

Dr. David L. Turner, The Gospel of John, Session 7, John 5:1-47, Podcast Audio Overview

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All right, we're diving deep into John chapter 5 today. Ooh, John 5. This chapter's like a powder keg, ready to explode with drama and theological throwdowns. And we're going to be looking at Dr. David Turner's take on all this.

I think you're going to find it pretty fascinating. Yeah, what's always struck me about John 5 is it's not just a miracle story. It's like this clash of worldviews.

You see the tension between Jesus and the religious leaders, the Pharisees, really coming to a head. It's like, okay, so picture this, right? Jesus is in Jerusalem. He's at the pool of Bethesda.

Yeah. No, this pool. Big deal.

Big deal back then, right? Yeah, huge. It might have been used for ritual cleansing, maybe even washing animals before sacrifice. Today it's just ruins.

But you can still get a sense of how busy it must have been in Jesus' time. Oh yeah, totally. Like, just imagine the crowds, the noise, the anticipation.

Yeah, and there in the middle of it all is this man who's paralyzed, and he's been waiting by the pool hoping for some kind of miracle. Yeah, like desperate for a breakthrough. Yeah, but instead of just telling the guy to go jump in the water, Jesus heals him directly.

Boom. Instant healing. And on the Sabbath.

Oh man. Talk about stirring the pot. You know those Pharisees are going to flip their lids.

For them, the Sabbath was everything. Cornerstone of their faith. You don't mess with the Sabbath.

No way. And so, to them, Jesus healing on the Sabbath- that's a major violation. It's like breaking the ultimate rule.

And not only that, right? He tells the guy to pick up his mat, which was like his bedroll. Yeah. And carry it.

And that's work. That's work. A Sabbath no-no.

Big no-no. So they're seeing this as like a double whammy, right? Yeah, they're fuming. Yeah, but Jesus doesn't back down at all.

Not even a little bit. He throws up this line that just hangs in the air, right? He says, "My Father is working on the Sabbath, and I too am working." Mic drop.

Dude, it's like he's claiming to be on the same level as God, and that just sends shockwaves through the crowd. It's like, whoa, hold on a minute. Yeah, it's not even an implication, really.

He's flat out connecting his actions to God's work. Like I'm doing what my dad does. Yeah.

And if you think back to John's prologue, remember how Jesus is presented as the Word of God, like eternally existing with the Father? So this claim might sound crazy to some, but it totally lines up with John's whole portrayal of Jesus as divine. It's all connected, man. It is.

All right, but let's dig into this idea of Jesus as God's agent for a second, because that's where things get really interesting. There's this ancient concept called shaliach, which basically means an authorized representative. Like a lawyer representing their client.

That's a good one. They have the full authority to speak and act for them. Exactly.

So some scholars think this idea of shaliach helps us wrap our heads around Jesus's actions. So, like, he's carrying out God's will. Yeah.

Could it be that he's operating as God's authorized representative, like doing his work in the world? Man, that's a radical idea. It is. It really makes you think.

It really does. And it changes how we see Jesus's authority and his relationship with God, right? Totally reframes it. But of course, the Pharisees aren't buying any of this.

No way. They're like, hold up. You can't be your own witness.

Yeah. Classic objection. But Jesus has a comeback.

He doesn't just rely on his own words. He points to other sources of validation. Okay.

Like what? Well, first there's John the Baptist. Oh, yeah. Remember, John was a key figure, right? He clearly testified to Jesus's unique identity.

Setting the stage. Preparing the way. Yeah.

Then you've got the miracles themselves. Oh, yeah. These are tangible signs.

They're receipts. Undeniable evidence of God's power working through him. Can't argue with that.

And ultimately, he points to the most important witness of all. Oh, okay. God the Father himself.

The big guy. The irony is the Pharisees, who are supposed to be so devoted to God, they seem completely blind to the Father's witness in Jesus. Talk about missing the forest for the trees.

It's like, come on, guys. Yeah, and then it gets even crazier. Oh, yeah.

Buckle up. Jesus throws him a curveball. He claims that Moses.

Moses. The one they revere above all else. The guy they're obsessed with? Is actually a witness to him.

What? I know, right? That's wild. The Pharisees are all about the scriptures. Yeah.

They believe they hold the key to eternal life. They're like, follow the rules. Get to heaven.

They see Moses as the ultimate authority. The OG rule-giver. But Jesus turns their whole world upside down.

Flips the script? He says that if they truly understood Moses, they would recognize him, Jesus, as the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. So they're reading the map. Right.

But totally missing the destination. They're so focused on the rules. The detail.

That they've missed the one the rules were pointing to all along. Wow. Okay, so it's like, what's the takeaway for us? Right.

It raises a question for all of us, right? Yeah. Are we reading the scriptures in a way that opens us up to Jesus? Like, are we seeing him in the text? Or are we like the Pharisees, getting caught up in the details and missing the bigger picture? That's a good question to ask ourselves. This is heavy stuff, and we're just getting started.

Oh, yeah. Because then John 5 takes an even more mind-bending turn. Okay, lay it on me.

Jesus drops this concept of inaugurated eschatology. Inaugurated, whoa. Now, I know that sounds intimidating.

It does sound a little academic. But stay with me here. I'm here.

Okay, I'm listening. So it basically means that God's future kingdom isn't just some far-off event. Right.

It's breaking into the present through Jesus. So it's happening now. Like right now.

Mm-hmm. Think of it like a seed. Okay.

When you plant a seed, the future harvest is already present in that tiny seed. Yeah. Even though you can't see it yet.

I can dig that. That's kind of what's happening with Jesus. He's the seed of God's kingdom.

Right. And his presence is already bringing about a new reality. So it's like a both-hand situation.

Exactly. Not either. So judgment, salvation, eternal life- it's not just waiting for us in some distant future.

Right. It's happening right now. Whoa.

As people respond to Jesus. That's intense. It is.

It really changes how we view time and eternity, you know? It does. It challenges us to see God at work, not just in some future event, but in the here and now in our everyday lives. But wait a minute.

Yeah. I'm a little confused. Okay.

Didn't Jesus also talk about a future hour in John 16? He did. How does that fit with this whole judgment is happening now thing? That's a really sharp question. Thanks.

And it shows that John's view of time and eternity is complex. Okay. So while there's this future culmination of God's kingdom, Jesus's presence is already kind of ushering in that reality in the here and now.

So he's holding two realities together. Yeah. It's like the present and the future.

Okay. So it's not either. Right.

It's both hands. Yeah. That makes more sense.

Good. But going back to this whole Sabbath controversy, it's clearly about way more than just the day of rest. Right? It's about authority.

About who gets to interpret the law. Yeah. And ultimately, it's about who Jesus is claiming to be.

It's like the ultimate showdown. His actions are like a direct challenge to the Pharisees' rigid legalism. They're all about the letter of the law.

And he's pointing to a deeper understanding of God's heart. It's like he's saying there's more to it than just the rules. And you know, it's interesting that in other gospels, Jesus is called Lord of the Sabbath.

Oh yeah. Lord of the Sabbath. What do you think that means about his relationship to the law? It's like he's got the authority to reinterpret it, even to transcend the law.

He's not bound by the Pharisees' narrow interpretation. Because he embodies the very heart of God. Right.

The one who gave the law in the first place. So he's not saying the law is irrelevant, but he's pointing to a deeper way of living it out. More about inward transformation than outward observance.

Exactly. It's like the heart matters more than the checklist. Yeah.

Right. And that's where it gets really personal, right? Because it's not enough to just, like, intellectually grasp these concepts. All right.

It's going to go deeper. It's about letting them transform our lives. Yeah.

Like actually change how we live. Our relationships. How we treat others.

Our very being. It's a whole-person transformation. And that's a journey, man.

It is a journey. It's a lifelong process. That's worth it.

Absolutely. It's funny, you know, we talk about the Pharisees getting caught up in the rules. Yeah.

But sometimes I wonder if I do the same thing. Like I get so focused on checking off the boxes of my faith that I miss the bigger picture. The heart of it all.

Yeah. The heart of what it's all about. I think we all struggle with that at times.

It's easy to get caught up in the externals, you know, the rituals, the doctrines. The do's and don'ts. But Jesus is constantly calling us back to the heart of the matter, to a relationship with God that's based on love, grace, and genuine transformation.

And speaking of transformation, I'm still wrestling with this idea that judgment is happening now. Right. It feels kind of intense, you know? Yeah.

I get it. Like every decision I make has eternal implications. That's understandable.

Yeah. It's a weighty concept. No doubt.

It is. But I think it's also incredibly liberating. Oh, how so? Well, because if judgment is happening now, then so is grace.

So is forgiveness. Right. So is new life.

Right. It means that every moment is an opportunity to turn towards God. Yeah.

To choose love. To choose love. To embrace the reality of his kingdom breaking into our lives.

That's a helpful way to look at it. Yeah. It's not about living in fear of judgment.

Right. But in the hope and freedom of God's transforming grace. Exactly.

And it's a grace that's available to everyone. Regardless of their past. Their past.

Or their present circumstances. It's like that paralyzed man at the pool. Yeah.

We're all in need of healing, in need of God's touch. And Jesus is offering it freely to all who are willing to receive it. Okay.

So we've talked about John the Baptist. Yeah. The miracles.

Mm-hmm. And even God the Father as a witness to Jesus. Right.

Right. But you mentioned that the most important witness of all is Moses. Yeah.

I've got to admit, that one's throwing me for a loop. It seems counterintuitive, right? It does. Because the Pharisees were all about Moses.

Yeah. All about the law. Right.

But Jesus is saying that their very reverence for Moses, yeah. Is what blinds them to who he truly is.

It's like they're so focused on the messenger. Right. That they miss the message.

Precisely. They're so busy studying the map. Yeah.

That they never actually embark on the journey. And the irony is. Yeah.

If they truly understood Moses. Mm-hmm. They'd see that he was pointing to Jesus all along.

He was a signpost. So how do we avoid falling into that same trap? That's the question. How do we read Scripture in a way that actually opens us up to Jesus? Right.

Instead of closing us off? I think it starts with humility. Humility. We need to approach the Bible with open hearts.

Open hearts. Willing to be challenged. Challenged.

Willing to let go of our preconceived notions. Our biases. And let the text speak for itself.

Let it speak. And maybe even more importantly. Okay.

We need to remember that the scriptures ultimately point us to Jesus. Yeah. He is the living word.

The living word. The one who fulfills and embodies all that the law and the prophets longed for. That's a beautiful way to put it.

Thanks. And it leads us back to that concept of Jesus as the Lord of the Sabbath. Mm-hmm.

You know, Dr. Turner points out that this title doesn't just apply to the seventh day of the week. Right. It speaks to Jesus' authority over all of creation.

Over everything. Over time itself. Wow.

So if Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath. Yeah. What does that mean for our understanding of rest? It means that true rest isn't just about taking a day off.

Right. It's about finding our ultimate rest in Christ. Yeah.

It's about surrendering our striving, our anxieties, our need to control. Letting go. And allowing ourselves to be held by the one who holds all things together.

That makes so much sense. Yeah. It's not about earning our rest.

No. It's about receiving it as a gift. A free gift.

And it's a gift that's available to us right now. Right now. In the midst of our busy lives.

In the chaos. If we're willing to open ourselves to it. Exactly.

And you know, one of the things I find so compelling about John 5 is how it connects these seemingly abstract theological concepts to the very real struggles of everyday life. It's not just heady stuff. No.

It's about how we live. Right. Like this whole idea of shalaish.

Yeah. Jesus as God's authorized representative. It's not just a theological idea.

Right. It has practical implications for how we live our lives. So what does that look like, practically? Well, if Jesus is acting on behalf of God, then that means we can trust his words.

His words. His actions. His actions.

His promises. Yeah. It means we can find hope and courage in the midst of our trials.

Okay. Knowing that we're not alone. We're not alone.

That God is working through Jesus to bring about his purposes in our lives. That's powerful. It is.

But, you know, thinking about Jesus as God's representative also raises some questions for me. Oh, yeah. Like what? Like, if Jesus is acting on behalf of God, does that mean that everything that happens in the world is part of God's plan? Even the bad stuff.

That's a tough question. Yeah. And one that theologians have wrestled with for centuries.

Yeah. I bet. I don't think they're easy answers.

Right. But I do think that John 5 challenges us to grapple with the mystery of God's sovereignty and human freedom. Yeah.

It definitely makes you think. It does. And, you know, there's another verse in John 5 that really struck me.

Okay. Which one? Jesus says, "He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father. That's a pretty bold statement.

It is. And I think it speaks to the essential unity between Jesus and God. Right.

You can't separate them. They're one. To honor one is to honor the other.

So it's not enough to just have a vague belief in God. We're called to have a relationship with Jesus. A real relationship.

To see him as the key to understanding who God is and what God is like. Exactly. And that relationship, as we've seen throughout John 5, isn't about rule-following or empty rituals.

It's deeper than that. It's about a heart transformation that leads to a life of love, grace, and freedom. It's about seeing Jesus as the Lord of the Sabbath.

Yeah. The one who defines true rest and fulfillment. It's about recognizing him as the ultimate interpreter of scripture.

He unlocks the meaning. The one who reveals the heart of God in ways we could never grasp on our own. It's a revelation.

It's amazing how much is packed into just one chapter, you know? Yeah. John 5 is like a treasure chest full of insights. And I think one of the biggest takeaways is that following Jesus isn't just about believing certain things.

Right. It's about letting him actually transform our hearts and lives. Yeah.

It's about recognizing his authority, not just over the Sabbath, but over every part of who we are. And that transformation, it's not always easy, is it? No. No, it's not.

It means letting go of our own ideas, our expectations. Yeah. Being willing to be challenged, to be stretched.

Absolutely. It's a process. It's a journey.

And there are times when we resist, right? Yeah. For sure. We cling to our old ways of thinking, our old ways of doing things.

But the beauty of God's grace is that he never gives up on us. He keeps pursuing us. He keeps inviting us deeper into relationship with him.

I was thinking about this idea of Shaliyach. Yeah. You know, Jesus as God's authorized representative.

What does that mean for us, like practically? Oh, that's a great question. If Jesus is acting on behalf of God, how should that, like, actually shape our daily lives? I think it means we can approach life with a sense of confidence. Confidence.

And purpose. Purpose. Knowing that we're not just like stumbling around in the dark, you know? Yeah.

We have a guide, a representative, who's paving the way for us. Okay. Showing us what it means to truly live in alignment with God's will.

So it's not about trying to figure everything out on our own. No, not at all. It's about trusting in Jesus's authority.

Yeah. His guidance. Surrendering our need to control.

Letting go. And allowing ourselves to be led by the one who knows the way. You said earlier about the Pharisees, you know, how they missed the message because they were so focused on the messenger.

Yeah. How do we make sure we're not making the same mistake? I think it comes down to intentionality. Intentionality.

We need to be intentional about seeking Jesus in the scriptures. About listening for his voice in our lives. About allowing his words and actions to shape our thoughts, our decisions, our relationships.

So it's not enough to just like passively read the Bible or go to church. Right. We need to actively engage with Jesus.

Yeah. Cultivate a relationship with him that, you know, permeates every aspect of our being. That's right.

And it's in that relationship that we find true freedom. The rest. Rest.

For life. Man, I feel pretty inspired after this deep dive into John 5. You too. It's given me a lot to think about.

Yeah. A lot to chew on. It has.

I hope it's encouraged our listeners to, you know, dive deeper into John's gospel. And discover for themselves the riches that await those who seek to truly know and follow Jesus. So until next time, keep exploring, keep asking questions, and keep seeking the truth that sets us free.

Amen to that.