But here he comes to Galilee, and this statement of verse 45 really marks the beginning of the great Galilean ministry, which is what all the other Gospels pay the closest attention and give the most detail about.

Almost all the famous miracles of Jesus that you read about are done in Galilee during this Galilean ministry. John gives very little attention to it. In fact, we have Jesus being received well in Galilee in verse 45.

Then we have another story that just goes to the end of the chapter. Another nine verses, and then he's going to go back to Jerusalem again. Because John is not concentrating on the Galilean ministry.

He's concentrating on those things left out by the other Gospels. And one thing they left out was the second miracle that Jesus did in Galilee. The first one was the turning water into wine on his previous visit there.

This is now going to be, as it says, his second sign that he did when he came out of Judea into Galilee. That's how John is going to summarize this in verse 54. The miracle itself is recorded beginning at verse 46.

Now, actually, Capernaum eventually became Jesus' headquarters. That's where Peter and his brother had a house, and it became the ministry center for the Galilean ministry in general. Although Jesus would make itineraries around the province, they would come back to Capernaum as their headquarters.

But they had not gotten there yet. They didn't move their headquarters there until he was rejected at Nazareth, and John doesn't record that, and we're talking about something before that time. He comes back to Cana, the only place in Galilee that he's ever done a miracle previously, and that's where he is when the second miracle takes place.

Capernaum was, I think, about 15 miles away from Cana, as I recall. So, a person walking that distance would be walking about five hours to get there, if I'm remembering correctly. It might be 25 miles, come to think of it.

Now, I think it's 15 miles distant. So, this nobleman comes, and this nobleman's son is sick at Capernaum, and when he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to him and implored him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. Then Jesus said to him, Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe.

The nobleman said to him, Sir, come down before my child dies. Jesus said to him, Go your way, your son lives. So, the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way.

And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, Your son lives. Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better, and they said to him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. So, the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, Your son lives.

And he himself believed, and his whole household. This, again, is the second sign that Jesus did when he had come out of Judea into Galilee. This story of Jesus healing a sick person at a distance without ever even going to see the sick person has a similarity to another story that the Synoptic Gospels record.

And some people, usually those that don't have a very high view of scripture, and think that a lot of these are legends that got told and retold different ways, some have suggested that this story is the same story but with different facts muddled up. In the other story, the man whose servant was sick was himself a centurion. Well, this is a nobleman.

A centurion was a government official, a military official. A nobleman was a government official. And in both cases, they came to Jesus on behalf of somebody in their household that was sick, though the centurion said it was his servant and this man said it was his son.

But people think, well, that could easily be confused in the retelling of the story. A nobleman could become a centurion or vice versa, and a servant could become a son in the retelling of the story and so forth. And so this is how people tend to think of it.

The only thing that these stories, the two of them, have in common is that Jesus worked a miracle on a sufferer who was not present. And this is not the only case where Jesus did that. There was a woman, a Syrophenician woman, whose daughter was demon possessed and came to Jesus and he healed her daughter from a distance without seeing her too.

In cases like this, it makes it clear that Jesus was not a worker of tricks or simply healing people who had psychosomatic illnesses. A lot of times people will admit that Jesus in his lifetime did heal people, but they want to make it not so miraculous. They want to make it seem like these people had ailments that were mostly in their head, psychosomatic sicknesses.

And so when Jesus told them they were healed or touched them or something like that, that made them feel better and they testified to being well. Of course, that doesn't work real well with cases of blindness or corpses coming back to life or even lepers, frankly. But maybe with a few kinds of sick people, you might give it that explanation, but why bother? You don't need to because there are so many miracles of Jesus that simply don't lend themselves to that explanation, these being examples.

If the suffering person had a sickness that was in his mind, how is it that they, without hearing or seeing Jesus, recovered at the very moment that he, 15 miles away, made the announcement that they'd recover? Obviously, there's a miracle here. Either the story has to be denied, that is, someone just has to say it didn't happen, or if acknowledging it to be true, they'd have to say it was a miracle. You can't make it a natural kind of a thing

that's posing as a miracle.

And it isn't the same story as the centurion's servant who is sick. In this case, the man asked Jesus to come down to his house and heal his son. The centurion didn't ask Jesus to come.

In fact, when Jesus said, I'll go, the man said, oh, I'm not worthy to have you come under my roof. I'm a Gentile. You're a Jew.

I know you Jews don't come in the house of Gentiles. We're unclean. He didn't say all that, but that was implied.

And he said, just say the word, and I know my servant will be healed. As I'm a man under authority, and I say, go, and my servants go, and I say, come down. And they come, and they come, and do this, they do it, so I know that you can do the same thing.

And that's when Jesus commented on the man's faith. In fact, that's a marked difference between these two stories, because the centurion had such great faith that Jesus complimented him and said, I've not seen such great faith in all of Israel. This man, Jesus, made a negative comment about the man's faith.

Though, strangely, it doesn't seem to have been applicable, because the man indeed did have faith. But Jesus said to him, when he heard about the problem, he said, unless you people see signs and wonders, you'll by no means believe. Now, you'll notice the word people is in italics.

The word people is not in the Greek, but the reason the translators put that there is because the word you is plural. In other words, by adding the word you people, the translators are telling you that you is not singular. He's not speaking to the man in particular, or about the man particularly.

In fact, the man himself proved to be an exception to the general statement, because this man did believe without seeing a sign or wonder. But Jesus was making a comment about the Jews in general, of which this man was a Jew. And Paul said the Jews seek after a sign, and the Greeks seek wisdom.

Remember in 1 Corinthians chapter 2, the Jews had a way of always asking for a sign. And Jesus even said to them once, a wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, meaning them. They said no sign will be given to them except the sign of Jonah.

Well here, Jesus makes a general comment about the Jews, you people, you just won't believe unless you see signs. Now, I don't know if Jesus was unaware that this man was an exception to that general statement, or if he knew it and he simply used the statement to make a sweeping statement over the man's shoulder to the people who were within earshot. Here's a man who comes with a request to Jesus, Jesus could have

turned to the crowd and said, you people, you won't believe unless you see a sign.

And it doesn't seem like it was a rebuke to the man, because it would have been a misplaced rebuke. As it turned out, the man had a fairly amazing faith, because the man said, listen, Lord, just come down or my son's going to die. I'm not going to argue about the quality of my faith, I'm just desperate here.

My son is at the verge of death, please come down. And when Jesus said, go your way, your son lives, the man believed. He didn't see a sign, he didn't see a wonder, he just heard the words of Jesus and he believed what Jesus said.

That's what the Jews generally did not do. So this man did not deserve the particular rebuke that Jesus gave, and that's why it makes me think that Jesus didn't intend it for him, but rather to some others within earshot. And in fact, his faith was pretty amazing, because he didn't even go home until the next day to see if it was true.

Remember when he went home, he said, when was he healed? Yesterday he was healed. Well, that's when I was talking to Jesus, yesterday. It took a whole 24 hours to get back to Capernaum, just 15 miles away.

If it was at the seventh hour when Jesus said, your son is healed, well, it probably wasn't seven at night, because that's after sundown. And generally speaking, people didn't travel and do things or weren't even out and about after sundown. At sundown they went indoors and got ready to go to bed.

But the point is, whether it was seven in the morning or one in the afternoon, which seems to be the only two options that make sense. He got home before sundown. He didn't have to stay around in Canaan and do some more business and go back home the next day.

Here his son was at the point of death the last time he saw him. If he didn't believe he was healed, he'd be in a hurry to go home to at least see his son in his last moments. If he was so close to death, he wouldn't want to be away at all.

But when Jesus said, your son lives, the man believed him and he made no hurry to get home. Again, it was either seven in the morning or one in the afternoon, but either one of those would have allowed him opportunity to get home before sundown that same day. But he didn't.

He spent the night in Canaan and then went home to Capernaum the next day and that's when the servants met him and said that his son was better. So the man did believe without seeing and he believed really with firm conviction. But we see that it says in verse 53, so the father knew that it was at that same hour in which Jesus said to him, your son lives and he himself believed and his whole household.

This again is the second sign that Jesus did when he had come out of Judea into Galilee. Now, Jesus had done signs in Judea. It's not saying this is the only second sign that Jesus did.

It's just the second time Jesus did a miracle after coming into Galilee from Judea. That's what happened in chapter two. He came from Judea into Galilee to a feast or a wedding feast, did a miracle there and then he didn't do any more miracles there apparently.

Went back to Judea and now came into Canaan and did it again. And it would appear that these were the only miracles so far that Jesus had done in Galilee. According to the synoptic tradition, he went to Nazareth before very long and got run out of there and then he moved to Capernaum and that's when things really took off and he started making a big splash and everyone knew who he was and was bringing all their sick to him and so forth.

But this is one of a few cases where Jesus healed somebody at a distance showing that Jesus had authority that transcends space. He did not depend on a person's psychological reaction to his declarations of healing or anything like that but there was power and authority that worked translocally when he would speak. Now chapter five, after this there was a feast of the Jews and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there were three feasts per year that the Jews were supposed to go to Jerusalem for Passover and Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles. John doesn't commit himself to which feast it was and I mentioned in our introduction to John that many scholars think this is probably a Passover though there's not an awful lot of reason to say so. If it was, it makes a fourth Passover in Jesus' life of ministry and not only three and it would be with four Passovers that we could make the ministry of Jesus three and a half years long.

If there were only three Passovers and he died on the third one, then between the first and second Passovers there's only one year and from the second to the third one there's only one year. He'd only have two years and a few months ministry. But if this is a Passover this would give us reason to say his ministry is three and a half years long.

We will never know, not here and it doesn't matter too much. But just since you do I'm sure hear frequently that Jesus' ministry is three and a half years long, that can only be demonstrated to be true if this feast is also a Passover. Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool which is called in Hebrew Bethesda having five porches.

In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. Now this waiting for the moving of the water and the entire next verse are not found in the most ancient manuscripts. Bear that in mind as we read verse four.

This last line of verse three and the entirety of verse four are missing from the oldest

manuscripts which said waiting for the moving of the water for an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water. Then whoever stepped in first after the stirring of the water was made well of whatever disease he had. Now this business of an angel stirring the water and the first person stepping in and getting healed is not something that is affirmed in the most ancient manuscripts.

And of course nobody knows for sure which manuscripts preserve the original reading. It's possible that the original reading did include this information and that it was somehow left out of some of our manuscripts. It's also possible that it was not part of the original and that these words were added by some scribe trying to explain something in the story that the readers would not otherwise be able to make sense of.

Because we're going to find the man saying when Jesus says would you be well, the man says well every time the water is stirred someone gets in there before me. Now that statement would make absolutely no sense to us without some kind of explanation. What's that got to do with anything? Would you like to be healed? Well whenever the water stirs someone else gets in before me.

So what's that got to do with the question? And so it is possible that if these words were not originally there that some scribe wishing to make sense of that statement gave this explanatory gloss and added it. We don't know which way it goes, whether it's authentic or not. If it is authentic it seems kind of weird to tell you the truth.

I mean it just seems more like magic than the kind of stuff God usually does. I mean if he wants to heal someone he doesn't have to, you know, it's not survival of the fittest. You know, this man had been for many years there, lame.

It's clear that God had no problem healing him because Jesus healed him. But why would God make it so that someone he wanted to heal, he'd have to meet some condition that was impossible to meet. And we see certainly nothing like this in the Old Testament or elsewhere in the New Testament where an angel would come down and give some kind of signal.

And those who spot the signal, you know, the fastest person to react gets the prize. You know, I mean it sounds, it just sounds kind of superstitious to tell you the truth. Now obviously if this is in the original then it's not superstitious.

God really did do this. But I'm not sure that we're required to believe it since there are older manuscripts that don't have this particular explanation. But without the explanation we are left without any reason to know why the man said what he did.

It is of course possible that there was a superstitious tradition held among the Jews and this man believed it. That if the water stirred and you jumped in the water in time you'd get healed. But that's not really true and that John doesn't affirm that to be true.

But it may be that John did or some scribe knew that this tradition existed and did insert it to make some sense of the man's words. This is a mystery that we may never be able to resolve. And I have to say I've always grown up assuming it to be true.

I didn't grow up knowing that it wasn't in the old manuscripts. So reading the King James when I was growing up I just always read those words and took them at face value. And I don't have any problem believing in miracles.

It's just some of them seem a little out of character for God to do. They seem a little more like magic than like miracles. And so I'm not sure.

I have to say I come to these disputed verses, these disputed words that are not in all the manuscripts with a little bit of skepticism. One thing I would say though is that and I just noticed that this year as I was reading it again after reading it hundreds of times previously that in verse 2 it says, Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool. Now that was not true after 70 AD.

But the author seems to be writing when that sheep gate was still there because he says there is. And the rest of the story is told in the past tense. There was this man there and he did this and so forth and Jesus went to him.

That's all in the past tense except this statement, There is in Jerusalem a sheep gate which seems to be saying that the author at the time he was writing is telling his reader something that existed at the time even at the time of writing. There's this sheep gate over there. It's like if I was trying to explain something that happened in a town that I was familiar with and you weren't and I described in the present tense some features of the town and then told you a story that relates to that.

The reason I bring this up is because people generally assume that John is one of the last books of the Bible to be written even later than Revelation. It can't be proven that John was written later than Revelation but there's some reasonable case that can be made for it. But if that is true it's remarkable that John appears to have been written before 70 AD because anyone writing after 70 AD would not say there is a sheep gate in Jerusalem because there was none.

Jerusalem was raised to the ground and burned up. There were no gates, there were no walls, there were no nothing. And so the author speaking in the present tense that there is such a feature in Jerusalem seems to be writing before it was destroyed and that would suggest a very early date of writing much earlier than the traditional.

See most scholars believe that John and Revelation and John's epistles all written by the same man were written perhaps in the 90s AD maybe around 96 in the reign of Domitian. But if indeed John was written before 70 AD as this little hint may suggest maybe the other writings of John were too, it's hard to say. That would be significant in

interpreting Revelation because as you know many people, myself included, believe that many of the prophecies in Revelation are predicting the destruction of Jerusalem which would not be the case if it's written after the event.

You don't write a book after an event and predict that event, not if you're writing authentic prophecy. And so if anything in Revelation was predicting the destruction of Jerusalem then that would have to be that Revelation was written before 70 AD. And most scholars today don't think that it was, though most scholars in the 19th century thought it was.

There's been differences of opinion at different times. But it's obvious that if it was written after 70 AD then the view that it's talking about Jerusalem's destruction is impossible, can't be true. But I'm saying that this, I believe there's evidence, I don't say it's a slam dunk, I don't say it's conclusive or compelling necessarily to a skeptic, but to my mind there is evidence that inclines me to believe Revelation was written earlier than the Gospel of John.

And there's evidence here that John was written before 70 AD, which doesn't prove but certainly inclines to view that Revelation was written before 70 AD also. That's a side note. Now, notice this man was in Jerusalem by what's called the Sheep Gate, a pool by the Sheep Gate.

The pool's called Bethesda. But John makes the point of saying it's near the Sheep Gate. Seems not necessary to say, in fact the word gate isn't even in the Greek.

It just says there is in Jerusalem by the sheep a pool. But it is talking about a gate where the sheep would go in. Now what's interesting about that is, remember when we were doing our introduction to John I said the miracles of Jesus that are recorded in John are selected, in my judgment, to correspond with the sayings of Jesus where he says, I am, and then fill in the blank.

There are seven such sayings in John and seven miracles recorded in John. And in at least three or four of the cases, John himself connects the miracle with the saying. But there are three or four of the cases where it's not clearly connected.

One of those is this one. This miracle is not clearly connected with one of the I am sayings of Jesus. But there's an I am saying of Jesus that's not connected to any of the other miracles and might be here where Jesus said, I am the Sheep Gate.

He says I'm the good shepherd of the sheep. I am the gate. I am the door to the sheepfold.

And that John would mention that this healing took place at the Sheep Gate seems unnecessary to mention unless John might be wanting to give us something to connect with that parable. The good shepherd takes care of the crippled sheep. And here's a

story that takes place near the Sheep Gate where one of God's sheep is in need of being cared for.

Look at Ezekiel chapter 34. In this prophecy, Ezekiel, or God, is castigating the leaders of Israel, calling them shepherds, because in the Old Testament it was common for God to refer to Israel as his flock, as his sheep. And the leaders, the princes, and the judges, and the rulers, and the priests, and even the prophets, often were false prophets.

But those who were providing leadership for Israel were called the shepherds. And here in Ezekiel 34, one says, The word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to them, Thus says the Lord God to the shepherds, Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves.

Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool. You slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flocks. The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who are sick.

Nor bound up the broken, nor brought back that which was driven away, nor sought after what was lost. But with force and cruelty you have ruled them. Now this goes on and continues to condemn the leaders of Israel because they have not done well to the sheep, meaning the Israelites, God's sheep.

But as we go on further, look at in the same chapter, Ezekiel 34, 11. For thus says the Lord God, Indeed, I myself will search for my sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep.

So will I seek out my sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries. I will bring them into their own land.

He's talking about the restoration from Babylon here. I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel.

There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed. I will feed my flock, he says. I'll make them lie down.

I'll seek what was lost. I'll bind up, verse 16, I'll bind up the broken and strengthen that which was sick. But I will destroy the fat and the strong and feed them in judgment and so forth, in judgment.

Now notice what he's saying. The leaders of Israel have not played the role of a shepherd to the people. But God says, I will.

And remember Jesus in John chapter said, I am the good shepherd of the sheep. No

doubt deliberately connecting to this promise that God said, I will be the shepherd to my sheep. Only it's Yahweh speaking there.

Remember Jesus in saying, I'm the good shepherd is only a very slightly veiled claim to being Yahweh. After all, David said, Yahweh is my shepherd, I shall not want. And Jesus says, I'm the good shepherd.

But not only that, but here at the sheep gate he finds one of the sheep that needs to be strengthened. Usually this is called the miracle of the impotent man. Impotent means weak.

Jesus strengthens him. The man doesn't have strength in his legs. He receives strength in his legs when he's healed, but he's weak.

But he gets strengthened here. And one of the problems Ezekiel said God had against the shepherds, they didn't strengthen the weak ones. And search them out.

Here Jesus searches this man out like a weak sheep. And he strengthens him and he acts as a good shepherd. So it seems to me, and John mentioned this happened by the sheep gate.

An incidental point that could have been omitted. Makes me think that this miracle is intended to be connected in our minds with Jesus' statement, I am the good shepherd. And it's in the same place that Jesus said, I am the door of the sheepfold.

That's not really a separate saying because the shepherd was the door of the sheepfold. The shepherd slept across the doorway of the sheepfold at night to keep the wolves and robbers out. So the door of the sheepfold was the shepherd.

But interestingly enough, Jesus here is acting the shepherd at the sheep gate. Which could be certainly by not much of a stretch of the imagination equated with the door of the sheepfold. Especially if Jerusalem is seen as the sheepfold.

But here Jesus comes to this man who has an infirmity. Verse 5, there was a certain man, he was there who had an infirmity for 38 years. And when Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been in that condition a long time.

He said to him, do you want to be made well? Now notice we're told in verse 3, there were a great multitude of sick people lying around on these porches around this pool hoping to be healed. And Jesus singles out one man. He searches him out as the good shepherd searches out the sheep.

This man was one, apparently, that Jesus believed God wanted to reach out to. Different than the others around the pool. As far as we know, Jesus healed only this one man and left the multitude of sick that were there waiting for the water to move.

And perhaps it was because he was the most helpless. Because he couldn't even move himself. And that's what everyone was waiting for.

He was hoping someone would help him get in the water, as we shall see. But Jesus basically removed that necessity. We don't know why Jesus picked this man out, except that Jesus was always guided by his father in what he did.

But we see him searching him out in a multitude, knowing the man's background. And approaching him and saying, do you want to be made well? Now the sick man answered him, sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up. But while I am coming, another steps down before me.

So it seems to me Jesus said, do you want to be made well? That's kind of a strange question to ask someone who's a cripple or who's sick. And yet Jesus, I don't think, asked superfluous questions. I think that's something maybe, maybe it just was a question rhetorical to arouse the man's hopes and his expectations.

Although at that point, all he would expect from Jesus, thinking Jesus to be an ordinary man, would be that maybe Jesus would hang around and if the water moves, he can help him get in the water. And that's what the man complains. Well, Lord, I'd love to be made well, but no one will help me.

Maybe by implication, maybe you could help me. If the water happens to move while you're here, maybe you could help me into the water. And Jesus said to him, rise, take up your bed and walk.

Now, there must have been some kind of authoritative tone that made the guy really think he could do it, you know, when Jesus spoke like that. He might otherwise, the man might otherwise feel like he's being mocked. You know, I've had a number of friends who were paralyzed.

One man in particular, I'm thinking it was an elder at our church in Santa Cruz when I was an elder at Calvary Chapel there. He was paralyzed in an accident during the war and I think from about the chest down, he just was fairly unable to use any of his parts of his body and was in a wheelchair. But he said there were many times that he'd been in meetings where people, you know, zealous to work the healing and full of faith would just grab him by the hand and pull him out of the wheelchair and say, And he, of course, couldn't.

He didn't become well. And he became really gun-shy. He didn't want to go to any meetings where anyone might be interested in healing him.

Not that he wouldn't love to have been healed, but he didn't want to be at the mercy of God's zealous would-be healers, you know. It's like that bumper sticker says, I got nothing wrong with God in my mind. No objection to God, it's his people, I can't stand.

And this guy just didn't want to go anywhere where people believed in healing for fear that they're going to pull him out of his wheelchair again. And if Jesus, as a stranger, had walked up to him and said, Would you like to be healed? Charlie probably would have said, No, thanks. You know, just leave me alone.

You know, I can get by. I've done this for 38 years, this man could say. You know, it's not the best life, but I've had people yank me up and drop me on the ground enough times that I'd just assume you don't even bring that subject up.

Unless you want to help me get into the water, when the water stirs. Some people don't really want to get well, because being sick is the only way they get any kind of attention. There are people who really don't have very much that sets them apart, or that gets people sympathy.

And sometimes the fact that they're not well gets them a lot more sympathy than they would normally have. I remember there was a guy who came to our school in Oregon. He had been in mental institutions several times, so I don't believe he was truly crazy.

I think it was an attention-getting thing. But he was on medications when he came to the school. And while I don't have any confidence in psychiatric medications being the right answer, I don't ever tell people to go off them.

If I told someone to go off their medications and they did, and then they did something crazy and dangerous and hurt themselves, I could be sued for giving medical advice without a license and so forth. I never advise people to go off their medications, but I often tell them I don't have much confidence that that's God's answer to their problem. But if they want to go off, I usually tell them to see a doctor about that and get weaned off of it and not do anything dangerous.

Anyway, he came to the school one year when there were like four people who came to the school, all of them on meds, and I didn't know it. None of them told me until later. They all, one by one independently without consulting each other, went off their meds during that year.

And they all did fine. I didn't suggest it. I didn't even know they were on meds when they came.

And in the course of the nine months of the school studying the Bible, they just kind of felt like they should just trust God and they went off their meds, including Donald, this one guy. And he's the one who had been in mental institutions a couple times before. And I remember he made a big thing about the fact that he went off his meds.

Like we had our public meeting on Friday nights. Every Friday he'd get up and say, I've been three weeks off my meds. I've been ten weeks off my meds.

I'm 15 weeks off my meds. Everyone would applaud and yay, great, congratulations. And he got a lot of strokes, a lot of attention, stuff like that.

And eventually, since he was doing this every week, people just got kind of tired of hearing about it. I mean, not that they didn't care. It's just like it wasn't news.

He was like living fine without his meds. Didn't have to report it every week. And eventually the enthusiasm of the people in responding to his testimony was not so exuberant.

Let's put it that way. And you know what? He went and checked himself in a mental hospital and acted crazy again. Of the four students who came that year who went off their meds, he's the only one who didn't make it through the year.

He made it six months, which makes it clear he didn't need the meds. He was just fine for six months without them. But I noticed when the attention was, you know, when he wasn't viewed as a sick person anymore, people just treated him like a normal person and there wasn't much about him to set him apart from others.

It's like he didn't like being well. You know? Once he went back to the mental hospital, we all visited him, you know, and stuff. And he's been out since then.

I mean, I think he normalized somewhat, but he did have quite a history going up and down there for a while. But that, I think, is that sometimes when Jesus says, do you want to be made well? Well, of course he'd want to be made well, wouldn't he? Or would he? I mean, some people get far more attention, and the attention they get and the sympathy they get for being sick is worth more to them than good health would be without the sympathy and without the attention. I heard a story about a woman who had a cast that she could zip on and zip off.

A leg cast, a whole leg cast. A fake cast, and she could put it on so that when she'd go to church in her cast, everyone would show a lot of attention to her. People like that don't want to be well.

This man did, and I don't think that Jesus asking him was implying that the man did not. I mean, I think Jesus was probably just starting a conversation about the man's condition and getting the man to be thinking about his desire to be well. And the man did desire to be well, but he was rather hopeless because he didn't have any friends.

Even in his sick condition, he wasn't getting any attention, except from Jesus. And Jesus singled him out, a man who apparently didn't have any friends, not even one who would help him get in the water. I mean, if you even had a family member or a person who wasn't very much your best friend, it seems like you might find somebody who would care enough about your 38 years of being crippled to say, I'll help you get in the water.

I'll just hang out with you. But this man was totally, apparently, without anybody. He says, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up.

But while I'm coming, another one steps down before me. So he snooze, you lose. If you're not the fittest, you don't survive.

Jesus said to him, rise, take up your bed, and walk. And immediately, the man was made well. He took up his bed and walked.

And that day was the Sabbath. Now, that is worthy of mention. It wouldn't have been mentioned if it was on Wednesday, or if it was on Friday, or if it was on Monday.

We would never have heard what day of the week it was. It wouldn't matter. But that it was the Sabbath, that makes it newsworthy.

Because it means that Jesus had healed somebody on the Sabbath day. And that is considered to be a no-no to the Pharisees. They had very strict rules, the Pharisees did, about Sabbath observance.

And the Talmud, which reflects their views, but was written down a few centuries later, but their views were passed along orally until it was written down in the Talmud. The Talmud has a lot of legislation about what you can and cannot do on the Sabbath day. And one thing that the Talmud said, and that the Pharisees believed, is that even a physician could not work on the Sabbath day.

He couldn't cure somebody. Unless it was a life-threatening situation that would not be safe to wait a day. In other words, if it could wait until Sunday, instead of doing it on Saturday, the Sabbath, then the physician was expected to wait until Sunday, and not do it on the Sabbath.

And reasonably enough, really, to tell you the truth, if the guy's been sick 38 years, he could wait one more day. And Jesus knew that very well, but the fact that Jesus did it on the Sabbath was deliberately to do it on the Sabbath. It was deliberately to be in their faces.

Because he knew he was going to catch some flack for that. And this is what we often read. Many times, the miracles that Jesus does, we read, and it was the Sabbath day.

He could have done it a different day, but he didn't want to. He wanted to do it on that day. His father wanted him to do it on that day.

And so we're told it was the Sabbath day, and pretty soon that fact eclipses the fact that a wonderful miracle has been done. The fact that it was done on a Sabbath makes it an offense. And so that day was the Sabbath.

Verse 10, the Jews, therefore, said to the man who was cured, it is the Sabbath. It's not

lawful for you to carry your bed. That's bearing a burden.

His bed was probably a rag rolled up under his arm. He's a beggar. For 38 years, he had no income.

Probably sleeping on the same rag for 38 years. He probably had it full of holes. Probably didn't weigh as much as a letter that can go for one stamp.

There was no burden at all. But it was something superfluous that he was carrying, and they said you can't do that on the Sabbath. Now, the law didn't say that.

The law did say that you shouldn't bear a burden on the Sabbath, and therefore collecting sticks to build a fire on the Sabbath was punishable by the law. But it didn't say what constitutes a burden, and certainly the spirit of the law would not be that a man would be forbidden to take his bed with him when he's leaving the place that he's just recovered from a sickness and going home. Anyway, the Pharisees were never in touch with the heart of God, only with the rules that had come down to them from the rabbis.

And they asked, well, he answered them, he who made me well said to me, take up your bed and walk. Then they asked him, who is the man who said to you, take up your bed and walk? But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn a multitude being in that place. So he didn't even know who Jesus was.

It's not like he believed in the name of Jesus or believed Jesus was God or the Son of God. He didn't even know who it was. Some guy told me to get up and walk, and I just felt like I could do it.

And I felt something in my legs I haven't felt before for almost 40 years. And I got up and it happened. And who was I to argue against that? And they say, well, who did it? I don't know who it was.

It's just a guy. And he kind of disappeared in the crowd. I don't know if I could point him out.

Then it says, afterward Jesus found him in the temple. He didn't find Jesus. Jesus went and found him and said to him, See, you have been made well.

Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you. Now, that statement of Jesus is a peculiar statement. It's similar to what he said to the woman taken in adultery, where he says, go and sin no more.

Obviously, sin no more doesn't mean live an absolutely perfect life and never fall short of any perfection. Because that would be putting a burden on a man that no man can bear. If he said, well, if you sin again, something worse is going to happen to you.

Boy, that would be an awful burden. Because not much worse than being paralyzed for 38 years of your life and losing those years of your life. Something worse? If I sin again? I mean, what if I have a bad thought? I mean, it seems obvious that when Jesus said to the woman who was taken in adultery, go and sin no more, he meant don't commit adultery anymore.

Don't repeat this sin. Of course, he doesn't want us to sin at all. But he was talking about that sin.

He said, where are your accusers? Well, there are none, Lord. Well, then I don't accuse you either. I don't condemn you.

You go and don't do it anymore. Don't sin anymore. He means, of course, that particular sin is what he's got in mind.

Likewise here, most scholars seem to agree that Jesus probably had some particular sin in mind that this man knew about. And possibly, by the way Jesus said it, it almost implies that his earlier condition had come upon him because of some sin that he had committed. And Jesus is saying, OK, you dodged that bullet.

Be more careful next time. Don't do that anymore, or it may be worse for you next time. Now, Jesus isn't really trying to be threatening here, I don't think.

I think what he's saying is, something you did before, and you know what it was. It caused you 38 years of paralysis. Don't do it again because it may not be as easy on you next time.

Whatever the sin was, we don't know. And I'm not sure what kind of sin would be directly connected with the condition of being so weak that he can't even move. He wasn't really paralyzed, apparently, because he could kind of move.

He just couldn't move fast enough to get to the pool. He says, while I'm coming, someone gets there ahead of me. So he's not totally paralyzed, just apparently chronic fatigue syndrome to the max, that he could hardly have any strength.

What could stop him of strength like that? What sin could he commit? I don't know. Possibly any sin could if he was feeling sufficient guilt about it, though. Sometimes just feeling guilt can do all kinds of awful things to a person.

It may not be that God was judging him for something he had done. It may be that he had done something he felt awful about, terrible about, and he just lost his will almost to live and lost his normal functioning. It doesn't seem when no doubt all of us have had things we've grieved about and repented of, that it didn't happen to us that way.

But I think that psychologists find that sometimes people who are, or doctors, find out

that people who have presenting symptoms, serious ones, sometimes they've really just got something going on in their head that's guilt, or something like that, which is causing their problem. That may have been the case in this man's situation, though we don't know. Jesus definitely, in his words, seemed to suggest that there was a particular sin the man should not repeat.

And by saying, lest something worse happen to you, it implies, it would seem, that the last time the guy committed it, it resulted in the problems from which he's just been healed. And so he'd better be careful not to repeat it, or else it might be worse next time. Jesus knew what was going on, and I think the man must have too.

Jesus expected the man to know what he was talking about. So the man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who made him well. Now, this doesn't seem like a very nice thing to do.

If he understood that Jesus was about to get in trouble for this, you'd think the man would say, well, I'll keep your secret, Jesus. You did me a favor, I got you back. But he didn't have Jesus back.

He figured, well, the Pharisees want to know who did it. I can take the heat off me by pointing him out. And so he pointed Jesus out as the man who did it.

And though we can't take the rest of this chapter, we can take a little bit more. Verse 16 says, For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus and sought to kill him, because he had done these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.

Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. Now, I guess I need to read a few more verses, because this is a stream of thought here. Then Jesus answered and said to them, Most assuredly I say to you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father do.

For whatever he does, the Son does also in like manner. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all things that he himself does. And he will show him greater works than these that you may marvel.

For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom he will. For the Father judges no one but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.

Now Jesus continues, but we won't be able to continue beyond this point, but I've got plenty of things I'd like to say about some of the things he said here. So, the Jews, meaning in this case the Jewish leaders, sought to kill Jesus, or they initially wanted to

persecute him, later it says they sought to kill him in verse 18. They persecuted Jesus and sought to kill him, oh yes it says that there too, because he had done these things on the Sabbath.

So they considered he was a Sabbath breaker, and they already knew that he was not their friend because he had driven their money changers out of the temple and so forth. He didn't like the way they were administrating the house of God, and had said so. And he was no doubt generating a lot of popular support, which made them look bad, and perhaps maybe made them feel their position was even endangered.

So they thought, we've got to get rid of this guy. And doing these things on the Sabbath, that's a punishable by death offense, seen a certain way. I mean, when a man was gathering sticks on the Sabbath in the book of Numbers, God ordered the man to be put to death.

Breaking the Sabbath was punishable by death. Jesus had done something that they called breaking the Sabbath. Had he? Well, it sounds like he did.

But a very large number of Christians today believe that keeping the Sabbath is a very important thing for Christians still to do, because it's in the Ten Commandments. And they believe that Sabbath keeping is part of the Christian's obligation as well. I'm not with them on this.

I don't believe the Ten Commandments are ever given in the New Testament as the description of the Christian life. They are given along with the Old Covenant, when the covenant was struck between God and Israel, and they were the covenant stipulations. In fact, God even said in the 30th chapter of Exodus that Sabbath keeping was the sign of the covenant between Israel and God.

So the Sabbath was specifically something that God gave to Israel. I'm sorry, it's actually Exodus 31. I said 30.

But in Exodus 31, 14, it says, You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you, everyone who profanes it. Now, profane, we think of profanity as like cussing. Profane is the opposite of sacred.

The word profane literally just means common. Things that are sacred are not common things. They're special things set apart.

Things that are not sacred are profane, they are secular, they are common things. Profane doesn't mean bad. It just means common.

Anyone who profaned the Sabbath means if you treat the Sabbath the way you treat every other day, like a common day. If you lower the Sabbath to the level of a common day instead of a holy day, that's what it means, whoever profanes the Sabbath, God said,

shall surely be put to death. For whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people.

Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Therefore, the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath to observe Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.

It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed. Now notice he says the Sabbath is a sign between God and Israel, just like circumcision was.

That's what God said the same thing about circumcision. In Genesis 17 he said to Abraham, this circumcision, that's a sign of the covenant between me and you for all generations. So, through all the generations of the old covenant, God and Israel had to circumcise and keep the Sabbath, and those were the signs of the covenant.

Now we know that circumcision is not demanded on Gentiles, because Paul wrote a whole epistle arguing that point. And arguably the Sabbath isn't enjoined on Christians anywhere in the New Testament either. Strikingly, because it seems like so many of the laws of the Old Testament do get reinforced in the teaching of Jesus, but not Sabbath keeping.

Anyway, people who think that we are required to keep the Sabbath, they are aghast at the suggestion that I would make that Jesus broke the Sabbath. They say, Jesus couldn't break the Sabbath, that would be a sin. But I say, but look what it says in verse 18.

The Jews sought all the more to kill him because he not only broke the Sabbath, but he said that God was his father, making himself equal with God. Now, this statement in John has been twisted by two different fringe groups, different ways. The Jehovah's Witnesses say, Jesus did not make himself equal with God.

But the statement here is that he did. It says, he said that God was his father, thus making himself equal with God. That's John's comment, that in making this statement, Jesus made himself equal with God.

Jehovah's Witnesses don't like that doctrine, so they say, no, what this is really saying is that when he said God was his father, the Jews interpreted that as making himself equal with God. Well, that would be a possible way of looking at it if John had said it differently. John didn't say it differently, he said Jesus said God was his father, making himself equal with God.

That is John's commentary, not the Pharisees'. It's not the interpretation of the Jews, it is John's interpretation that Jesus made himself equal with God. It is also John's statement that Jesus broke the Sabbath.

The Adventists and other Sabbatarians say, no, he didn't break the Sabbath, he just broke what the Jews thought should not be done on the Sabbath. He broke the Jewish customs about the Sabbath, not the Sabbath law. And again, I'd say the same thing I say to the JWs.

That's a feasible explanation, if only John hadn't said it the way he did. But I'm going to have to go with what John said, since he was certainly capable of saying it differently if he meant it differently. He said that Jesus broke the Sabbath, and they wanted to kill him for it.

But what do we do then with the fact that Jesus broke the Sabbath? Isn't that a sin? It would be for any other Jew, but Jesus argued that he was the Lord of the Sabbath. And that Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. Jesus gave that teaching elsewhere in Matthew chapter 12, when he was criticized for working on the Sabbath again.

And he said, well, the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. To benefit man is what God had in mind when he gave the Sabbath. He did not make man so that somebody could serve the interests of the Sabbath day.

The Sabbath day was made to serve the interests of man, not vice versa. And so if you interpret the Sabbath, or keep the Sabbath, or enforce the Sabbath in such a way that it is bad for man, then you're not doing the right thing. Furthermore, Jesus said, the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath day.

Now, Lord of means he's not the servant of the Sabbath day. He's the Lord of the Sabbath day. The Sabbath day is his servant.

He has authority over it, not it over him. And I liken it to a policeman giving chase on the freeway with his lights and siren on. Code 3, going after a criminal with sirens blaring and lights flashing and driving 90 miles an hour on the freeway after the crook.

Is the policeman breaking the law? Yes, he is. Speed limit is 75, he's going 90, that's breaking the law. Is he sinning? No, he's authorized to do that.

If I did it, I'd be breaking the law. He has authority to do that. That's his authorization.

Jesus could do on the Sabbath what no one else was allowed to do at that time without sinning because he was authorized. He was the Lord of the Sabbath. He could indeed ignore the Sabbath.

And he explains why with this comment that they hated so much in verse 17. He said, my father's been working until now and I've been working. What's that mean? That means my father works all the time and I work all the time.

My father doesn't punch a clock. My father doesn't take Saturdays off. He still holds the planets in their places.

He still feeds the sparrows and clothes the lilies of the field. He's on duty seven days a week and I do what my father does. So I'm on duty seven days a week too.

I must work on the Sabbath as well as on other days. Now, by the way, this became the model and the ethic for Christian thinking about the Sabbath. Which is why I personally don't think that Sabbath observance is something that the Bible enjoins on Christians.

Because Jesus said we must do the works that the Father does and he works all the time. Jesus actually put it this way in one of the Gospels in Mark, I think it is. He said, therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day.

Okay, so it's lawful to do good on the Sabbath day. What are you allowed to do on the other days? Bad? No, you're supposed to do good all the time, right? Doing good is our obligation the other six days. And now we find it's lawful to do it on the seventh day too.

So the seventh day is no different than the others. Doing good is what Christians are supposed to do all the time. And doing good on the Sabbath, Jesus said, is lawful.

So the Sabbath no longer becomes a day that has to be treated differently. It's like every other day. Jesus is the Lord even, as he put it, even of the Sabbath day.

Which means what? As well as the other days. He's the Lord of Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and even of Saturday. The Sabbath day.

That's what he's saying. And if he's the Lord of all the days, even the Sabbath day, then what is my obligation? The same thing on the Sabbath as any other day. To do what the Lord says.

My obligation is simply to please the Lord and to obey him. I don't have to look at the calendar and say, am I allowed to obey Jesus today? Am I allowed to go heal somebody? Am I allowed to carry a burden of food to a hungry family? Am I allowed to even earn a living for my children? That's a good thing, isn't it? And it's lawful to do good on the Sabbath. Isn't it good to support your family? The point here seems to be that Jesus says, my father doesn't distinguish between days anymore.

Yes, he did on the creation week. He worked for six days and rested and he hallowed that day. And for the period of the old covenant, he wanted the people to commemorate that by resting one day a week.

But I'm doing something different. I'm the Lord of the Sabbath day. I'm here to do what my father does.

And you know, we are told to do so too. In Ephesians 5, 1, Paul said, be imitators of God

as dear children. Children imitate their father.

What's your father do? Well, that's what you should do. What's my father do? He works seven days a week. My father's been working all the time.

I work all the time, Jesus said. I'm an imitator of God as a dear child. And when they got angrier still, he explained this way in verse 19.

Jesus answered and said to them, most assuredly, I say to you, the son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the father do. For whatever he does, the son does in like manner. Now, father and son are capitalized in our Bibles, but they're not in the Greek.

And most scholars would agree that Jesus is giving sort of a parable here. That although he is talking about himself and the father, he's talking generically about fathers and sons in general. In a principle that also applies to him and his father.

He's basically saying, my father and I do the same thing, just like fathers and sons do generally. The average son was being trained by his father to take over the family business. A child was not born knowing how to do the trade.

Jesus himself, no doubt, had in mind his own apprenticeship under Joseph in carpentry. Jesus, the son doesn't know what to do. His father has to show him what to do.

He doesn't know the trade. He watches the father. And what he sees the father do, he does it the same way.

That's how fathers and sons were. Sometimes this is called the parable of the apprentice son. Because almost every son in Israel was an apprentice to his father.

And Jesus had been an apprentice to Joseph for many years. And now he's an apprentice under his father in heaven. And he says, you know, an apprentice son, he doesn't intuitively know how to do the family work.

He has to be taught. What does he do? He has to watch his dad. His father does it the right way.

And the son, if he's wise, will imitate his father. And that's the best way he learns how to do it. And in verse 20, it says, The father loves the son and shows him all things that he himself does.

This is still generically true also. The father, who's training his son to take over the family business, shows his son the family's trade secrets. The special ways that he makes those cabinets and so forth, that other artisans are not privy to.

Because he lets the son know all his trade secrets, because he wants his son to continue the work. The father loves his son and holds back nothing from him. And therefore he

demonstrates to his son how to do things.

And the son learns from his father. What Jesus is saying is, I'm a son. I've got a father.

I'm just doing whatever he does. I don't know what to do, unless he shows me. And I look at him and I see him working seven days a week.

So I figure that must be how the family business is run. I work seven days a week too. We don't have a day off.

My dad doesn't take a day off. That's how our family business runs. I don't take a day off.

24-7. We're helping people. We're working.

That's what my father's like. That's what I'm like. And then in verse 20, he breaks away from the generic statement and gets more personal about himself and his father.

And says, And he, that is my father, will show him, that is me, greater works than these that you may all marvel. For as the father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the son gives life to whom he will. Jesus is going to say more about this before the end of the chapter in verses that we can't get to tonight.

And so we'll have to come back to it when we come to those verses later in chapter 5. But he says, For the father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the son. So the father who was the judge of all the earth in the Old Testament has now assigned his son to that role. And Jesus, of course, has to do it the way his father does.

It's the father's job to judge. Now he's handed off to his son, the heir, to take over that business of judging. And so the son must judge the way his father does.

And he says, So that all should honor the son just as they honor the father. When the son takes over the role of the father, that the father leaves it to him, then people are to view the son as being in the shoes of his father and to honor him as they honored his father. And Jesus says, He who does not honor the son does not honor the father who sent him.

So he's saying whoever doesn't honor Jesus doesn't honor God. That would have a lot to say about modern Jews who aren't believers in Christ, or Muslims, or even just people who believe in God generically but don't believe in Jesus. Well, okay, believing in God, that's good.

James said, You believe there's one God, you do well. But the demons believe and tremble. Now the demons believe there's God too.

But do you honor the son? If you don't honor the son, you cannot honor the father who sent him. And that's just a given. If I send somebody to be my representative and you treat him like dirt, you're treating me like dirt.

He's my agent. He's my son. And so also, when God sends his son into the world, it's not optional.

Other people honor Jesus. It's not like they can honor God through some alternative ways without honoring Jesus. Nobody can honor the father unless they honor the son.

So Jesus is making some pretty unique claims here such as he didn't make prior to this in the book of John and such as we don't really hear him making much in the synoptic gospels. Here he's starting to talk about his unique relationship with the father pretty much for the first time. And he's not holding back.

He's making some claims that are going to get the people even angrier at him. And he doesn't stop here, but we must stop here for now. But his comments go on until the end of the chapter.

So this is kind of a discourse he gives them. And the occasion was them criticizing him for working on the Sabbath day. And he begins by saying, Well, I'm my father's son.

Chip off the old block. I learned the trade from my dad. I was his apprentice, and now I continue doing it the way he shows me.

But since, of course, these special claims of special relationship to God that he's making sound very much like and really legitimately are taken to mean that he's on the same level with God. He's of the same species. If God is his father, he's of the same species as God.

Well, that makes him sort of equal with God as opposed to men being equal with God. He's not equal to men. He's equal to God.

That then, of course, is something that he realizes has to be. It's a claim that won't just be accepted without being defended. So he goes on for the rest of the chapter to make his defense of those claims and to talk about how much God has borne witness to the truth of what he is saying.

But we'll have to hold off on commentary on that until next time.