

In Chapter 5 of John's Gospel – Jesus miraculously heals a man who has been paralyzed for 38 years, and gives him the ability to walk. He does this on the Sabbath Day, breaking the Jewish laws concerning the Sabbath. Let's see what happens...

15-16 - The Jewish leaders saw both a mighty miracle of healing and a broken rule. They seemed to throw the miracle aside as they focused their attention on the broken rule, perhaps because the rule was more important to them than the miracle. God is prepared to work in our lives, but perhaps we shut out his miracles by limiting our views about how God works.

17-18 – This verse is saying a lot! If God stopped every kind of work on the Sabbath, nature would fall into chaos, would it not? And, sin would overrun the world. Genesis 2:2 says that God rested on the seventh day, but God never stops doing good. Jesus wanted to teach that when the opportunity to do good presents itself, it should not be ignored, even on the Sabbath. We can perhaps become so rigid with rules that we neglect to do good when given the opportunity.

Here, Jesus was also identifying himself with God, his Father, and, there could be no doubt as to his claim to be God. Jesus does not leave us the option to believe in God while ignoring God's Son. The Pharisees also called God their Father, but they realized Jesus was claiming a unique relationship with him. In response to Jesus' claim, the Pharisees had two choices: to believe him, or to accuse him of blasphemy. Let's see what happened...

19-23 - Because of his unity with God, Jesus lived as God wanted him to live. Because of our identification with Jesus, we must honor him and

live as he wants us to live. The questions “What would Jesus do?” and “What would Jesus have me do?” may help us make the right choices.

How many of you continue to wear your Bethel UMC bracelet that asks, “What are you doing for Jesus?” My bracelet is a good reminder for me to live my life in a way that honors God – just as Jesus did. Additional bracelets are available in the Narthex if you did not receive one.

24 - “Eternal life” — or, living forever with God—begins when you accept Jesus Christ as Savior. At that moment, new life begins in you. It is a completed transaction. You still will face physical death, but as a believer, when Christ returns again, your body will be resurrected to live with Him forever.

25 - In saying that the dead will hear his voice, Jesus was talking about the spiritually dead who hear, understand, and accept him. Those who accept Jesus, the Word, have eternal life. Jesus was also talking about the physically dead. He raised several dead people while he was on earth, and at his second coming, all will stand in judgment before him.

26-27 – Being God in human form, Jesus refers to himself as the “Son of Man.” While in human flesh, Jesus never sinned against God the Father, and he willingly gave his life as the sacrifice that atones for all sin. Therefore, Jesus is the only one qualified to judge all human beings.

28-29 – When Jesus returns, Revelation 20 tells us that all persons who have ever lived will receive a spiritual body. Those trusting in Christ will receive glorified spiritual bodies like the risen Christ, and they will have eternal life. Those not trusting in Christ will live under Christ’s reign on the earth for the millennium, or 1000 years, and then be judged by God

at the Great White Throne Judgment, which comes at the end of Christ's Thousand Year reign.

Those who have placed their trust in Christ, and submitted to his authority as King and Lord of all, will then receive glorification and eternal life. Those who rebel against Christ will be destroyed in the Lake of Fire.

30-33 - Jesus claimed to be equal with God (5:18), to give eternal life (5:24), to be the source of life (5:26), and to judge sin (5:27). These statements make it clear that Jesus was claiming to be divine—an almost unbelievable claim, but one that was supported by another witness, John the Baptist.

34-40 - The religious leaders knew what the Bible said. However, they failed to apply its words to their lives. They knew the teachings of the Scriptures, but they failed to see the Messiah, to whom the Scriptures pointed. They knew the rules, but seemed to miss the Savior. Entrenched in their own religious system, they refused to let the Son of God change their lives. God warns us against becoming so involved in “religion” that we miss Christ altogether.

41-44 - Whose praise do you seek? The religious leaders enjoyed great prestige in Israel, but their stamp of approval meant nothing to Jesus. He was concerned about God's approval. And this is a good principle for each of us. If even the highest officials in the world approve of our actions and God does not, we should be concerned. If God approves of our actions, even when others don't; we can be content and have peace.

45-47 - The Pharisees prided themselves on being the true followers of their ancestor Moses. In fact, they tried to follow every one of his laws to the letter, and they even added some of their own. Jesus' warning that Moses would accuse them stung them to fury. Moses had written about Jesus in the Old Testament Books of Genesis, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, which by the way, contained the laws the Pharisees lived by. And yet, these same religious leaders refused to believe Jesus when he came.