

The Book of John - 30

Introduction - We are transitioning in this passage from the impotent man's healing to the conflict between the Lord and the Jews. In the last lesson, we understood that the Lord displayed His **authority** by **this third sign**. When we speak of authority, we are speaking of the **ability to act** and the **right to act**.

Webster defines authority as "1. Legal power, or a right to command or to act; as the authority of a prince over subjects, and of parents over children. Power; rule; sway."



We may think about **Matthew 28:18–20** *"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All **power** is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."* The word 'power' in this verse is the Greek word 'ἐξουσία' (exousia), which means authority. It is the same word we find in **Jude 25**. **Jude 25** says, *"to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, **dominion and power**, both now and ever. Amen."* I cannot stress to you how important it is to understand the right authority in the life of a Christian. In **John 5**, the Lord displays His authority over the **physical** and **the spiritual**. In this passage, we see:

1. The **Man's** Understanding of Authority
2. The **Jew's** Misunderstanding of Authority
3. The **Lord's Words** Concerning His Authority.

We stated in the last lesson that this man who was healed may not have had a theology degree, but He had **a personal encounter** with the Savior! No amount of knowledge can replace an intimate relationship and fellowship with the Lord. Remember in **verse 11** the man's statement, *"He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk."* It is evident to Him that the Lord possessed **a higher authority** than the religious crowd. "The true corrective **to traditionalism and formalism** is still the same. We must ever get back **from** the tradition of men and the rudiments of the world to Christ and His inspired word." And in this, we see the Healed Impotent Man's Understanding of Authority.

Verse 12 tells us that the religionists wanted to know **who** this higher authority was. **John 5:12** *"12 Then asked they him, **What man** is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?"*

We could rightly ask ourselves, Who has authority in our Christian lives? Where does

our authority come from in the local church? Understanding **the Lord has authority in every part of our lives** clears up a lot of issues.

When we think about the **three institutions** God has given: the family, the government, and the church, God has given delegated authority in each, **but the authority comes from Him**. And therefore, in all stations of life to Him, we are accountable.

Colossians 3:17 *“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”*

Not only do we see this man’s understanding of authority, but we also see **his ignorance**. **John 5:13** *“13 And he that was healed **wist not who it was**: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place.”* This man **wist not who it was**...you and me fully know who it is that bought us with a price. The Bible tells us in **1 Corinthians 6:20** *“20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”*

After this dispute with the man, the Bible tells us in **verse 14**, *“14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.”*

Death and sickness are certainly a sober reminder of **the terrible results of sin**. The devastating effects of sin indeed cannot be fully measured by man. Sin entered into the world and has wrought terrible, devastating effects. No statistic could fully account for it. We have only to look into the Scripture to understand the end result is death. **Romans 6:23** says, *“23 For the wages of sin is death; ...”*

We can rejoice that the Lord, by His Word and His Spirit, speaks to us about our sins. If it were up to us, we would deceive ourselves, for the Bible tells us in **Jeremiah 17:9–10**, *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.”*

Following this encounter, the **healed man testified** to the same group that it was Jesus. In **verse 15**, *“15 The man departed, and told the Jews **that it was Jesus**, which had made him whole.”* **He states it was Jesus who made him whole**. He did not say, “Jesus was the one who made me take up my bed and walk,” but rather, Jesus was the one who made me whole.

Merrill Tenney said, “The man told the religionists who had healed him. He did not do this to bring harm to Jesus. He thought the religionists should know and would want to benefit from knowing Jesus personally.” What was their reaction to this light, this testimony? Verse 16 tells us.

John 5:16 *“16 And therefore **did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.**”*

Why did they want to persecute and slay Him? Because, according to them, He had broken the Sabbath. And in this, we see **the Jew's misunderstanding of authority.** Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word, spoke according to **His word**, which they claimed He broke. The Lord is the lawgiver. The Lord had given the very law they believed they were defending. Here and in other encounters, the Lord corrected their false interpretation. "To the religious leaders, Jesus was *the man who broke the Sabbath*. To the healed man, Jesus was *He who made me well*." (Phillips) It reminds me of the New Testament passage in **II Corinthians 2:16** which states, "*To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life.*" There is no middle ground with the Lord. These refused the light they were given by the sign and the testimony of this healed man. Some might think I can have Christ and be friends with the world, but **it will not work**. Some might think I may have Jesus and keep my form of religion, but **that will not work either**.

The conversation then shifts to the Lord Himself. The response is recorded for us in **verse 17. John 5:17** "*But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*"

Here begins **the Lord's Words On His Authority**. In this first place, He claims **His unity with His Father**. "It is significant that in the Fourth Gospel, Jesus said either "my Father" or "your Father," but never "our Father." (Tenney) As the Lord begins to speak of His authority, He also emphatically declares who He is. This matter of Christ's identity is so important. It is fundamental to Salvation and Christianity.

Jesus Christ is **God**. He is the **second person of the Tri-unity of God**. Some cults and heretical "Christian" religions wrongfully assert that we are Tri-theists, that is, that we believe in three Gods. That is not correct; we believe in a Triune God.

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit; three persons-One God.

1 John 5:7 "*7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.*"

What the Jews call the Shema (Hebrew for hear) begins with **Deuteronomy 6:4**, which states, "*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord:*"

And while the Jewish interpretation of this speaks against polytheism and idolatry, this verse, when taken with the entire testimony of Scripture, speaks definitely of the triunity of God. In other words, if God the Father is God, and Jesus claimed to be God, and the Holy Spirit, by His work and agency, claims deity, this would insist on the Tri-Unity of God. All over the Scriptures, and especially in the book of John, you will find that Jesus claimed to be God because He is God. Not only is this the correct interpretation, but we have recorded for us that the Jews took it in the same light.

John 10:30, for example, is a claim to unity and equality with God the Father, where the Lord states, "I and my Father are one." (Literally, I am my Father are of the same power and essence.)

In our passage, Jesus claims unity and equality with God the Father.

There are several words I want you to notice in this verse.

The **first** is that Jesus says, “My Father...” He did not state ‘our father’ or the father, but rather My Father.

Then, **secondly**, the Lord says, “*My Father worketh hitherto...*”—which means works continually or unceasingly. The Lord asserts that God has been working and continues to work, irrespective of the Sabbath given to the Jews.

Thirdly, He states, “*...and I work.*” In other words, I will not cease this work because I and my Father are one... what My Father does, I do.

Maybe we should take up this motto as well. Although we cannot state it in the same peculiar sense in which the Lord does, being part of the family of God, perhaps we should declare that My Father works and therefore I work. My Lord Jesus works; therefore, I work.

This is made clear in **verse 19. John 5:19** “*Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.*”

And in case we are scratching our heads to understand what the Lord is claiming, notice the response in **verse 18. John 5:18** “*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.*”

The Lord describes His oneness with the Father in the subsequent verses. He also describes His unfettered fellowship and communion with God the Father.

Warren Wiersbe stated this, [In **verses 16-18** Jesus] “simply replied that He was **doing only what His Father was doing!** God’s Sabbath rest had been broken by man’s sin (see Gen. 3); and ever since the fall of man, God has been seeking lost sinners and saving them. But when Jesus said “My Father” instead of the usual “our Father,” used by the Jews, He claimed to be equal with God.”

In the remaining dialogue of the Lord recorded here for us, there are three claims that the Lord made:

1. **Vs. 19-23** He claims to be equal with God the Father.
2. **Vs. 24-29** He claimed to have authority to raise the dead.
3. **Vs. 30-47** He claimed His witnesses to His deity were valid.