

W331-JOHN'S_GOSPEL_5.mp3

[00:00:02] This is a recording made in the Chapel of the Open book under the heading of brief or short studies for Young Believers. And this is being recorded in the chapel on Sunday, June the 14th, 1959. We are considering certain chapters and passages in the Gospel, according to John, and today we are giving special attention to the testimony of the fifth chapter of John's Gospel. It has been said that we go to the door more quickly if we have a double knock. Well, those of you who are living in different distant parts, this will not quite apply. But it is strange to say that without any preparation to make these two passages coincide in our Sunday morning service which has preceded this one, we were dealing particularly with the word fulness, and we came to the contrasting passages in Colossians where it says, Let no man judge you with regard to new moons and Sabbaths for the body is of Christ. Now, I have not planned to bring in the Sabbath again. It's not that I've got a bee in my bonnet over that, but here we find in John's Gospel the fifth chapter that the at least the external occasion that led those people in Palestine and Jerusalem to plot the death of Christ arose out of the fact that he didn't keep the Sabbath as they thought he ought to. You remember in reading Isaiah chapter one just now, he called the rulers of Sodom and Gomorrah. He called the rulers of Israel, the rulers of Sodom and Gomorrah.

[00:01:55] And then we found that they were extraordinarily zealous to bring sacrifices and offerings and go to the temple and attend feasts and fasts. And God says, Who's asked this at your hands? He told them that incense should be offered, but he says it's an abomination to me. So we too may slip into a mere external adhesion to some principle of scripture, and yet the whole thing be just simply dead. Well, now, in this fifth chapter, you will find that it's one of these signs which we've already looked at when looking at John as a whole. And this sign balances the sign of the blind man in the ninth chapter. And they are linked together with by 1 or 2 features. They were both in the condition we find them for a long time. This man, the lame man, was in that condition for 38 years. The blind man. We don't know how old he was exactly, but he had been blind from birth. In both cases, they are associated with the pool of Siloam. This is mentioned in chapter five when it speaks about a pool called in the Hebrew tongue, Bethesda having five porches. And in the chapter nine, he is sent go wash in the pool of Siloam. One of the features that we already have noticed is that linking these signs together,

there is an emphasis upon the word work and a parallel emphasis upon the word believe or faith.

[00:03:34] It is opened by our Lord's statement. My meat and my drink is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish the work. And then when it comes to speaking about those who followed him for the loaves and the fishes, he said, This is the work of God. This miracle that's been wrought in order that you may believe on him whom he sent. So all the way through the signs must be remembered as not merely wonderful, miraculous works, but something which have a purpose, a lesson and a point. And this sign, strangely enough, leads on to the great testimony of the second half of John five that we shall have to deal with presently. But you see, when you come to read this story about the man, I won't go into it. I'm asking you to supplement these studies by your own reading. They were disturbed about it because it says in verse nine of chapter five and immediately the man was made whole and took up his bed and walked and on the same day was the Sabbath. Now, if you turn to the ninth chapter, you will find that that is echoed the ninth chapter, and I think it's the 14th verse 16. Verse 14 and 16. Another feature that links these two together. Yes, it is. They brought to the Pharisees him that Aforetime was blind and it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes.

[00:05:20] And then said the fact again. The Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight, and he said unto them he put clay upon mine eyes and I washed and do see. And they've all said some of the Pharisees, this man is not of God because he keepeth not the Sabbath. Is he quite ignoring the fact that this wonderful work had been done in kindness to a blind man? He didn't keep the Sabbath. Others said. How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. And the division is expressed in two ways in this gospel. According to John, at the testimony which our savior gave concerning himself. Ultimately, we read they took up stones to stone him. You see, if what he had done was, according to their view, something which was radically antagonistic to the Word of God. There was the punishment meted out by Jewish law. They took up stones to stone him. And the alternative is not to pass by on the other side and think nothing about it. The alternative is to say we've got to accept his challenge. He has stood for something and it led an unbelieving Thomas at last to fall at his feet and worship him and say, My Lord and my God. Nobody in the Gospels ever

said, Oh, he's just a very nice man, because the things he said were not a blasphemy in their ears or made such a claim that it was a revelation of the mystery of godliness.

[00:07:00] And so we've got a very big subject which we must keep before us as we proceed. Now, a chart has been exhibited at this meeting. It's possible it may not be visible to you. I don't know. That blinding light sometimes is an example of the fact that you can have light in the wrong place. But I can't interfere with the sun. I'm not even like Joshua. But if you can't see it, you see that the the. Division of subject has been suggested in a very simple form the opposition. That is the question of the fact that it was done on the Sabbath is met by the defense. My father Worketh hitherto and I work. The Lord never buys Sabbath into a shibboleth. It was to be a part of a man's worship, and his living is Christian, if I may put it, or his holy living. But it didn't preclude acts of mercy. Do you remember how he challenged her? He said, if you have a sheep that falls into a pit, you don't leave it there until tomorrow. If it happens to be a Sabbath, he said, Don't you remember that, David? On the Sabbath day, he apparently profaned the temple and took of the Showbread. But he was not blamed. The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. The son of man is the Lord even of the Sabbath day.

[00:08:35] So we don't want to harp on this theme, but how could I help myself? If so, he is so dominant that you can be a zealot for the traditions and for all these observances and yet be as far removed from the heart of Christ and the spirit of the of the Scriptures, as were the rulers of Sodom and Gomorrah. Well, then you see, that is a claim. His defense. My father Worketh hitherto, and I work. Oh, they listen to that. And they said, Now this is blasphemy. The verse 17. But Jesus answered them. My father worketh hitherto and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his father making himself equal with God. That is the way in which this. Wonderful. Chapter five is introduced. Now on the chart before you is an analysis. I'll just give it a run through and then pick up in our second part. And if the second part should happen to be a bit a bit longer than the first, that will be all to our advantage because we have much to cram in these passing minutes. You see, it starts off in verse 19 with an extraordinary defence. Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, the son can do nothing of himself. And then at the bottom of this chart, if you can see it in verse 30, it says, I can of mine own self do nothing.

[00:10:16] So it is bounded. It begins at the ends. On that note. That's an extraordinary way of defending the fact that you're equal with God, isn't it, to say you can do nothing? But you. Of course, of course. You've got to go further before you get his complete answer. And then we have in verse 20 this statement and he will show him greater works than these that ye may marvel. Instead of belittling and apologizing, he said, oh, no, you you'll see greater works than these. What are these greater works? Will you look down to the equivalent letter B on the chart to verse 28? Notice the. That is the word Marvel in verse 20. Verse 28. Marvel not at this or do no accident in the structure of Scripture if he got the right one. Marvel not at this for the hour is coming in, which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice. That is a greater work than healing a man who was 38 years a lame. There's the whole scripture points to the essential fact that resurrection, life from the dead is the greatest miracle of all. When we are reading our own epistle to the Ephesians, the prayer is that we may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us. Ward, who believe according to the power which he the mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead. And so we have the Lord making this challenge.

[00:11:51] Then we come back again on our story to two verses 24 and 25 under the letter O No. The verses 21 to 23 under the letter C, we've got A, B, C, we have the emphasis upon equality. Verse 21. For as the father raised up the dead. Even so, the son Quickeneth whom he will. That's equality and it's extended. But we'll come back to that again presently. And then under the next heading, verses 24 and 25, we have no condemnation. Let's read verse 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. Then if you look at the balancing member verse 28, 29, we've read a part of it. I'll go on to verse 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. So we have no condemnation in verse 24. We have a resurrection of damnation in verse 29. And that brings us through in large outline this Chapter five. Well, I think it would be wise if we stopped here for a moment and then went back without any further preface and considered the way in which this claim is emphasized. Starting our next study with the words of Christ verse 19. So we'll switch off for a moment or two and then make our second study immediately afterwards.