

The Gospel of John (5:16-30)

A House Church Outline



1. Praise *(Purpose: To worship God)*

- What are you thankful for this week? *(let the group's secretary write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)*
- Song Service
 - Sing a few songs of praise to God

2. Pray *(Purpose: To carry each others' burdens and to seek the Lord)*

- What challenges did you have this week? *(write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)*
- Go into a season of prayer

3. Review *(Purpose: To learn accountability)*

- Tell us how it went with what you promised to do in last week's meeting? *(e.g. Who did your share your faith with this past week? Who did you minister to? How did actioning your I WILL STATEMENT go?)*
- *Where people have failed to fulfil what they said they would, do not be harsh with them but gently encourage them to try again in the coming week. Give them more support by phoning or joining them in the week.*

4. Give *(Purpose: To be good stewards of our monies)*

- This is the time to return tithes and offerings. If done electronically, kindly ensure that you get the bank account details of your local church from your treasurer. Don't forget to complete an envelope and to send the breakdown to him/her.

5. Discover *(Purpose: To learn to listen to God, and be obedient to His Word)*

- **Notes for the facilitator**

- Read *Desire of Ages (DA)*, p. 204-211
- **“Jesus was brought before the Sanhedrin to answer the charge of Sabbathbreaking. Had the Jews at this time been an independent nation, such a charge would have served their purpose for putting Him to death.** This their subjection to the Romans prevented. The Jews had not the power to inflict capital punishment, and the accusations brought against Christ would have no weight in a Roman court. There were other objects, however, which they hoped to secure. Notwithstanding their efforts to counteract His work, **Christ was gaining, even in Jerusalem, an influence over the people greater than their own. Multitudes who were not interested in the harangues of the rabbis were attracted by His teaching. They could understand His words, and their hearts were warmed and comforted. He spoke of God, not as an avenging judge, but as a tender father, and He revealed the image of God as mirrored in Himself. His words were like balm to the wounded spirit.** Both by His words and by His works of mercy He was breaking the oppressive power of the old traditions and man-made commandments, and presenting the love of God in its exhaustless fullness” (DA 204).
- **“If the priests and rabbis had not interposed, [Christ's] teaching would have wrought such a reformation as this world has never witnessed. But in order to maintain their own power, these leaders determined to break down the influence of Jesus.** His arraignment before the Sanhedrin, and an open condemnation of His teachings, would aid in effecting this; for the people still had great reverence for their religious leaders. Whoever dared to condemn the rabbinical requirements, or attempt to lighten the burdens they had brought upon the people, was regarded as guilty, not only of blasphemy, but of treason. On this ground the rabbis hoped to excite suspicion of Christ. They represented Him as trying to overthrow the established customs, thus

- causing division among the people, and preparing the way for complete subjugation by the Romans” (DA 205).
- “Jesus had come to ‘magnify the law, and make it honorable’ **He had come to free the Sabbath from those burdensome requirements that had made it a curse instead of a blessing. For this reason He had chosen the Sabbath upon which to perform the act of healing at Bethesda.** He could have healed the sick man as well on any other day of the week; or He might simply have cured him, without bidding him bear away his bed. But this would not have given Him the opportunity He desired. A wise purpose underlay every act of Christ's life on earth. Everything He did was important in itself and in its teaching. **Among the afflicted ones at the pool He selected the worst case upon whom to exercise His healing power, and bade the man carry his bed through the city in order to publish the great work that had been wrought upon him. This would raise the question of what it was lawful to do on the Sabbath, and would open the way for Him to denounce the restrictions of the Jews in regard to the Lord's day, and to declare their traditions void”** (DA 206).
 - Vs 16: “Jesus stated to them that the work of relieving the afflicted was in harmony with the Sabbath law. It was in harmony with the work of God's angels, who are ever descending and ascending between heaven and earth to minister to suffering humanity. Jesus declared, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” All days are God's, in which to carry out His plans for the human race. **If the Jews’ interpretation of the law was correct, then Jehovah was at fault, whose work has quickened and upheld every living thing since first He laid the foundations of the earth; then He who pronounced His work good, and instituted the Sabbath to commemorate its completion, must put a period to His labor, and stop the never-ending routine of the universe”** (DA 206).
 - “Should God forbid the sun to perform its office upon the Sabbath, cut off its genial rays from warming the earth and nourishing vegetation? Must the system of worlds stand still through that holy day? Should He command the brooks to stay from watering the fields and forests, and bid the waves of the sea still their ceaseless ebbing and flowing? Must the wheat and corn stop growing, and the ripening cluster defer its purple bloom? Must the trees and flowers put forth no bud nor blossom on the Sabbath?” (DA 206).
 - “In such a case, men would miss the fruits of the earth, and the blessings that make life desirable. Nature must continue her unvarying course. **God could not for a moment stay His hand, or man would faint and die. And man also has a work to perform on this day. The necessities of life must be attended to, the sick must be cared for, the wants of the needy must be supplied. He will not be held guiltless who neglects to relieve suffering on the Sabbath. God's holy rest day was made for man, and acts of mercy are in perfect harmony with its intent.** God does not desire His creatures to suffer an hour's pain that may be relieved upon the Sabbath or any other day” (DA 207).
 - “The Sabbath is not intended to be a period of useless inactivity. The law forbids secular labor on the rest day of the Lord; **the toil that gains a livelihood must cease;** no labor for worldly pleasure or profit is lawful upon that day; but as God ceased His labor of creating, and rested **upon the Sabbath** and blessed it, so **man is to leave the occupations of his daily life, and devote those sacred hours to healthful rest, to worship, and to holy deeds.** The work of Christ in healing the sick was in perfect accord with the law. It honored the Sabbath” (DA 207).
 - Vs 18: “Jesus claimed equal rights with God in doing a work equally sacred, and of the same character with that which engaged the Father in heaven.... The whole nation of the Jews called God their Father, therefore they would not have been so enraged if Christ had represented Himself as standing in the same relation to God. But they accused Him of blasphemy, showing that **they understood Him as making this claim in the highest sense”** (DA 207).

- Vs 19: “Jesus repelled the charge of blasphemy. My authority, He said, for doing the work of which you accuse Me, is that I am the Son of God, one with Him in nature, in will, and in purpose. In all His works of creation and providence, I co-operate with God. ‘The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do.’ **The priests and rabbis were taking the Son of God to task for the very work He had been sent into the world to do.** By their sins they had separated themselves from God, and in their pride were moving independently of Him. **They felt sufficient in themselves for all things, and realized no need of a higher wisdom to direct their acts. But the Son of God was surrendered to the Father's will, and dependent upon His power. So utterly was Christ emptied of self that He made no plans for Himself. He accepted God's plans for Him, and day by day the Father unfolded His plans.** So should we depend upon God, that our lives may be the simple outworking of His will” (DA 208).
- Vs 19-21: “**The Sadducees held that there would be no resurrection of the body; but Jesus tells them that one of the greatest works of His Father is raising the dead, and that He Himself has power to do the same work.** ‘The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.’ The Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the dead. Christ declares that even now the power which gives life to the dead is among them, and they are to behold its manifestation. This same resurrection power is that which gives life to the soul ‘dead in trespasses and sins.’ Ephesians 2:1” (DA 209).
- Vs 22: “**The priests and rulers had set themselves up as judges to condemn Christ's work, but He declared Himself their judge, and the judge of all the earth.** The world has been committed to Christ, and through Him has come every blessing from God to the fallen race. He was the Redeemer before as after His incarnation. As soon as there was sin, there was a Saviour. He has given light and life to all, and according to the measure of light given, each is to be judged” (DA 210).
- Vs 25: ‘...and now is/ ...and has now come’: Jesus seems to be referring back to vs 24, of crossing over from death to life. In other words, He was already resurrecting the spiritually dead, and will one day resurrect the literal dead as well.
- Vs 27: “Because He has tasted the very dregs of human affliction and temptation, and understands the frailties and sins of men; because in our behalf He has victoriously withstood the temptations of Satan, and will deal justly and tenderly with the souls that His own blood has been poured out to save,—because of this, the Son of man is appointed to execute the judgment” (DA 210).
- Vs 28-29: “**This assurance of the future life was that for which Israel had so long waited, and which they had hoped to receive at the Messiah's advent. The only light that can lighten the gloom of the grave was shining upon them.** But self-will is blind. Jesus had violated the traditions of the rabbis, and disregarded their authority, and they would not believe” (DA 211).
- “The time, the place, the occasion, the intensity of feeling that pervaded the assembly, all combined to make the words of Jesus before the Sanhedrin the more impressive. **The highest religious authorities of the nation were seeking the life of Him who declared Himself the restorer of Israel. The Lord of the Sabbath was arraigned before an earthly tribunal to answer the charge of breaking the Sabbath law.** When He so fearlessly declared His mission, His judges looked upon Him with astonishment and rage; but His words were unanswerable. They could not condemn Him. He denied the right of the priests and rabbis to question Him, or to interfere with His work. They were invested with no such authority.” (DA 211).
- “**Instead of apologizing for the act of which they complained, or explaining His purpose in doing it, Jesus turned upon the rulers, and the accused became the accuser. He rebuked them for the hardness of their hearts, and their ignorance of the Scriptures.** He declared that they had rejected the word of God, inasmuch as they had

rejected Him whom God had sent. 'Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of Me.' John 5:39, R. V. In every page, whether history, or precept, or prophecy, the Old Testament Scriptures are irradiated with the glory of the Son of God" (DA 211).

- *Read John 5:16-30. Preferably let one person read it. Let everyone then put down their Bibles and get the group to reconstruct the passage in their own words. This teaches the group to be careful in quotation Scripture correctly and to use it as the basis of their discussions.*
- **Discussion Questions** (use only a few). *The notes in italics after some of the questions below are for the facilitator, and not to be read out to the group.*
 - In this passage, Jesus was brought before the Sanhedrin on the charge of Sabbath breaking? In which way was Jesus a law breaker?
 - How does the Father work every day, including Sabbaths, to bless mankind? How was Jesus' work similar to the Father's? (ask one question at a time)
 - Why do you think Jesus deliberately provoked the Jews by healing the paralytic on the Sabbath instead of some other day?
 - What does Jesus say about his ability to act independently from the Father and accomplish His own will (vs 19)? How does this statement bear testimony about who Jesus is and what he has come to do? What lesson is there in this for the Christian? (*ask one question at a time*)
 - Verses like 19 and 30 are used by some people to prove that Jesus was subordinate to God, and therefore could not be divine. How do you understand these verses?
 - Identify the verses in today's passage that prove Jesus' divinity? Elaborate.
 - What does the phrase in vs 25 mean: '...and has now come'? How is conversion like a spiritual resurrection? What is the good news of both Jesus' spiritual and physical resurrections? (*ask one question at a time*)
 - While rules have their place in the Christian experience, how can a rules-based religion (legalism) make us cold and indifferent to the needs of others (just the Sanhedrin was when the paralytic was healed)?
 - What does this passage tell us about God?
 - What does it tell us about people?
 - Is there an invitation, warning, promise or command in this passage? Elaborate.
- **Application Questions** (select a few depending on your time. *One has to be the I WILL STATEMENT*)
 - Jesus lived to reflect His Father in every aspect of life. In what practical way would you like to reflect the Father's character to the world this week?
 - Have you experienced a spiritual resurrection (conversion)? If so, briefly share how God raised you from spiritual death to life?
 - Vs 21 asserts that Jesus perfectly comprehended the Father's will (i.e. the Father shows the Son all He does). Do you feel that you know God's will for your life at the moment? Elaborate. If you are not sure, how do you think you could find what His will is for you? (*ask one question at a time*)
 - What stood out for you in the passage today, that you'd like to apply in your own life?
 - I WILL STATEMENT: Formulate an I will statement in response to what you have discovered in the Word. Let the group's secretary also record these in an A4 notebook. Ensure that everyone gets a chance to give their I WILL STATEMENT. You have to be specific. E.g. "I want to give my neighbour a glimpse of the Father, by sharing some of the extra vegetables from my garden."

6. Share (Purpose: To be witnesses of our faith)

- Do you have anyone you could share today's lesson with this week? *Be specific.*

7. Closing prayer