*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

January 28 – February 2

*Jesus in John’s Gospel*

**Monday, January 28 John 4:43-54**

*“The man believed what Jesus said”*

Jesus now moves on from Samaria to Galilee where he is received by people who had witnessed his works in Jerusalem. While faith can never finally rest on mighty works, they can be a point of beginning. How gracious that Jesus starts with any one of us where we are, often with our curiosity asking for more wonders, but he knows that our only hope will be to finally believe in him.

A government official, whose son is ill and near death, seeks Jesus out. Jesus challenges the man’s request as one more desire to witness miraculous wonders, but the man is insistent. The child whom he loves is desperately ill and there is no one other than this man who can help. His cry for help is now rooted in Jesus, not in signs and wonders. In response to this cry of faith Jesus speaks the word, “Your son lives.” And the man took Jesus at his word and made off for home, a bold act of faith! He asked no further questions and needed no further proof. Jesus’ word was enough. And in the coming of physical health to this home, spiritual life was born.

*I take you at your word, Jesus, and believe that you are the Son of God. Amen.*

**Tuesday, January 29 John 5:1-15**

*“This miracle happened on the Sabbath”*

Jesus delighted in the feast days of his people that celebrated the saving acts of God, so he journeyed again to Jerusalem where he healed a needy, lonely man. That he healed him on the Sabbath becomes the crucial issue of the visit. This act of mercy caused suspicion and anger among the religious leaders. The Sabbath originally was set as a day of rest and worship, but also of celebration, to rejoice before God who was in the midst of his creation. But it had become a dreary institution hedged in by all kinds of regulations as if the holiness of God could be protected by legalism.

“Carrying things from one domain to another” on the Sabbath was one of the works forbidden and “carrying empty beds” was implicitly forbidden, as were “works of healing.” So when the healed man comes carrying his bed, he is immediately confronted by the Jewish leaders who remind him of the rules. Jesus is eager that this man should know who it is that has healed him. So Jesus seeks him out in the temple – does he not seek us all out? – and reveals himself to the man.

*I will never know you, Jesus, through legalistic rule keeping. Amen.*

**Wednesday, January 30 John 5:16-18**

*“The Jewish leaders began persecuting Jesus”*

Jesus’ enemies react quickly to Jesus’ Sabbath day healing. In response to their anger, Jesus declares his relationship to his Father. He is not off on his own defying tradition as a lone star faith healer. He has healed this man on the Sabbath because he is doing the work of his Father. For God does his unique work even on the Sabbath. Even with their intense desire to regulate and control the Sabbath, Jewish theologians knew that all created things would cease to exist if God did not continue his work of sustaining and renewing life on even this holy day. So, in this work of mercy, the healing of this man, Jesus has done what the Father does.

The crux of the matter is Jesus’ relation to God, whom he calls “My Father.” For this itinerant, free-wheeling, unorthodox wonder-worker to dare call God “My Father” is the ultimate blasphemy. He has made himself equal with God, and this is a sin which deserves only death! John is revealing to us that the persecution and eventual death of Jesus stemmed from Jesus’ divine claims about himself.

*Through faith in you, Jesus, your Father has become my Father. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

January 28 – February 2

*Jesus in John’s Gospel*

**Thursday, January 31 John 5:19-30**

*“Whatever the Father does, the Son also does”*

The central idea of the passage is the relation of a father and a son as it would be viewed in this culture through the trade or skill the son was learning. We can think of Jesus growing up with Joseph in the carpentry shop, obediently learning skills and later imitating them. In a similar manner, Jesus is connected to the Father. His activity is never independent or self-initiated but always dependent, deriving its purpose from his Father’s will. What makes this possible?

The Father loves the Son! The Greek present tense suggests an ongoing, continuous affection. This love spills into two tasks entrusted to the Son that belong exclusively to the Father: life and judgment. That God alone has power over life and can raise people from death is well known in Judaism. That Jesus can do it too affirms his Sonship. But this giving of life has also to do with judgment. Since Jesus is in this world, since he is the one through whom light and life are mediated, he becomes the channel of divine judgment. Those who love darkness find themselves under judgment already. Whoever believes in the Son has life already.

*I believe in you, Jesus, and you have given me eternal life. Amen.*

**Friday, February 1 John 5:31-40**

*“John the Baptist’s testimony about me was true”*

In Old Testament law, more than one witness was needed in order to condemn someone. This idea was expanded to say that more than one person was needed to confirm someone’s testimony. Jesus is not saying that any self-testimony he gives is false, but rather that its truth is validated by the confirmation of other witnesses. Jesus’ claims are extraordinary. But if he is the only one making them, they will carry little weight with his audience. But if his claims are corroborated, they should stand.

Jesus identifies John the Baptist as a witness. John preceded Jesus, identified him, worked with him, and directed his followers to become Jesus’ disciples. Jesus also points to his own works which are not simply powerful miracles, but signs, culminating in the great works of the cross and resurrection. The Old Testament is also a witness to Jesus, as he is the one who fulfills the prophecies of the Messiah who is to come. Most importantly, the Father himself gives witness to Jesus.

*I give testimony, Jesus, that you are who Scripture declares you to be. Amen.*

**Saturday, February 2 John 5:41-47**

*“You have rejected me”*

What a tragedy that the very ones who searched the Scriptures, who prided themselves on being experts, thinking that in doing so they had eternal life, were not willing to come to the one of whom the Scriptures spoke. They rejected him! Here he was standing before them, bold and clear, inviting them and challenging them, and they turned on him in anger – all the time believing they were being faithful to the Scriptures. So they did not hear the biblical voice of the Father, nor could they perceive him in Jesus. Because they refused to believe in him, they did not have the love of God in them.

The great irony in all this is that the very one these Jewish leaders felt they knew and trusted, Moses, ended up being their accuser. For if they really understood and believed what Moses had written, they would have accepted Jesus, the one to whom Moses bore witness. But they misread and misinterpreted because they came to the Scriptures with hard, unbelieving hearts. They missed Jesus’ message and consequently missed life.

*I am able to love you, Lord, because you first loved me. Amen.*