GCC John Bible Study

Fall 2012

**Authority and Witness of the Son**

John 5

“The needle on a compass and the arrow of a weather vane have something in common. Both indicate the direction of natural powers. In a much broader sense, the books and writers of the Bible point to the person and power of Jesus. Jesus Christ is the Alpha and Omega of the Bible. He is the constant theme of its sacred pages. From first to last, they testify of Him…The Prophets, kings, priests, and preachers all look to Jesus though dimly as through a veil. They stand as the cherubs did over the Ark of the Covenant, desiring to look within and read the mystery of God’s great redemption of man. In the New Testament, our Lord is the one pervading subject. The whole substance of the New Testament is Jesus crucified. Even its closing sentence is bejeweled with the Redeemer’s name. We should always read Scripture in this light. We should consider the Word to be as a window through which we see Jesus. His likeness is dim, but it is still a blessed preparation for when we will see Him face to face. The Bible contains Jesus Christ’s love letters to us. The Scriptures are the swaddling bands of the holy child Jesus. Unroll them and you find your Savior. The essence of the Word of God is Christ.” -Spurgeon

**Discussion Question:** D.L. Moody said, “The scriptures were not given for our information but our transformation.” What does this mean? Do you agree?

**Read John 5:1-30.**

1. Summarize what happens in verses 1-15. What do you learn about Jesus?

The man had been invalid for 38 years. That is a long time. Many times when people live in their hurts, habits, or hangups for a while, they get used to them and don’t want to change or lose all hope.

When it comes to inner healing, people struggle to be healed because of the following reasons:

- May not recognize they have a problem

- May need to give up what is familiar (friends, unhealthy love source, routines).

- May need to forgive others.

- May need to give up a sin that they like. (Jn 5:14 - Jesus tells him to stop sinning. We don’t know his sin or if it was related to his illness but Jesus calls him out on this one.)

- May believe a lie. (I am invalid because God doesn’t love me. I am not worthy to be healed.)

- May take inappropriate responsibility on themselves. (I deserve to be punished for what I did. I was to watch my baby brother when I was only 10 and he pulled boiling water on himself.)

- May need to change a habit or life style they have known all their life (anger, hate).

- May need to give up a defense mechanism (reject you before you reject me).

- May just want to give up and die.

- May take too much work to start a new action plan of healing (ex. Losing weight requires changing our diet and exercise).

John 5:8-13

Jesus was challenging the Pharisees’ and Teachers of the Law’s interpretation of God’s law and their heart for God and God’s people. The writer of John immediately points out in 5:9b that “the day on which this took place was the Sabbath.” And Jews tell the man who was healed, “It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat.” It was not God’s law or the law of Moses, but their traditional interpretation of it that prohibited carrying loads of any kind on the Sabbath. (See Matthew 23:1-4 & Matthew 23:13).

Mark 2:23-28: One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. The Pharisees said to him, “Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?” He answered, “Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions.” Then he said to them**, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”**

Luke 6:6-11: On another Sabbath he went into the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was shriveled. The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal on the Sabbath. But Jesus knew what they were thinking and said to the man with the shriveled hand, “Get up and stand in front of everyone.” So he got up and stood there. Then Jesus said to them, **“I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?**” He looked around at them all, and then said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He did so, and his hand was completely restored. But they were furious and began to discuss with one another what they might do to Jesus.

**Jesus’ understanding of the Sabbath** battled against the Pharisees’ and Teachers of the Law’s interpretation. Jesus has the heart of God and battles for us to have the heart of God. The Mosaic law in Exodus 20:8-10 says, “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God.” That was the core law, but the Pharisees took it a step further or several.

Jesus says, “That on the Sabbath we should do good and save life not do evil and destroy life.” We should not set aside a greater truth for a secondary tradition.

Also, Jesus says, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” He is saying that the Sabbath was given for men to rest on (literally stop doing, stop working) so they can be renewed and focus on God. The Sabbath is given for man to worship God and realign themselves and their PRESSE with God.

Last of all Jesus says, “Worship God not the Sabbath...I am Lord of the Sabbath.” Many times as humans we begin to worship a tradition or habit more than Jesus. We set up an idol that we serve more than Jesus who created it all. Overall Jesus’ heart was God’s heart, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself.”

**Be careful**. In our freedom we should now not say, “I am free to serve myself on the Sabbath and do what I want to do because Jesus said, “The Sabbath was made for man.”” Or to say, “The Sabbath is to do good, so I will not go to church and spend the time cleaning my mother’s house and hanging out with my friends.”

1. What are the accusations the Jews are bringing against Jesus, and how does he respond? What do you learn about the Father and Son relationship?

(See notes above) The Jews were accusing Jesus of doing work on the Sabbath. The meaning of Sabbath in Hebrew is “to cease work, or cease doing”. So in his statement in verse 17 Jesus is making three very profound statements that are shared in verse 18:

1. Jesus was working on the Sabbath. Jesus was not ceasing to work.
2. Jesus was making himself equal to God.
3. Jesus was calling God his Father but also claiming to be the Son of God.
4. The Son can only do what the Father does (5:19)
5. The Father loves the Son and shows him all he does (5:20)
6. The Father raises the dead and gives life, and the Son gives life (5:21).
7. The Father entrusts all judgment to the Son (5:22)
8. If you honor the Son, you honor the Father (5:23)

1. Discuss eternal life and the final judgment (vv. 24-30). Where does eternal life come from, and what does it mean to have eternal life?

Eternal life: See Jn 3:16, Jn 11:25, Jn 17:3, Rm 6:23.

Those who are dead will be judged. “the dead will hear his voice.” Jesus pointing out that He is life. If you believe in his Father and him,

A.) you will not be condemned (Greek word for “Judge” and used in Jn 3:18); and

B.) you will not be dead…

”You will cross from death to life.” (Jn 5:24). So you will not be dead. In John 3, Jesus points this out that those who believe have eternal life but those who don’t believe stand condemned or judged already (Jn 3:18). It seems that the verdict is that men are sinners and love darkness more than life (Jesus and God and life) (Jn 3:19).

Paul points this out in Rm 3:23-24: “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”

Paul also clarifies that those who believe are filled with God’s Spirit and not condemned. Rm 8:1-4: “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.”

In Summary…

In Scripture, we see that all have sinned and are judged according to works, but also there is Grace for those who believe and trust in Jesus.

Judgment in scripture is on the basis of works, while salvation is a gift from God in response to faith.

Jesus only judges by what he hears from Father God (5:30). And Jesus’ judgment is just for 2 reasons:

1. It is his Father he is listening to; and

2. Jesus seeks not to please himself but his father (5:30).

**Read John 5:31-47.**

4. a) Who or what are Jesus’ witnesses? How does each testify to Jesus?  
  
In Jn 5:31-47, Jesus established his credibility by discussing the testimony about him. In Jewish law and culture, a person’s testimony regarding an event or another person was very important. It established their credibility. It was used to make judgments to justify or accuse. Without the proper number of witnesses, which was two to three, the testimony would not stand. Read Deuteronomy 19:15 to understand the Jewish law establishing a testimony: “One witness is not enough to convict a man accused of any crime or offense he may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.”

Jesus’ witnesses:  
1. John the Baptist: Read Jn 1:19-28 for John the Baptist’s testimony about Jesus

2. A.) the work of the Father (5:36) and B.) the Father himself (5:37).

- See Mt 3:17 for the Father’s voice speaking to Jesus and witnessing of who he is.

- See Jn 19:30 when Jesus says, “It is finished.” for finishing the work of the Father on the Cross.

3. Moses:

Jesus knows the Jews are trying to accuse him and kill him - we see that Jn 5:16 & 18. So he accuses them in verse 45. Abraham was the Jews’ father. Moses was the Jews’ great Prophet and Lawgiver. It was Moses who ascended Mt Sinai to receive the 10 commandments and the Torah. Moses is credited with the Pentateuch (the 1st 5 books of the OT).

Moses wrote about Jesus in Genesis 3:15. Some of the most famous are the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. 22), the Passover Lamb (Exodus 12), the Bread from Heaven (Exodus 16) the Smitten Rock (Exodus 17:1-7 and Numbers 20:1-12), and the Bronze Snake (Numbers 21:4-9). But perhaps the clearest is from Deut.18:17-19, where the prophet like Moses is promised.

b) Who does Jesus not accept as a witness but the Jews do? Why does Jesus not accept this witness?

Jesus does not accept men’s praise as a testimony for he knows men’s heart are wicked.

Jesus knew the Jews loved men’s praise (Mt 6:1 & 5) more than God’s praise or truth.

It is very easy for us to listen to men more than God. Which one do you listen to more?

5. Jewish leaders had made the study of scripture their god rather than God himself. How can we ensure we don’t make religious activities our idol, but that we keep our relationship w/ Jesus as the center of our lives?