

When God Speaks

(John 5:17-24)

(preached 8/26/18; Pine Grove BC Sun AM)

Introduction

Just last week, the Mormons announced plans to abandon the name Mormon or LDS and is now asking the world to call them the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints..

While that name has always been a subtitle to the Mormon cult, it is not the name that the current president wants to keep..

So he announced on August 16 that the Lord has told him to correct the name of the cult.

“The Lord said to me that the name of the church shall be the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Period. And that is not negotiable.”

Well, the new spread through the Mormon community.

They are called Mormons because their demonic addition to the Bible came through a prophet named Mormon.

In fact, his book, the Book of Mormon, is equal to the Bible in the cult of Mormonism.

Now the Mormon president made it clear that they weren't abandoning the teachings of Mormon.

Instead, they were just correcting the name of the organization...

The president offered no other reason for the change, but other Mormons made it clear why the name change is important..

Patrick Mason, who is a professor of Mormonism at Claremont University, said this...

"Mormon is a long-standing nickname for the church and for the movement, but the church leadership has always been concerned that the nickname has obscured the fundamentally Christian nature of the church and the religion. Especially since they're so many people who've criticized the church and have done so historically for not being Christian or orthodoxly Christian. The church leadership really wants to emphasize the fact that it is a Christian church."

He is right.

Satan likes to disguise himself as an angel of light.

So it would make sense that a false church would try and disguise itself as the true church.

And if the name change is successful, people will simply see Mormonism as another Christian denomination, which is no doubt their intention.

Yet, Mormonism is not a Christian denomination.

It is not a Christian church.

Now the confusing part is that they sound and look a lot like us.

They have church looking buildings.

They have people in suits and ties.

They have great family values.

They are moral people.

They point to a god in heaven.

They speak of the excellencies of Christ.

They call Jesus the Son of God.

They believe in His resurrection.

They speak of faith in Christ for salvation..

Yet, none of the people in the Mormon church are saved.

None will enter heaven because none have a complete and proper view of Christ..

Because no Mormon believes that Jesus is God.

The Mormon church was founded and has taught for nearly 200 years that Jesus is a created being.

He is separate from God in all ways..

Mormons view Jesus as the brother of Satan.

Jesus obeyed his Father and Satan disobeyed his father..

But none of this error is based on anything in the Bible..

Rather it is the heresy of the father of Joseph Smith, who is the father of their false religion.

Smith said that Jesus is not God because he never claimed equality with God...

Yet that is not even remotely close to the truth.

In fact, over the next few weeks, we are going to be looking at John 5:17-47...

And in these 31 verses, you will see Jesus claim to be equal to God over and over again..

When the Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses show up at your door, John 5 is where you should take them in your Bible..

Because this is one of places in Scripture where Jesus affirms his identity as God, and that is exactly what every member of every false religions needs to consider.

Today, we will only get thought the introduction of this section as Jesus makes 5 claims to deity here in these 8 verses...

Now, I want to make a disclaimer before we begin..

As Christians, we affirm the trinity...

We believe that the Scriptures teach of one God who is seen in three persons.

Each member of the trinity is God but each is also distinct from the other..

Now, the trinity is one of the most difficult concepts to understand..

As a result, these verse may raise some questions in your mind about the nature of God..

If they do, that is good and we can talk about them..

But we also need to understand the mystery of the Trinity as well..

How can Jesus be God and be with God?

And the answer is simply this..

I don't know if I have a good explanation of that other than I believe that to be true..

Christ is God but Christ is also a person of the Trinity who is distinct from the Father and the Spirit...

So as we go through this rather deep portion of Scripture, jot your questions down and get with me if I can help...

With that said, let's jump into this passage with a little background..

We will label verses 17-18...

I. Jesus Is God in Person (17-18)

Last week, we looked at Jesus' healing of a lame man by the pools of Bethesda.

The lame man had been there by the pools for 38 years.

He had no idea who Jesus was.

Jesus simply stopped by the pools while he in Jerusalem for a feast at one point in his ministry...

Though the miracle of healing was stunning and remarkable, the religious leaders of Judaism were not impressed..

And the main reason is that the miracle of healing had taken place on Saturday, which was the Jewish sabbath..

And we talked last week about how the Sabbath was the heart of the false religion of the Jews in Jesus' day.

It was the Sabbath that really exemplified the religion of works that Judaism had become..

And so when Jesus healed on the Sabbath, he knew what the response would be because he knows all things...

The first response of the religious leaders was to scold the lame man for picking up a pallet on the Sabbath..

In other words, his picking up of the pallet equaled work, so he was to be reprimanded...

Look back at verse 9...

9 Immediately the man became well, and picked up his pallet and began to walk.

Now it was the Sabbath on that day. 10 So the Jews were saying to the man who was cured, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet." 11 But he answered them, "He who made me well was the one who said to me, 'Pick up your pallet and walk.'" 12

But the second response of the religious leaders was to scold Jesus..

Verse 12..

12 They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Pick up your pallet and walk'?" 13 But the man who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had slipped away while there was a crowd in that place. 14 Afterward Jesus *found him in the temple and said to him, "Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you." 15 The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. 16 For this reason the

Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath.

In other words, Jesus healed on the Sabbath to highlight the corruption of their false religion.

Salvation was not a matter of keeping all the laws of the Sabbath...

Salvation was not a matter of keeping external rules and regulations about a day of the week..

Salvation was a matter of repentance and faith alone...

But the Jews were blind to their false religion.

They were so blind that they couldn't see a miracle of God right before their eyes..

Instead, all they saw was a violation of their Sabbath rules.

And because their rules were more important than a relationship with God, they sought to destroy anyone who violated their rules...

And so Jesus was squarely in their sights now..

And in verse 16, the persecution began..

But Jesus is about to raise the stakes even higher..

Not only does he violate their Sabbath, he claims equality with God..

Verse 17...

17 But He answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.”

The comment by Jesus is a direct attack on the Jews prohibitions of working on the Sabbath..

You see, the Jews had a problem with their Sabbath laws.

Though they knew that God had commanded them to keep the Sabbath, they also wondered if God worked on the Sabbath..

They knew that God rested on the 7th day of creation but they also

But they wondered if God took every Saturday off with them...

And the answer they came to was no..

God has to work on the Sabbath because God holds all things together in the universe..

Therefore, their Sabbath laws allowed a little work on the Sabbath..

But here comes Jesus and he makes this incredible statement that he was working on the Sabbath and His father was also working on the Sabbath...

And you can predict the Jews response...

Verse 18..

18 For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

The level of hate for Jesus was rising..

They wanted to kill him after he cleaned out the temple in chapter 2 with a whip...

But now they are really ready to kill him..

Sabbath breaker and worse yet, blasphemer..

Because in that one personal pronoun of “my,” Jesus had declared his equality with God..

The two highest crimes in Judaism were breaking the Sabbath and disrespecting the name of God, and Jesus had apparently done both in a matter of minutes here..

Not only is Jesus declaring his authority over the Sabbath, he is declaring his equality with God..

Which reminds me...

The best way to answer the Jehovah's Witness or the Mormon or the Muslim is to declare your belief that Jesus is equal to God..

Just like the religious leaders here, their blood pressure will rise and their eyes will get big..

Yet, Jesus is clear.

He is equal to God.

He is God in the flesh..

As he stands there before these Jews, he has worked to heal a lame man on the Sabbath, but he is also working in a way they can't see...

He is working at keeping the whole universe together as well..

And the reason he works is that he is God, and God never needs rest...

So the game is on, and Jesus isn't done..

Not only is he is equal to God in his person, he is also equal to God in what he does..

Let's move to verses 19 and 20, where he declares that he is equal to God in performance...

II. Jesus is God in Performance (19-20)

19 Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever [e]the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner. 20 For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel. 21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.

Why is Jesus able to give new legs to a cripple man?

Because God is a healer.

God creates working legs every day, so when someone needs a perfectly good set of legs, God is able to do it..

When Jesus healed the lame man, he did it because God can do it..

The works of God are the works of Christ because the Father and the Son are the same..

To see Jesus make new legs is to see God make new legs..

To see Jesus do a miracle is to see God do a miracle..

The Jews before Him claimed to know God better than anyone else in Israel...

Yet, they didn't see the miracles of God in the person of Jesus Christ..

Instead, they attacked the God that they said they loved when they went after Jesus..

Furthermore, Jesus tells them in verses 20-21 that healing a lame man is nothing compared to the works that he will do..

The reality is that Jesus is going to miracle after miracle before their eyes to show them the power of God and demonstrate his equality to God..

Soon, Jesus is going to give sight to the blind which is a miracle that Jews believed God could do...

Then Jesus is going to raise the dead, and ultimately Jesus is going to be raised from the dead himself..

Yet, despite all the evidence of his equality seen in the works that HE did, the Jews will reject his claim of deity..

And still do to this day, along with every other false religion..

Christ is God because He does the works of God...

A third defense that Jesus offers of his equality with God is found in verses 22-24...

We can call this...

III. Jesus is Equal to God in Praise (22-24)

Verse 22..

22 For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son,

In Genesis 1:1, we read that in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth..

In John 1:3 we read that all things were created by Jesus..

And for years, people read those verses and struggled to understand how God could create and Jesus could create..

Well, the answer is simple they are one in the same...

In Genesis 18:25, we read that God is the judge of the earth...

But here in John 5:22, we read that Jesus is the judge over everything..

And how do we understand that?

Jesus is the judge of all things because he is God..

Jesus will judge all believers at the judgment seat of Christ...

Jesus will judge all unbelievers at the great white throne judgment...

No one in heaven will bypass Christ to get there..

And no one in hell will bypass Christ to get there..

All judgment will go through him..

Now, let me make an important note that may help in conversations with people..

Most folks think that judgment awaits them after death...

They live, they die, and they hope for the best in the judgment..

Yet, the Bible teaches no such thing..

The Bible teaches that judgment has already been made on every living soul today...

IF you are saved by faith and repentance in Christ alone today, you are already judged worthy of heaven even though you live on earth still..

If you are not saved and reject the gospel, you are already judged worthy of hell and simply await death and your arrival there..

There is no judgment after death that will reverse the judgment you are already under..

Every one in this room sits under the judgment of God already.

You won't get to heaven and plead your case.

You have already pleaded your case by either trusting in Christ alone or rejecting him...

Christ is the judge because all judgment goes through him...

And why is that?

Verse 23...

23 so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father.

Courtrooms are serious places.

I am reminded of that every time I am called for jury duty.

But the serious tone is even greater when the judge enters to take a seat.

Baliffs call people to stand while the judge takes a seat.

And the issue is not whether or not the judge is a good person or not, the issue is the judge commands respect as someone who has the title of judge..

Jesus is given the authority to judge because it brings him honor and glory...

Jesus is not just another Jewish rabbi standing before these Jewish religious leaders..

Jesus is not just a messenger sent to bring news about salvation..

Jesus is not just another prophet of God calling people to repentance...

Jesus is the judge of all..

Therefore, he commands respect and honor and praise and worship...

Sadly, tragically, not everyone gives Jesus that honor...

And that is a great and eternal mistake..

The end of verse 23 is crystal clear..

He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

This is why a Jew today cannot find salvation.

This is why a Muslim today cannot find salvation.

This is why a Mormon today cannot find salvation.

This is why a Jehovah's Witness today cannot find salvation.

If you don't honor Christ, you don't honor the Father...

You don't know Christ, you don't know God..

Muslims today say that they worship the same God as Christians.

Jews today say that they worship the God of the OT.

Mormons today say that they are Christians..

Don't fall for that lie...

None of them worship our God because they don't honor the Son of God..

And if you don't honor the Son, you don't honor the Father.

Which leads to verse 24...

24 “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

If dishonoring the Son means dishonoring the Father...

Honoring the Son means honoring the Father...

And how do you honor the Son?

You believe His words..

And where do you find His words?

In the Bible.

Honoring Christ is a matter of honoring and obeying his words..

And when you believe the Word of Christ, you believe this testimony that He is God and the Son of God.

And you believe his command to turn from your sin and put your trust in Him..

And at that moment of belief, you pass from death to life.

The judgment over your head is removed...

You leave death row and you walk out of prison a free man or woman..

This is the gospel..

These are the words of Christ, who is the Judge and Jury over all..

Conclusion

So what are we to take from this today?

#1 - Fill your minds with a defense of Christ.

It angers me when Christians refuse to engage opponents of the gospel.

You should not be unprepared to speak to the Mormon or the Jehovah Witness at your door.

And when you are, it reveals a sad reality.

Members of false religion care more about their false faith than you do about your true faith...

Therefore, prepare your minds to defend Christ.

Open your Bibles.

Find some verses that point to Jesus being God and be ready to give a defense of the hope that lies within you.

#2 - Focus your hearts on the wonder of Christ.

At times, we forget the glory of who Christ truly is.

Yes, he is a great teacher.

Yes, he is a great healer.

Yes, he is a sacrifice for sin.

Yes, he is King.

But even greater than all that.

Our Jesus is God in the flesh.

He is the Creator, the Sustainer, the Judge and the Jury.

And because of that, he is worthy of our praise, our obedience, our love, and our service..

Let us pray.