

Sermon Series: LIFE IN HIS NAME

Sermon Title: Life at Work

Text: John 5:1-30

Discussion Questions:

A central verse in our text today is **John 5:17**—

“Jesus said to them, ‘My Father is always at His work to this very day, and I too am working.’”

This is followed by **verses 19 & 20**—

“Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by Himself; He can do only what He sees His Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows Him all He does. Yes, and He will show Him even greater works that these, so that you will be amazed.”

Let’s begin today by talking a little bit about work.

- What is work? How would you define it?
 - Is work good or bad?
 - Is work hard or easy?
 - How is work viewed in our culture? Is this good or bad?

When it says that God the Father is always at work, and the Son is also working—

- What do you think this means?
- What is the Father’s work?
- Is this work hard? How much effort do the Father and the Son have to put into this work?
- Why do they do this work? What’s the reward or “payment” for this work?

Examination:

- Read **John 5:1-15**
 - We’re five chapters into John’s Gospel, and we’ve seen Jesus change venues (*or locations*) several times - back and forth from Judea (the area around Jerusalem in the south of Israel) to Galilee (*the region surrounding the Sea of Galilee in the north of Israel*). We first find Jesus in John 1 being baptized by John the Baptist in Judea. Jesus then goes north to Cana in Galilee (John 2:1) where He turns the water to wine. He then goes back to Jerusalem (John 2:13), where He evicts the money changers from the Temple, speaks with Nicodemus, and is praised by John the Baptist. Jesus then goes back north (*via Samaria*), where He heals the royal official’s son. Now here, in John 5, Jesus returns to Jerusalem.
 - A good way to think about these two locations is to think about the difference between New York City - and upstate New York. Upstate (*like Galilee*) is rural...out of the way...almost backwoods. New York City (*like Jerusalem*) is where all the action is. If you can make it there - you’ll make it anywhere! Much of Jesus ministry happens out of the spotlight in Galilee. Out of the watchful eye of the Jewish religious leaders. But when Jesus goes to Jerusalem - watch out! You know that’s when sparks will fly.

- Sure enough, here in John 5, Jesus walks past the pool of Bethesda which is right near one of the twelve gates into the old city of Jerusalem (*the Sheep gate - which is on the northern wall right near the Temple...this is where they would bring in the sheep from Bethlehem that were to be slaughtered for sacrifices on the altar*).
 - This miracle feels very different from most. In almost every other case, people are crowding around Jesus - begging Him to heal them. Not so here. It's almost like nobody even knows Jesus is there.
 - Who sees who first (v. 6)? Who talks first? Who instigates all of this?
 - What do you make of the question: "Do you want to get well?"
 - Do you think Jesus knew that healing on the Sabbath would cause some sparks to fly with the Jewish leaders? Do you think this was intentional?
 - The man had NO CLUE who Jesus was (*think about how different this is from all of Jesus' other miracles*) - and then Jesus disappears into the crowd. Why do you think He did this? What was Jesus up to?
 - Clearly, the healing wasn't the end goal of this interaction. Jesus tracks the man down again, and gives him further instructions (v. 14). What was Jesus ultimately wanting for this man?
- Read **John 5:16-30**.
 - Now we get the sparks. What do you think it means that the Jewish leaders began to persecute Jesus (v. 16)? What did this persecution likely entail?
 - As we saw in the opening question, Jesus equates the "work" He is doing with the work that God the Father is doing (v. 17). This seems to really push a button. It quickly goes from the leaders persecuting Jesus - to them deciding to kill Him (v. 18). Why did this escalate the situation so quickly and violently?
 - What do you make of Jesus' response in verses 19-23?
 - What are the rewards or results of hearing and believing Jesus (v. 24)?
 - Who are the "dead" that Jesus speaks about in verse 25?
 - What do you think it means that the Son "has life in Himself" (v. 26)?
 - What "time" is Jesus referring to in verse 28 - when the dead will be raised? Do you think Jesus is describing the rapture and great white throne judgment?
 - Is this why Jesus told the healed man in verse 14 - "Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you"?
 - How do you reconcile verse 22 with verse 30? In verse 22, Jesus tells them that all judgment has been entrusted to the Son. Here in verse 30, Jesus states that by Himself He can do nothing - and judges only as He hears. Does Jesus judge every heart - or does the Father?

Application:

The ultimate work of Jesus isn't to make us healthy - or happy. His work was to go to the cross to make us holy. It was the hardest work any of us can even begin to imagine. Jesus was pushing back the darkness. He was defeating the gates of hell. And He is STILL doing it - in our hearts. Jesus is very clear that judgment is real - and final. Many will rise to be condemned. Some will rise to live. John's purpose in writing this Gospel is that we believe in Jesus - and have life in His name. We need to take to heart the words of Jesus: "Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you."