

Gospel of John - episode 11

Chapter 5 part 2

Welcome to our sharing on St. John's Gospel. We are looking into John chapter five and we continue to look at the issue of the man who was healed. I left you in the last episode having to confront the man with the fact that there were consequences for him receiving this extraordinary grace from Jesus. It is one thing be healed and it is another thing **to stay** healed. Even in modern situations we have the phenomena of people who could lose their healing. You could lose your healing if you don't accept the challenge to live the new life; if you don't go the way of health, wholeness, holiness and happiness. So, what you have here is that this man discovered that 'the Lord is my shepherd and I need nothing because of him. He brought me into the wonderful pastures and he gave repose to my soul' Ps 23.

But we have to take this message, internalise it and go forward with it. There is a choice on the part of the man to actually stay healed. So, let us look at it again so that we can continue with the consequences of this. "Now that you are well again. Jesus said, be sure not to sin anymore or something worse could happen to you". The 'something worse' is that if you would reject the gift of salvation - and there is only one Saviour - but if I don't allow **this one saviour** to save me, then I have left myself under the judgement of God. Since I am only a creature this puts me in danger of eternal loss. So, it's not something small that Jesus is saying to him, it's something great. It is something great that Jesus is saying to the whole people of Israel as well. Because when they finally rejected their Saviour in the Passion of Jesus, there were terrible consequences of judgement coming for them in AD 70 and the years that followed it.

Jesus is not playing games with us. These are eternal matters and they have terrible consequences. So, let us deal with the matter of the Sabbath issue. When this man took up his mat and walked, he went into the temple carrying his mat. Since he has been 38 years sick you can forgive him for not remembering some of the rules of the temple! You don't carry anything on the Sabbath. Just a reminder of a text I have given you before. This is Jeremiah, 17:21: He says, "as you value your lives, on no account carry a burden on the Sabbath day and do not bring it through the gates of this temple".

So, this man has done two terrible things in the eyes of the Judean leaders. First of all, he has carried a burden on the Sabbath day, **and** he has brought it into the temple. The poor man was probably so delighted to have an opportunity to go into the temple that had never crossed his head as to what he was doing. So, he broke the Sabbath rules, but without realising it. Now, the Judean leaders were very strong on the rules concerning the Sabbath. They had 613 rules about the Sabbath alone. How anybody remembered them, I don't know. And they correctly defined work as 'carrying a weight a distance'. So, if this man carried his mat into the temple, he was working, and that was simply the way it was.

Now, you will notice that the Judean leaders are not sympathetic with the man who has been cured after 38 years. Wouldn't anybody rejoice with him? They are not remotely impressed that this man has experienced a spiritual resurrection. There is a complete absence of love in their reactions to him. And this is what John wants you and I to see, that on this level of below, there is no love.

All they can see is an infringement of a law. They cannot see anything else, so, they make an inquiry about who the healer was. Of course, they knew very well who he was, but they want the man to tell them, but initially, the man doesn't know. This points out **his passivity** as well, that he would accept a gift and a grace as great as this, showing absolutely no curiosity about Jesus himself. You can see why I said that psychologically, mentally and spiritually he was almost dead. Eventually he finds out that the name of the person is Jesus. You can see that this man, finding the name of the healer to be Jesus, has no idea who Jesus is. None whatsoever. Now, you and I are armed with the enormous amount of testimony that we have received from chapter one. So, we can see the tragedy of this man having no idea who Jesus is. He seems to have not a scrap of wisdom either! As soon as he got the name, he went back to the Judean leaders and said, oh, the name is Jesus.... but they knew that!

This is what John says: "It was because Jesus did things like this on the Sabbath that the Jewish leaders began to persecute Jesus". Well, if you read Mark's Gospel and the other Synoptic Gospels, Mark says that they persecuted him **from the beginning**. What John wants to tell you now is that they have evidence against him. That is the difference. Up to now, they have all kinds of difficulties with Jesus. They don't accept him at all, but they have evidence against him now. If you look at the Synoptic Gospels, they were **looking for evidence** to bring Jesus down; it was a very serious matter to be a Sabbath breaker. It was punishable by death. They were looking for something to legitimately kill him. They now have it. But the thing is, Jesus did not carry a weight, a distance. Jesus carried nothing into the temple, and when Jesus healed the man, he did not touch him.

Jesus broke no law, but the Pharisees are not going to accept that. This is why Jesus has to begin his great defence, and his defence actually **gives them** the one piece of information on which **they will** kill him. In the end, Jesus said to them: "My Father goes on working and so do I". It's very interesting. He is talking about the Sabbath, so we have to look at this. The book of Genesis tells us that after the labour of creation, God rested on the Sabbath, but they put that together to try and establish a day of rest for the people. They **knew** that in any real sense God could not rest - in the sense that if God did not maintain the world in existence, it would just simply cease to be. If God does not continue to maintain you and me in existence, we will just simply cease to be. So, in any real sense, God cannot rest on the Sabbath because He continues to give life; that is, children are born, and He continues to take life - which is that people die on the Sabbath.

Because it has been known from the very beginning that neither birth nor death regard the days of the week, and as women know, nor the hours of the night either! Therefore, since God gave life and received life on the Sabbath Jesus said, 'my Father goes on working, and so do I'. Therefore, God gives life, and God pronounces judgement on the Sabbath day. Jesus is telling the leadership straight up, with no crowds around them, in order to try and explain that this Divine prerogative **is his**. But they are reading this on the level of below. They are not reading it **on his level**, and they don't accept what we know about him. Therefore, they accuse him of blasphemy. "That made the Jews, the Jewish leaders, even more intent on killing him. Because not content with breaking the Sabbath, the spoke of God as his own Father.

So, he made himself equal with God". Here we begin the great controversies in John's Gospel, and it's wonderful teaching, but it is actually very deep.

Does Jesus back down? No, not at all. Instead of backing down from what he has said, he actually gives them a sevenfold claim to be equal with God! Now, seven is a perfect number, and so he is giving a complete and total proof - well, claim anyway - that he is, in fact, the Son of God. But we have to do a little bit of revision, because if you remember the prologue, everything that Jesus says here in John, chapter five, we have already heard. There is nothing new in it. Back there, we were told "in the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God, and the Word was God". So that is verse one. So, he was with God from eternity. We are told in verse two that "all things came to be through him, and nothing came into being except through him". And in verse four, that he is the source of life. And in verse nine, that he is the true light. And in verse twelve, that he has the power to make us children of God. And in verse 14, that he is the Divine Logos which became Incarnate. And in verse 18, that he has been leaning on the Father's heart for all eternity.

So, you and I know what he is going to claim here. He is just going to expand on it. Armed with this revelation from the prologue, we, the readers, are ready for what Jesus is going to claim. But the Jewish leaders are not ready. They never heard the prologue. The people in the crowd who might be listening don't know this. And so, we are much more armed with knowledge than the people who are actually dealing with Jesus. I would think we should have compassion on them, because it must have been very difficult for them to hear this for the first time and to hear a young man who was only 30 years of age talking like this.

This text that we are going to look at now is one of the most exalted heights in John's Gospel. John's Gospel is the exalted height of the four Gospels. So, this is one of the most incredible things that has ever been penned by a human being. We are going to get the revelation of the relationship that exists between the Father and the Son. We are going to hear that the Father and the Son are together in everything. Jesus is going to tell us something that we know already - that is there are three persons in God, but there is only one Will. Jesus is not doing his own thing. He is doing what the blessed Trinity has decided from all eternity is to be done. Therefore, he can say, "I am only doing what my Father wants". It is really fascinating. Let us read some of it and then we will start talking.

This is chapter 5:19. To this accusation, Jesus replied, "I tell you most solemnly". Now he only uses that expression when he is going to make a very serious revelation. "The Son can do nothing by himself. He can only do what he sees the Father doing. And whatever the Father does, the Son does too. For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he does himself. And he will show him even greater things than these works that will astonish you". One of the greatest of his works is going to be, the raising of Lazarus.

"Thus, as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so the Son gives life to anyone he chooses". That is what they have just seen - that Jesus has given life to the worst case in this pool of Bethesda. As we have seen from the man's reaction, he really was almost dead in every sense that you could possibly imagine. Jesus is now telling us this extraordinary relationship that exists between himself and the Father.

But when he says the Son and the Father, you have to realise he is talking about the Incarnate Son on earth and the Father who is in heaven now - the pre-existent Christ in heaven. That would have been different, but Jesus has taken flesh and he has become one of us. So let me just give you a list, first of all, of this claim that Jesus is making. In verse 19, he says he is equal to God in works. In verse 20, he says he is equal to God in knowledge. In verse 21, he says he is equal to God in resurrection power. In verse 22, he says he is equal to God in judgement. In verse 23, he says he is equal to God in honour. In verses 24 and 25, he is equal to God in regeneration, power. And in verse 26, he is equal to God as the source of life. Well, that's equality, isn't it?

Therefore, **Jesus is THE GREAT I AM**. And he is going to say this in chapter eight. So, the first thing I want to say here is that no other living person that has walked this planet has ever made such a claim. Even the people who founded religions and had millions of people following them, it never crossed their heads to ever say this. Jesus is completely unique in making this claim. The Jewish leaders would have understood perfectly. They are not only scripture scholars, they are theologians. They know exactly what Jesus is saying. And they know the implications of what he is saying, that if what he is saying here is true, then the mysterious hidden Presence of God has left the holy of holies and is standing here talking to them.

That is what they understand. It is just they don't accept it, and therefore, to say that Jesus of Nazareth is unique is to say it very mildly indeed. But he goes on to tell us that Jesus, as man, as the incarnate Son, is not independent of his Father. Why? Because in the three Divine Persons, there is only **One Will**. And so that is why you are going to hear him saying, "I don't do my own will. I do the will of the one who sent me". He is not independent of the Father. In the blessed Trinity, **There Is Only One Will**. Whatever one of the Persons of the Trinity does, the other two concur with it. So here Jesus says that the Son does nothing by himself, naturally, because everything he does, he has the Father and the Holy Spirit working with him. So, he is not independent of the Father. He is not doing his own thing. Now he has to say this to the Judean leadership because they think **he is** doing his own thing, because he has not submitted to them and he has not asked their permission to do whatever he is doing.

Later on, in the second half of this Gospel, we will find that the community of the beloved sons or the beloved disciples, whichever way you want to put it; when they begin their mission to the world, they must **have one will with Jesus**, and they will be completely dependent on Jesus. You remember in chapter two, blessed mother said, 'do whatever he tells you'. There should only be one will in the church as well. And that is **THE WILL OF GOD**. So, we live in complete surrender to the will of God. You will hear Jesus saying to them in chapter 15:5 "without me, you can do nothing". And you will hear St. Paul saying later on in his letter to the Philippians, chapter 4:13: "But with Christ I can do all things, without him, I can do nothing".

In verse 19 Jesus says that whatever the Father does, he does - of course because he is one of the Three, and the works that are coming out of Jesus are not just coming from Jesus. It is what the Father wants. That is why I underlined for you when we did chapter four that if Jesus went to Samaria and made the revelation of who he was to that woman, it was what God wanted; it was what the God of Israel

wanted. Therefore, the God of Israel was trying very hard to get through to his people that this was a new day, that he was doing a new thing, that he was starting a completely new era, but they were just not interested.

It is really frightening in verse 20, where Jesus said, “the Father loves the Son”. The relationship that exists between the Father and the Son is a relationship of love, eternal, unconditional, absolute, incredible love. Jesus is going to pass this love on to his own disciples, where he will say in John 15:9 “as the Father loves me, so in exactly the same way I love you”. Then that love has to be passed on to everybody else who the disciples bring into the church. Therefore, this incredible infinite love of God comes to every single individual involved. It is totally amazing. One of the things that the Jewish leaders don't like about Jesus is that God's love is without borders. It is not confined to any nation, or political system. It is not even confined to any belief system. God loves everybody equally. If you are alive, if you are a human being, if you are a member of homo sapiens, God loves you. **You are his**. So, this love that is the burning fire that is in Jesus and drives him on to do the most incredible things and is going to drive him on to sacrifice himself in the most incredible way for us. That burning fire of love is what he passes on to the church, so that the church, generation after generation, will pass on the fire of God's love to another generation and enable them to get up and live as well.

Since **love** is the motivation between the Father and the Son, John himself will tell you in 1 Jn1:7 that “God is love”. That is his nature. So, when you are looking at Jesus showing this Divine love to everybody else, you are actually looking at God. **God is love**. And the things that Jesus does makes everybody stand back in absolute awe. They are looking at something that is way above anything they could have imagined. And it is this love, this tender love - but it is wise and it is just, holy and life-giving; it is forgiving - just so amazing. This love is what he wants to pass on. This is the motivation that Jesus has, and it is the only motivation he wants us to have also.

this love is expressed in total self-giving, in sacrificial service. Even though you know exactly the faults and failings of the people you are loving, you don't love them because they are good; you don't love them because they are bad! You love them **because God loves them**, and you love them because they are your brothers and sisters as well. So, the Father loving the Son, therefore passes on all knowledge to him. What Jesus does in training his disciples is that he passes on all his knowledge to them.

The church has to pass this knowledge, this Divine wisdom, knowledge and understanding, so that we can raise the world and keep the world alive, keep it healthy, keep it wholesome, and keep them turning back to God. So, Jesus is the Word, and therefore he passes on the Word to the church, and he feeds the church with the Word and the bread, which, of course, is the Eucharist. So, because HE IS THE WORD, all of God's Will is expressed in Jesus. The apostles only have to look at him. Everything for us is the imitation of Christ.

When we get to chapters 13 -17, Jesus will pass this on to his disciples, as I say, so that they can pass it on to the rest of humanity as well. Then he goes on to say, “thus, as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so the Son gives life to whoever he chooses”. Now, we have seen the Son give life to the little

boy in chapter four. We have seen the Son give life to the woman of Samaria and her people in chapter four. We have seen the Son give life to this man on the mat in chapter five as well. But the Judean leaders only want to see that he gave the man and the boy physical healing. They don't want to see that. The greater healing was the raising of this person to a completely new level. They don't want to see that. And the more they refuse to look at what Jesus is saying, the more spiritually blind they become, and the more blind they become, the more they accuse them of blasphemy. If they could turn to Jesus and just ask him for help, he would take away their blindness. Because, you know, when Isaiah had his great experience in the temple in Jerusalem, as expressed in Is 6:1-6 the Lord told him that the people would become so blind that they would never see, so deaf they would never hear, so hardened that they would never understand. That is exactly what Jesus experienced. We will continue this discussion in the next episode.

INTERVAL

Welcome to our sharing on St. John's Gospel. We are continuing with Jesus' sevenfold claim to be equal with God and as I said in our last episode, this is one of the most incredible things that has ever been written by a human hand. I want to go on to verse 21: "Thus, as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so the Son gives life to anyone who chooses". In the book of Deuteronomy, which is part of the Torah, chapter 32: 39, we read: "See, now that I, **I AM HE** says, the Lord, and beside Me, there is no other God. It is I who deal death and life, and when I have struck, it is I who heal, and nobody can deliver from my hand". Now, these Judean leaders, who are experts in the scriptures, will know that Jesus is making these references. They hear very clearly. And that is why the more he speaks, the more they want to kill him.

When Jesus says that he gives life to anyone he chooses, then you know that when he was offering life to that young boy in chapter four, that it was **the greater life** that he wanted to give him, the lesser life of just simply bringing him physically back to life was not Jesus' aim. How vital it was that the father would put his faith in Jesus so that the whole household could believe. Therefore, the little boy would come into this higher life, he would come to the realm of above and receive all that Jesus had given to him then he was **completely** healed. Because of this we can see why Jesus would say to the man who had been on the mat for 38 years that he must not sin anymore or something worse could happen to him. Because if he doesn't allow Jesus to take him up onto this higher level and into the kingdom of God, the physical healing is nothing, and he can lose it.

So, we who are reading and listening to this must realise that we are being told, line by line, 'make sure that you let Jesus **take you** up into a true spiritual life where you have a personal communion with God, and that the relationship that **you have with God** is a relationship of love; that your motivation for doing anything that you do **is love**, because that is the only motivation that is acceptable in the kingdom of God'. We have to understand the consequences of all of these statements.

The next thing we have in verse 22 is: "for the Father judges nobody. He has left all judgement to the Son, so that all may honour the Son as they honour the Father, and whoever refuses honour to the Son

refuses honour to the Father also". Now we will take **the judgement** first. If you go back into the Old Testament, you will find that there is a whole book called the Book of Judges. A judge was a person who ruled the people of God but ruled them under the Will of God and according to the Law of God. So, if judgement has been given to him, it means that **Jesus is the rightful ruler of planet earth**. Because the author of this planet God, the Father, he has appointed Jesus as the rightful ruler. But we know from the Synoptic Gospels that Satan claimed to be the ruler of this earth. And we know that the whole struggle that Jesus is going through is not just with the Judean leaders. Behind them, unknown to them, are the powers of evil. Satan is in contention with Jesus to be the Lord of the earth.

This is brought out in the Synoptic Gospels. I will just give you a little taste of it. In Matthew 4:8-9 the devil took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the earth and all their splendour. "All of these I will give to you", he said, so, Satan is claiming that the whole earth is his. How could Satan make that claim? It is because when we sin we give him power, and when we love, we give God power. Please understand the two principles. It is terribly important. Every thought, word, every action of ours either allows God or Satan to rule the earth, one or the other. So, he said, "you can have these if you bow down before me". Now, we know from history that many a king, queen, emperor or empress got power by dedicating their souls to Satan. It is very frightening. They got the power from an occultic source.

But when you come to the second half of this Gospel, you will hear Jesus saying that Satan is not a king. John 14:30 say that he is the prince of this world. Jesus says he has no power over Me. The reason why Satan has no power over Jesus is that there is no sin in Jesus and he is motivated only by love. Satan cannot touch love. Satan only has power where there is sin. If we know that, we will go to war with sin, and we will never go to war with any human being, because if we go to war with sin, then we have the victory; love can come into our lives and dominate our lives and go out from us to raise others from death to life. That is what the Lord actually wants.

When you come to the passion of Jesus, in John's Gospel, it is only in the Passion of Jesus that the kingship of Jesus is actually acknowledged. "Are you a king? Yes, I am. I was born for this". He is the king of the Jews, written over the cross. His kingship is actually acknowledged. Yet it is only when you come to Revelation, chapter 19 - the other book that John wrote - that you have the glorious return of Christ, which I have already given to you in an earlier episode. He comes back as the Divine Word coming to rule the earth, and he deals with all the evil that is there. But between the point where we are in chapter five and the return of Christ, it is a long process, and we are all involved because we either choose the light or choose the darkness. We either choose to love or choose to hate. Hate means you don't forgive and you hold resentment and all this kind of stuff.

St. Paul tells us in Romans 5:17 that when each one of us individually allows Jesus to take us up onto this level of above, to live a true spiritual life, that we reign with Christ. Because once Jesus went back to the Father in the Ascension, his glorious reign began. The reign of Christ begins in each soul when we allow him to raise us from death to life, from sin to grace, from flesh to spirit, from the cosmos, which is the unbelieving world, to the kingdom of God. Each one of us has to take this journey with him. As we saw

with the woman in chapter four, Jesus gives a lot of attention to each individual, as if nobody else existed. But what Jesus is saying is unthinkable to the Jews, to the Jewish leaders.

The Old Testament teaches us to worship and honour God alone, yet Jesus is saying that he must be honoured in the same way as the Father is honoured! This means you either accept him as God Incarnate or you accuse him of blasphemy, which is what the leaders do. When you go to John's other book - the book of Revelation – in chapters four and five, you see Jesus the Lamb, being called before the Throne of the Father, before all the dwellers in heaven, and he is honoured as the Father is honoured. You have all the people who dwell in heaven singing the praises of the One who ransomed us.

The reason why I give you these other references is that you don't get the complete picture in John's Gospel. You need the others to give you the complete picture. They were not in their own lifetime going to see Jesus honoured as the Father is honoured, so, they were going to mock him dreadfully in his dying, because in his dying they thought he was a curse. So, in verse 24 Jesus says, "whoever listens to me now" - he is giving us a lesson, a very important lesson – "whoever listens to my Words and believes in the One who sent me has eternal life. Now, without being brought to judgement he has already passed from death to life. This is incredibly good news. Here we are shown how to go from the level of below to the level of above. We must listen to the Word of God and all that he wants to teach us. Now, to listen doesn't mean just to hear it in your ears. It means you have to receive it in your heart, and when you receive it in your heart, you must put it into practice.

Do you remember chapter 3:19-21? Some people don't want it because their deeds are evil, and so they reject this. So, to believe, is to accept Jesus for who he really is, and to accept the Father who works in tandem with him. We pass from judgement because we have gone from the level of the cosmos up to the level of the kingdom of God. We are walking with God already. We are reigning with him in Christ, and therefore there is no judgement. That is the amazing thing he says. We have passed from death to life, and the judgement that will come to anybody is whether they have accepted or rejected Jesus as the spokesperson of the Father and the One who came to give us life.

So, from verse 25-29, it is really fantastic. I am going to read it all in one piece. "I tell you most solemnly". Jesus says. He says that when he is going to say something incredibly important, "the hour will come. In fact, it is here already, when the dead, meaning the spiritually dead, will hear the voice of the Son of God, and all who hear it will live". So, we had the Samaritan woman coming from death to life. We had the man on the mat, hopefully coming from death to life, 'they will hear the voice of the Son of God, and all who hear it will live'. That means live on the life of above. "For the Father, who is the source of life, has made the Son the source of life". Now, if Jesus is equal with God, of course he is the source of life.... and we see it because that young boy came to life simply on the Word of Jesus.

The Samaritan woman came to life just on the Word of Jesus. The man got off his mat after 38 years just on the Word of Jesus. The father of that young boy came to life spiritually by simply hearing the Word of Jesus and accepting it. This is true in Jesus' ministry and in the time of the church. Those who are dead in sin will be called to life again and brought to the level of above. Now, the way Jesus has done that is he

has created the sacraments for us so that we can come to life again in the sacrament of penance, for example, but also, first of all, in baptism. And why is this? It is because 'the Father, who is the source of life has made the Son to be the source of life'. Therefore, Jesus is the king of the ages; he can grant spiritual life, eternal life, to anyone he wants. He is the Lord. And this is part of the mystery, it is part of what Jesus was saying, that 'the Father goes on working and so do I'; he goes on working with each individual.

At some stage we need to be raised from death to life, and at other stages he is going to give us something incredibly different according to what we need. So, giving life, sustaining life is God's work. Everything comes to us through him, with him and in him. So, verse 27, "for the Father who is the source of life, has made the Son to be the source of life. And because he is the Son of man, he has appointed him supreme judge". Now this is a different subject. Before, when we were told Jesus was to judge, that meant he was to rule. But this time it is in the context of the Son of Man. That is a different matter altogether, because when we are dealing with the Son of Man in the context of the supreme judgement, we are talking about the end of the world. So, after the kingdom of God, after ruling the kingdom of God, we are told here that Jesus **has the last word on anybody's life**.

He is the One who will tell me and you whether you are going to heaven or hell. In the end, it would be very important to be in communion with him if he has the last word on our lives. In the second half of the Gospel, we will realise that **The One** who does have the last Word on our lives and the one who determines our destiny, either in heaven or hell, that this person actually **paid for our salvation with his own life**. This person loves us beyond limits, so there should be no reason why we should lose our salvation if the person who is going to judge us has paid for our sins. Well, we do have the obligation to come into communion with him and **to come into one will with him**.

The reference to the Son of Man again is to Daniel 7:13-14, which I have given to you several times. I will give it to you again to remind you, Daniel said - and he saw this about 500 years before Jesus came on earth- "I gazed into the visions of the night, and I saw coming on the clouds of heaven [that is the realm of above] one like a Son of man". That is Jesus. He came to **The One Of Great Age**, that is God the Father and he was led into His Presence. [That is Revelation, chapters 4-5]. and on him was conferred sovereignty, glory and kingship, and men of all peoples, nations and languages became his servants". [That is Revelation, chapter five. "His sovereignty is an eternal sovereignty which shall never pass away, and his empire will last eternally. It will never be destroyed". It really behoves us to join his kingdom. Daniel also told us in chapter 12: 2-3, that "of those who lie sleeping in the dust - that is, those who are dead - many will rise, some to everlasting life and some to everlasting shame and disgrace". So, if Jesus has been appointed **the supreme judge**, he is the one who will either send you to everlasting life or to everlasting disgrace.

This is not illustrated by John. We are simply told it here, but if you go to Matthew 25 and you get the whole scene of the final judgement; you see it there, where the human race is divided up into sheep and goats, and their destiny is determined by that. Jesus, the Beloved Son, is the one who **rules the everlasting kingdom**. And we learn from Hebrews 12:14 that "nothing unholy or unworthy can ever enter

the presence of God". I say that to try and underline why, Jesus said to the man who had been 38 years ill, you must get rid of your sins if you want to come to the realm of above, if you want to be in communion with God, if you want to be in the everlasting kingdom, if you want to be raised on the final day to glory, then get rid of your sins, because that is the destructive thing in your life.

So, verses 28 and 29, Jesus says, "do not be surprised at this, for the hour is coming when the dead will leave their graves. At the sound of his voice, those who did good will rise again to life, and those who did evil to condemnation" - just as Daniel had told us. Isn't it interesting? The first inkling we are going to get of people actually coming out of their graves will be in chapter eleven when Jesus calls Lazarus out of his tomb. All who have died are waiting for the Son of God to call them from their tombs into this everlasting life. They are all waiting. When we come to chapter eleven, I will show you that if Jesus had not said, "Lazarus, come forth", all the dead would have come forth, because they are all waiting for the Son of God to call them. So, you can see here, even from this very gentle commentary that I'm giving to you, that Amos 3:7 is true, that God never does anything without telling the prophets first. What Jesus is saying here to the Judean leaders, they know that they know all of this. They know it from the scriptures. He is not telling them anything they don't know. The thing that is completely different for them is that he is saying it is all going to be fulfilled in Him, **that 'I am the person**. I am your Messiah; I am your Saviour, but I am a person who is way beyond what you have been expecting. You thought the Messiah was going to be a limited person, a political person who would have an army and he would try and fight Rome. What would that do? I wouldn't accomplish anything. Instead of that, I am giving you an everlasting kingdom. I am giving you everlasting glory. I am giving you everlasting happiness. They couldn't take it.

And so, verse 30, Jesus said, again, "I can do nothing by myself" as a man. He is completely dependent on the Father. "I can only judge as I am told to judge". In other words, everything the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are operating together. They have One Will. "My judging is just because my aim is not to do my own will, but to do the Will of the one who sent me. This is the marvellous way that Jesus actually completes this wonderful testimony that he is giving here. He tells us that the secret of his life is obedience to the Father. It is the hallmark of his life. I am going to literally just read the references for you because I would be here all night! John 6:37 and 40; John 7:16; John 8:16, 26, 28, 29 and 55; John 10:30 and 38. John 12:50 and John 14:31. I will just give you some examples.

"I only do what my Father tells me to do. I only say what my Father tells me to say. The Father and I are one. I only teach what my Father tells me to teach. I only judge the way my Father tells me to judge. I don't do my own will". And then he brings it all to a most wonderful crescendo in chapter 14:31. When he says, "I want the world to know that I love the Father, and therefore I do exactly as my Father tells me". Now this is the headline for the church. God's Will is the essence of everything. It has to be the reason why we live to accomplish God's Will on the earth. The reason why we will do God's Will is because we love him, because that is what Jesus said. 'I want the world to know that I love the Father, and therefore I do exactly as my Father tells me'.

So here we are given the centre of our lives, which is obedience to the Will of God and the motive of our lives, which is that we do it for love of God, that whatever we do, we do it for this motive of love of God.

Jesus has given a headline to the whole church. It is really fantastic. When we move from this point, I don't know if you are moved by what Jesus has said, but the Jewish leaders were moved in a completely different way, in a completely negative way. They said, "you are only testifying on your own behalf. Jesus said to them, "were I to testify on my own behalf, my testimony would not be valid, but there is another witness who can speak on my behalf". Now we come to the final section of chapter five, in which Jesus produces four witnesses. So, you can see that we are in the courtroom scene where you are faced by accusers, so you have to produce witnesses. Jesus produces four witnesses here. And later in the Gospel, John gives us three other witnesses. So altogether he gives us seven witnesses. I am going to finish this section by saying to you that we have a sevenfold claim by Jesus to be equal with God. And John produces seven witnesses to prove it. We will take that up in our next episode. God Bless you.