

THE SON GIVES ETERNAL LIFE

John 5:16-30

Key Verse: 5:24

"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."

Thank God that he has given us the opportunity to study John's gospel. The purpose of John's gospel is manifested in John 20:31. It says, "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." John's gospel also teaches us the heart of God in John 3:16. It says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John wrote his gospel to prove through a deductive method that Jesus is God, and that Jesus gives eternal life when we hear his word and believe. In their wretchedness, fallen men are piercing darts into the heart of God. But God wants them not to perish, but to have eternal life. Last Sunday we studied that Jesus healed a 38-year paralytic on the Sabbath day. Where there was a work of God, there was a work of Satan. Today the Jews accuse Jesus of violating the Sabbath law by healing the paralytic. Jesus explains why he healed him, and who he really is. Finally, Jesus tells them that if they are right with God, they will have eternal life; if they are not right with God, they will not escape eternal condemnation. May God bless us to hear his word and believe in him so that we may have eternal life.

I. Jesus gives eternal life to men (16-23)

First, the Jews' persecutions (16). Look at verse 16. "So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him." It was time for the Jews to support Jesus' healing ministry. But they immediately persecuted Jesus out of their jealousy and political intuition. The Jews are the descendants of Abraham, and they are the chosen people. Therefore, they must do what God wants them to do. But they lost their mission as the chosen people. When they lost their mission, they became extremely legalistic. For example, in light of Jewish Sabbath law, the Jews thought that carrying more than one ounce of something in one's pocket was regarded as working on the Sabbath. In this way, they accused Jesus of violating the Sabbath law by healing a 38-year paralytic on the Sabbath. The Jews persecuted Jesus because they did not know the true concept of the Sabbath. In contemporary terms, the meaning of the Sabbath is Sunday worship service. Why do people say "Sunday worship service" instead of saying "Sunday worship"? It is because we must worship God with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our strength as a matter of first importance (Dt 6:5). Personal Bible study is for the sake of one's spiritual welfare. So it is for one's own benefit. But worshiping God on the Sabbath is to praise him and thank him and remember all his goodness until we can say, "God is good" (Ps 106:1). Therefore, worshiping God is for the glory of God.

Why do we put the word "service" after "worship" and call it "Sunday worship service"? The true meaning of worship service is praising God

for his goodness, and at the same time, serving the flock of God's sheep on the Sabbath in many ways. So we call it "Sunday worship service" so that our worship and service may go together. One of our missionaries picked up an old woman who lived 30 miles away from our church, in order to let her attend our Sunday worship service. He had to go to her house and bring her here, and after worship service he had to take her back home. So he had to drive 120 miles each Sunday. The missionary had done this picking up ministry for four years without fail. But when we taught the woman how to get a driver's license and how to drive, she stopped coming to our worship service. Her theory was that she did not want to burn her own gas. But the missionary didn't complain at all. He thanked God for the privilege of working hard for the glory of God on the Sabbath.

We can see another life-giving work of God in Jesus' ministry. Once Jesus healed a crippled woman who was bent over for 18 years (Lk 13:10-13). To a woman, a marriage dream is predetermined. Therefore, all women, including cripples, live in a marriage fantasy. She, too, must have had a marriage dream. But because her back was bent over, she was very fatalistic about her marriage. Jesus participated in her sorrowful marriage problem and healed her back on the Sabbath day. Then the Jews depreciated Jesus' healing work on the Sabbath day and persecuted him. Jesus answered in Luke 13:15-16: "You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?" In this, Jesus taught them the true meaning of the Sabbath. But the Jews' heads were sparkling with hatred towards Jesus. With their legalistic system they oppressed people and maintained their dignity and savings. These Jews came to Jesus and persecuted him on the pretext of his working on the Sabbath by healing a woman whose back was bent over for 18 years. Receiving much persecution, Jesus gave the crippled woman a new life. Jesus is the giver of new life.

Second, Jesus does what God assigned him to do (17-18). Jesus taught them God's truth. Look at verse 17. "Jesus said to them, 'My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.'" In this verse Jesus explains that he himself is participating in the work of God. As we know well, God's work is a labor of love and life-giving work. His work is that no one perish but have eternal life. As soon as they heard the meaning of God's work, they were furiously angry and all the more they wanted to kill Jesus. In addition, they wanted to kill Jesus because he told them that God is "my Father" in verse 17. How wonderful it is that we can have a right relationship with God! How wonderful it is to call God "Our Father!" "Abba, Father" is the foundation of Christianity, not blasphemy (Ro 8:15). This is the reason Jesus taught them in the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name" (Mt 6:9).

Third, Jesus gives man life (19-23). Jesus assured the Jews that he does what God assigned him to do. And whatever God does, he also does. It is because the Father sent him to this world to do the work of God (19-21). In verse 21 Jesus tells them that he gives men life. It is true that Jesus gives men life. There are two kinds of life, physical life and eternal life. In the time of technology, most people are

living in material abundance. People enjoy bits and pieces of comfort and convenience and can make money according to their ability. So they should be happy. Strangely, instead of being happy there are many fatalistic people. Young people must be full of vision and dreams in their hearts. They must read many books staying up many nights, in order to know wide and deep humanity and the true meaning of man's existence. Above all, they must struggle to know God in heaven, because the world is made of three dimensions.

But the advancement of technology only brought relativism, because it caused people to lose the absolutes of God. When they lost the absolutes of God, they became relativistic and began to have split personalities. In their easy-going lifestyle men became only flesh, losing their spirit--which is everything to man (Jn 6:63). This tendency has made people lazy. Laziness has produced all kinds of wretchedness. There is a young man who is smart. But he is only developing a habit of procrastination. As a result, he is very fatalistic. There is a pretty young lady who thought she was very beautiful. But her parents broke up. Since then, she became very fatalistic because she lost her sweet home. She cried and cried for a decade. But Jesus gave her a new life. Now she does not cry, but smile a lot with her prince. There is a young student who says, "I have no meaning of life." In the sight of God, his life is full of meaning because he is a student prince and a man of dream and he can live for the glory of God and be a blessing to others after his study. A miracle has happened. Since he began to study the Bible he felt a new life in his soul. Now he is full of meaning of life and vision.

Let me tell you another Bible story. Jesus once saw a woman caught in the very act of adultery and brought to him by the Jews. The Jews asked him whether she was guilty or not. At that time, a woman who was caught in adultery was stoned to death. But Jesus said, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her" (Jn 8:7). In this way, Jesus gave her a new life. Once there was a blind man. He called out, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" (Mk 10:47) Jesus stopped and healed his eyes and gave him a new life. Our Lord Jesus Christ gave a new life to the blind man: Our Lord Jesus Christ is the giver of a new life to those who come to him.

Let's read verses 22 and 23. "Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him." Jesus not only gives life to men, but also he judges those who do not honor Jesus as the Son of God and those who do not honor the Father who sent him. The Jews saw with their eyes that Jesus was doing the work of God but did not honor him as the Son of God. In this way, they invited judgment upon themselves. When men love the darkness and hate God, they invite eternal condemnation upon themselves (Jn 3:19,20). As the Bible says, "Jesus is the Judge." Jesus is the standard of man's life. Men's destiny is determined by how they see Jesus: If they see him as the Son of God, they have eternal life; if they reject him, they invite eternal condemnation upon themselves.

II. The way of salvation (24-30)

First, those who hear the word of God (24-27). Look at verse 24. "I

tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life." This verse teaches us that without hearing the word of God, no one can believe. Romans 10:14 says, "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?" In the past, many saints wanted to know God. But they did not hear the word of God. So all of them died after saying that God is a kind of Supreme Being.

The first part of John 5:24 says that those who hear the word of God and believe have eternal life. The way of salvation is very simple. Throughout history, all men were looking for God Almighty. But because they did not hear the word of God, they lived sorrowfully and died of sorrow. In light of history, hearing the word of God is very important. But fallen men are engrossed with their sinful desires. They hear the word of God so many times, some more than 30 years. But they never accept the word of God. If we are going to be saved, we must hear the word of God. The verb "hear" is the same as "accept." Next we must believe it. Then God gives us eternal life at the present.

Eternal life begins when we hear the word of God and believe. Firstly, those who have eternal life can have the life of God in them at the present (Jn 11:25). Eternal life does not come after death; those who believe have eternal life now, and they have no fear of death. Secondly, when we hear the word of God and believe, we will not be condemned in the future: We are free from experiencing the judgment of God in our daily life (2Cor 5:10). Thirdly, those who hear the word of God and believe have crossed over from death to life as a matter of past event. Many are busy doing something to make themselves forget about the fear of death. But they are slaves of death because they are in the bondage of sin and death, and because they are under the torment of the power of death. Those who hear his word and believe have no fear of death, because they crossed over from death to life by hearing and believing his word. Therefore, to have eternal life is so important in our life in the world, because eternal life supplies God's life to us daily.

Second, do not be amazed at this (28-29). Those who are bound by attachment to the world will be amazed to hear about eternal life, and especially, eternal condemnation. But the most important thing is hearing and believing in the Son's voice. The second part of verses 28 and verse 29 says, "...when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out--those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned." This is a metaphysical expression about the power of God's word. It doesn't necessarily mean that those who are in their graves will come out by hearing his voice. When a man dies, his eternal being goes to heaven and his physical body goes back to the dust of the ground. Bodily resurrection was expressed to explain that after the resurrection, men will have the likeness of Jesus (1Cor 15:49). It was also to emphasize the certainty of the resurrection. God is Spirit, and after death we will be God's children as immortal spiritual beings. This verse also implies the concept of the millennium. The millennium is the idea that after the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, Jesus will rule 1,000 years on the earth. The early Christians who waited for the Second Coming of

Jesus thought that he would come today or tomorrow. But the Second Coming of Jesus did not happen as they had expected. In the time of Augustine, the theory of the millennium was changed into the amillennium, and this was largely accepted.

Third, man's glorious purpose (29-30). Look at verse 29. "...and come out--those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned." In this verse, the meaning of human existence is explicitly explained. The meaning of human life is to live for the glory of God (1Cor 10:31). Those who have done good will rise to live forever, but those who have done evil will rise to be condemned. This verse explains not only the meaning of human existence, but also the sovereignty of God. This idea is well explained in Romans 2:7,8. It says, "To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger." The Sovereign God will reward those who have done good with eternal life and the kingdom of God, but those who have done evil will be condemned forever. We just do many evil things without any thought of God. It is sheer ignorance. We must live with the fear of God, remembering his words.

In this part, we learned that we must overcome our fallen mentality not to hear God's word. We must hear and believe God's word, even one word of God. May God bless you to overcome yourself and hear God's word and believe, and enjoy eternal life at the present.