

Passing from Death unto Life

John 5: 19-29

Our text follows the familiar passage of Jesus healing the lame man by the pool of Bethesda. Clearly this was a great miracle. The man had been in that condition for 38 long years. Obeying the command of Jesus, he took up his bed and walked. His healing took place on the Sabbath day and he soon encountered legalistic Jews who questioned the carrying of his bed on the Sabbath. Upon hearing Jesus had instructed the man to carry his bed, they sought to slay Him because He had done these things on the Sabbath day.

Our text is literally Jesus' response to the legalists who challenged His deity and authority. Although it is given in response to extreme opposition, we also discover profound truth and comfort in the words of Jesus. He speaks of His relationship to the Father, the work of redemption, and eternal life afforded all who believe. As we consider this conversation of Christ, I want to examine the eternal truths He reveals as we think on: [Passing from Death unto Life](#).

I. The Preeminence of Christ (19-23) – Although Jesus spoke in response to the doubting legalists, we too must consider and respond to His preeminence as well. Consider:

A. His Position (19) – *Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.* Jesus confirms that He is not working independently. His works are consistent with the will of God. He is working in cooperation with His Father. This openly declares His relation to the Father. It also confirms the deity of Christ. Jesus is in essence saying that He and the Father are one.

- Many in Jesus' day could not accept His position as the second person within the Godhead. They refused to embrace Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God. The same is true in our day. This remains a major point of contention for many. Salvation is impossible apart from Christ, and we must see Him as He is!

B. His Power (20-21) – *For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.* ^[21] *For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.* Keep in mind the context of the passage. The lame man had just been healed. Whether they wanted to admit it or not, a great miracle had occurred in their midst. Jesus had simply spoken the word and the man was healed. His work was consistent with the will of the Father, and in cooperation with Him.

- They marveled that such a physical miracle had taken place. (I am sure we would have as well.) However, Jesus declares that He will do greater works than these. The Father has power to raise the dead and give life to whom He chooses. Jesus declares He too shares that power. It is evident He is speaking of spiritual miracles and work. We know Jesus has power to raise the dead physically, but the greatest of all miracles is that spiritual resurrection brought about in salvation! **John 17:2 – As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.**

C. His Prominence (22, 27) – For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: ^[27] **And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.** These sought to condemn Christ for healing on the Sabbath and pass judgment on Him for His actions. Jesus declares that all judgment has been committed to Him of the Father. He speaks of the judgment that waits those who reject Him as the Christ.

- Jesus came and offered Himself the atoning sacrifice for sin. Through Him there is cleansing and restoration. Apart from Him there is eternal judgment and condemnation. He will stand as the righteous judge in the end. All will be examined of Christ, and we are assured that He knows those who belong to Him!

D. His Praise (23) – That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. Again this is further confirmation of His deity. The honor given to the Father must also be given to the Son. If honor and praise are withheld from the Son, they are also withheld from the Father. It is impossible to worship God if we refuse to worship Christ. It is impossible to serve God and deny the Son.

- This too remains a point of contention in our day. Many profess faith in God but deny Christ. Some suggest we all serve the same God, headed toward the same afterlife, but travel different paths. You cannot separate the Father and the Son. You cannot please the Father, nor be accepted of Him, apart from the Son! **1 John 2:23 – Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.**

II. The Provision of Christ (24) – Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Many who heard these words that day rejected them, but in this statement Christ reveals His great provision for humanity. Notice:

A. The Revelation (24a) – *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word...* Although He was yet to bear the sins of humanity upon the cross of Calvary, Jesus was sharing the gospel message. He was revealing Himself as the Christ. Many could not comprehend all He said or receive who He was, but He proclaimed the way of salvation.

- As we consider these words, the plan of God for redemption has been fulfilled. Christ did bear our sin and the judgment of God for sin. He offered His body the sacrificial atonement for sin, died, was buried, and rose victorious from the grave. The message of the gospel is being proclaimed today, revealing Jesus as the Christ, Savior of the world.

B. The Response (24a) – *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me...* Many in Jesus' day heard His words, witnessed the miracles, and pondered the truth, but few responded to His offer. It was certainly a blessing to hear the words of Christ and comprehend what He said, but that alone wasn't enough. By faith they had to respond in belief.

- Is that not evident in our day as well? The gospel is being proclaimed as never before, through church services, television, radio, internet, and yet many do not believe what they hear. Christ died for the sins of humanity, mine and yours included, but we must respond to the gracious offer of salvation by faith. We must believe that Christ is who He said He was and did exactly what He promised He would do. Knowing of Christ will not bring salvation. Believing in His finished work by faith will.

C. The Redemption (24b) – *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.* Jesus reveals the blessing associated with saving faith in Him. All who receive Him, believing He is the Christ, inherit eternal life. We no longer stand condemned before God because of sin. Our guilt is removed as our debt is paid in full. In Christ we have passed from death unto life! *Rom.8:1 – There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

III. The Promise of Christ (25-29) – Here Jesus reveals the hope all believers have in Him. A physical miracle is wonderful, but the promises in Christ exceed them all. Consider:

A. The Work of Salvation (25) – *Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.* Most likely failed to grasp the truth Jesus spoke here. They were considering His words in a physical sense. Jesus speaks of

the spiritual work that takes place within us as we are born again in Him. Apart from Christ we are dead in trespasses and sin. We have no hope of life eternal, only the certainty of coming judgment. In Christ we are quickened, literally made alive in Him. The old man is cast aside as we are resurrected in Christ. This physical body may suffer death, but the spirit is made alive to live throughout eternity!

B. The Wonder of Salvation (26) – For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; Christ has already confirmed His deity. Just as the Father possesses life, He too possesses life. This life is unlike the physical life we possess. This life is eternal, holy, and righteous. Christ has the power to impart such eternal, righteous life to us. We have the promise of dwelling in the presence of God throughout eternity, possessing the righteousness of Christ.

- I cannot explain the wonder of it all. It amazes me that God would love humanity enough to offer such grace to us. Christ loved us enough to suffer death so that we might inherit eternal life. The work of salvation is a wonder of grace. God works in the hearts of sinful men, bringing light to darkness, resurrecting us from eternal death and separation unto eternal life and acceptance! [Rom.5:21 – That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.](#)

C. The Witness of Salvation (28-29) – Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, ^[29] And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. Jesus speaks of a day when the graves will release their dead to stand before Him at His command. Those who have believed on Him, receiving salvation, will be resurrected to life eternal. All who have rejected Christ, refusing salvation in Him, will be resurrected to eternal death and damnation. In the end, salvation in Christ will be the deciding factor throughout eternity.

- Jesus provided redemption for humanity as He bore our sin upon the cross. There is salvation in Him with the promise of eternal life. Apart from Christ there is no hope, only eternal condemnation in hell.

Conclusion: Jesus is without question the Christ, Savior of the world. He alone is the means of salvation. In Him there is life eternal. He came to pardon our sin and reconcile us to God. There is no other way. Where do you stand today? You have heard the gospel. Will you believe it and receive Christ by faith? I rejoice to know that I have inherited eternal life in Him. I pray you know Christ as your Savior as well. If not, come as He leads!