

John 5:25-29

Great **people** are asked to do great **things**. If you're a great **quarterback**, the coach doesn't ask you to win the local **flag** football contest. He expects you to lead your team to victory in the biggest game of all - the **Super Bowl**. If you're a great **doctor**, the medical profession doesn't ask you to write out prescriptions for the **sniffles**. They expect you to help find cures for those who are suffering from **life-threatening** diseases - things like **cancer**. Great **people** are asked to do great **things**. And when it comes to great **people**, there is no one greater than **Jesus**. Jesus is God's one and only **Son** - equal to the heavenly **Father** in all things. And because Jesus is **so great**, the Father has assigned great things for Him to **do**. You can probably **guess** that Jesus hasn't been assigned to pay your **utility** bills, or to end the **drama** in your teenager daughter's life. No, His work is far more **important**. His work is to see to it that each one of us can spend an eternity with God in **heaven**. In order for that to happen, Jesus needs to **do** some things - things that **only He** is capable of doing. He must **destroy** the power of **sin**, **death**, and **Satan**. That makes it possible for us to **rise** from the dead. Then, as we heard in our worship service **last week**, we will be **judged** by Jesus on the Last Day, and will receive a verdict of **not guilty**. And finally, having received that verdict, we will be able to **live** in the presence of God for all eternity. And it's all because of our **Savior**. In all the **battles** against the forces of evil which need to be **fought**, we receive the **Victory Through Jesus**.

As we look at our text for today, it's important to note that Jesus had been speaking to a pretty **tough** crowd. Earlier in the day He had healed a man who had been an **invalid** for **38 years**. But because the healing took place on the **Sabbath** day, the Jewish leaders got all bent out of shape - with **Jesus**, because He had **healed** on the Sabbath, and with the **man** who had been **healed**, because he was carrying his **mat** on the Sabbath, which is what Jesus had **told** him to do. When they **confronted** Jesus He responded by saying that His **Father** works **every day**, and so does **He**, God's **Son**. That **really** angered the Jews, but Jesus didn't back down. He simply went on to say, *"I tell you the truth, the **Son** can do nothing by **himself**; he can do only what he sees his **Father** doing, because whatever the **Father** does the **Son** also does. For the Father **loves** the Son and shows him **all** he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even **greater** things than these."*

Jesus **is** the eternal Son of God - the one who was with the Father in all **eternity**, and who even took part in the **creation** of the world. This is the Son whom the Father sent **into** that creation, to become fully **human**. The relationship between Jesus and His Father is a very **special** one. Everything He does **matches**

what His **Father** does. But there is even **more** to that relationship, which became evident as Jesus spoke about the Father showing Him even **greater** things. He said, *“Just as the Father **raises the dead** and gives them **life**, even so **the Son gives life** to whom he is pleased to give it. Moreover, the Father **judges** no one, but has entrusted all **judgment** to the **Son**.”* Raising the dead, and judging the world - two important areas where we receive **Victory Through Jesus**.

First of all, let's think about **raising the dead**. You might think about how the **Father** raised the son of a **widow** in the village of **Zarapheth**, or how **Jesus** raised **Lazarus** from the grave - both **excellent** examples. But Jesus actually has in mind something which goes even **farther** - a **spiritual** resurrection. All of us were **born** spiritually **dead**. The sin of **Adam** in the Garden of Eden brought **physical** and **spiritual** death to **himself**, and every one born **after** him. So, from the moment of our birth we think, say, and do things which **anger** God - things which **condemn** us to **eternal** death. God says, *“Those who do such things **deserve death**.”* He says **I** deserve eternal death, and so do **you**. The judgment of **death** is what **every** sinner **deserves**.

But the work of Jesus is to **raise** us from death to **life**, and to set us **free** from sin's judgment. For Jesus, that would mean living a life of **humility** and complete **obedience** to His Father. It would mean **suffering** and **dying** on a **cross** at the hands of wicked men. It would mean spending 3 days in the grave, and then rising to **life** again. And that's **exactly** what Jesus **did**. He offered **His life** as the sacrifice for **our** sin. His **life** paid the debt for all sin of all time. The sacrifice of His perfect **life** set us free from the power of **sin**, **death**, and **Satan**.

The fact that Jesus earned eternal life for all people is **wonderful** - it goes above and beyond anything we can even **imagine**. But it doesn't do **any good** at all, if people don't **know** about it and **believe** it. Jesus told the crowd, *“I tell you the truth, whoever **hears** my words and **believes** him who sent me has **eternal life** and will **not be condemned**; he has crossed over from **death** to **life**. I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the **dead** will hear the **voice** of the **Son of God** and those who **hear** will **live**.”* Part of the work of Jesus was to **proclaim** the Good News of the forgiveness of sins, which He Himself **earned** for them. Even today He **continues** that work through the message of His **printed** Word - the **Bible**. As you and I **read** and **proclaim** the message of the Bible, we can hear Jesus say, “I am the **Son of God**. I **died** to pay for your sins. I am the **Way**, the **Truth**, and the **Life**.” In His **Word**, Jesus **speaks** to us - He gives us a **living** faith - He sets us **free** from all condemnation - and He allows us to cross over from **death** to **life**.

That result is absolutely **certain**, because Jesus Himself will be the **judge** on the Last Day. He said, *“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 is the **perfect** judge, because He is God’s **Son**, and therefore it’s **impossible** for Him to make any **mistakes** in His judging. Nobody is going to **accidentally** find themselves in **heaven**, or in **hell**. Jesus Himself tells us what it **takes** to get to heaven. He said, *“Do not be **amazed** at this, for a time is coming 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**.”*

But, wait a minute. Doesn’t that sound a lot like **work righteousness**, as Jesus talks about those who have **done good**, and those who have **done evil**? It might **seem** that way at **first**, but when we compare those words with the **rest** of Scripture, it soon becomes **obvious** that Jesus **doesn’t** mean we have to **work** our way into heaven. In fact, when it comes to what **we** do, God is very clear. He says, *“There is **no one** who does good, **not even one**.”* But, toward the end of the letter to the Hebrews God tells us, *“May the God of peace **equip** you with everything good for **doing his will**, and may **he work in us** what is **pleasing** to him, through **Jesus Christ**, to whom be glory for ever and ever.”*

That doesn’t bode well for people who worship **false** gods like **Allah** and **Buddha**, and those who **reject Jesus** as God like the **Mormons** and **Jehovah’s Witnesses**. When people claim that they are worshiping **God**, but at the same time **deny** that **Jesus** is the eternal **Son of God**, then the god they worship is not the **true** God. The **world** may think that’s just **fine**, and they may even **say** that in the end, we’re all the **same** - that we just call God by **different names**. But the heavenly Father says that the world is **wrong**. He says, *“He who does not honor the **Son** does not honor the **Father** who sent him.”* It’s all about **Jesus** - God’s one and only **Son**. He **humbled** Himself even to the point of dying on a **cross** for **everyone** - even for those who **don’t believe** in Him. That makes Jesus worthy of **worship** from **everyone**. To paraphrase some very famous words of William Shakespeare, *“To **believe**, or **not** to believe - ultimately, **that** is the question.”*

On the **Last Day** Jesus will return to this world for the **last time**. He will command **all** the dead to **come out** of their graves, and at His command **everybody** will **rise**. Those who did good by **believing** in Him and **living** their lives in faith will rise to **live**, and those who in **unbelief** plugged their ears to His Word and did **evil** will rise to be **condemned**. And it’s all because we have

Victory Through Jesus - a victory over sin, death, and the devil - a victory over **unbelief** - and a victory that brings us **eternal** life. Amen.