

## Honor the Son

✠ Walk in His holiness. (vv.1-15)

✠ Listen and believe His Word. (vv.16-47)

In the Name of Jesus, the Son of God and Son of Man, dearly redeemed believers:

To the world the three figures who appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration look like losers. Moses led the people of Israel forty years from Mount Sinai, but failed to reach the Promised Land. God allowed Moses to see it, but Moses died on Mount Nebo, buried by God, grave unknown. (Deuteronomy 34)

Likewise Elijah. Victorious on Mount Carmel in his showdown with the prophets of Baal, Elijah still had to run for his life from wicked Queen Jezebel who still rejected the LORD as God. Mighty Elijah looked small indeed until God's Word encouraged him on Mount Horeb, the mountain of God. (1 Kings 19)

And Jesus, of course, is viewed by the world as a tragic figure who did good and said nice things, some quite profound, but suffered injustice in the end on Mount Calvary, Golgotha, the Place of the Skull.

And that is why on the sacred mountain, probably Mount Hermon, Jesus was transfigured in glory. Before His suffering and death on the cross, Jesus shines as God. As at His baptism three years earlier, the Father's voice boomed from heaven: ***"This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"*** (Matthew 17:5) Giver of the law, Moses; defender of the law, Elijah; encouraged Jesus in fulfilling the law, removing its curse from a world of sinners. By faith we delight to **Honor the Son.**

✠ Walk in His holiness. (vv.1-15)

You can probably remember when you got into trouble for doing the right thing. Sometimes our best intentions can backfire. But sometimes people around us just do not want to accept the right thing. Sadly, the worst culprits can be the most religious people. Moses and Elijah suffered from religious zealots long before Jesus came to suffer the ultimate rejection by the religious community.

Then there are those who inspire us by their dogged determination. One of my childhood heroes was my Uncle Jim. He could swim with only his arms after he lost the use of his legs to polio at age nine. Growing up, I admired Uncle Jim for overcoming obstacles. He supported his family working in electronics. He could cook. Gave great insights into handicapped challenges. He taught me that no one need be "crippled." Obstructions are meant to be conquered. One more reason to always do my best.

In Jesus' day there were very few opportunities for a man without the use of his legs. Physical labor was required for everyone except the nobility. We cannot image how hard it was for the invalid at the Pool of Bethesda. Through John the Holy Spirit also tells us he was ***"sick for thirty-eight years."*** His only possession seems to have been the mat he was lying on and the clothes covering his emaciated body. He had long hoped for healing at this miraculous pool, but too many other people knew what happened when the water was stirred. Only the first one in would be healed. Without someone to carry him, the sick man was just too late. With nowhere else to go, he just stayed there by the pool and hoped for help.

Don't think it was pleasant place, so close to the Sheep Gate into the Temple. What a stench from so many sick people too. So where does Jesus go? Always where there is the most need. Jesus knew the plight of this man. And Jesus was determined to help, no matter who would object to Him doing good.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, quotes are from a draft translation by the undersigned for the Wartburg Project – John.

Could we ever be so cruel to object to Jesus healing on the Sabbath Day? God's law said no work. But Jesus had to correct their misunderstanding that this did not mean, "Don't do what is good." Jewish religious leaders had to admit they would work hard to pull an animal from a well on the Sabbath. So why not help a human being on the Lord's day? Do we sometimes give the impression that we are against kindness by opposing the welfare state? Would we have a welfare state if Christian churches always took care of their own? Are these questions too simplistic? Jesus rises above politics and points the man and us to the real problem: not physical ailments, but the sickness of sin in our souls. *Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "Look, you are well now. Do not sin anymore or something worse may happen to you."* (NETNT) Jesus drew a line from this man's lifestyle to his physical health. Not always the case, as we learn from the errors of Job's three friends. (Cf. Job 42:7-10) But we should not deny that possibility either. God wants us to live a life of repentance. **Honor the Son** as you **Walk in His holiness**. Jesus makes things well with your soul, but not everyone will accept Him.

### ✦ Listen and believe His Word. (vv.16-47)

It started with Jesus healing on the Sabbath. So the Jews persecuted Him. Then He told them the truth about His relationship to God the Father. *"My Father is working until now, and I am working too."* God never rests. Father and Son along with the Holy Spirit are working hard to save souls 24/7. God never gets tired, never gets discouraged, never stops doing good for everyone, even those who only curse His Name whether it rains or shines. *"This is why the Jews tried to kill him, because he was not only breaking the Sabbath, but even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God."*

If you wonder why Jesus just didn't give up and walk away, here's the answer: He wants to save souls for eternity. This can only happen if we believe in Jesus as our Lord and Savior, the eternal Son of God and Son of Man. No one can have life without receiving it from the Father and the Son. No one can survive the judgment on the Last Day unless Jesus says so. But here's the comfort for everyone who will **Listen and believe His Word** today. Jesus says most emphatically, *"Amen, Amen, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and does not come into judgment, but has crossed over from death to life."* When you believe in Jesus as your Savior, you're already on God's side, safe with Him and kept by Him in the faith for life everlasting in heaven.

On the Last Day there will be a general resurrection of all the dead. As Jesus details in Matthew (25:31:46), so He says here. Good works will be used as evidence of faith. Faith alone saves, but faith is never alone. So evil deeds practiced by unrepentant sinners will prove their lack of faith. Jesus and our Father in heaven are absolutely united in this judgment: We are saved by faith alone in Christ alone.

Remember who first said this? "It ain't bragging if you can back it up." According to Google, it was Dizzy Dean. He and brother Paul (Daffy) Dean won the 1934 World Series for the St. Louis Cardinals. Other famous athletes have said similar things, but most of them are long dead and forgotten.

God's own Son backed up His claims. Jesus' works of power in Word and deed are proof of His divine nature as the eternal Son of God. The Jews had sent messengers to John the Baptist who testified in Jesus' favor. But Jesus said, *"But I have testimony greater than John, for the works which the Father gave me to accomplish, the very works that I do, testify about me, that the Father has sent me."* Down through the ages with prophets like Moses and Elijah the Father testified about the coming Christ who would save us all from sin. *"You search the Scriptures,"* Jesus said, *"because you think in them you have eternal life."* This is true! But get this too. Jesus says, *"They testify about me."*

That, dear friends, is the key to understanding the Old Testament. All thirty-nine books point to the coming Christ. Twenty-seven New Testament books show how Jesus' life and ministry fulfilled all those ancient prophecies – especially His suffering and death, resurrection and ascension. **Honor the Son** as you **Listen and believe His Word**. Then the light of God's glory shines on you. No matter what the world thinks, God has brought you over from death to life on His side with Jesus. Amen.