

WHOEVER HEARS JESUS' WORD HAS ETERNAL LIFE

John 5:16-30

Key verse 5:24

„I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.“

We thank God for his living word from John's gospel. The purpose of this book is that we accept Jesus as the Son of God and by believing in Him have eternal life. In the last lesson we learned about the healing of a man who had been an invalid for 38 years. Jesus stirred in him the desire to be healed and challenged him: "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." The invalid man believed in the word of Jesus and got up. The healing of this man was the life-giving work of God.

Where Jesus did the work of God, there was also persecution. In today's passage we learn that the leaders of the Jews accused Jesus and wanted to kill him, because Jesus had allegedly broken the Sabbath and made himself equal to God. Jesus told them why he healed the sick on the Sabbath. Jesus testified to them who he was. Furthermore, Jesus shows the way to eternal life, how we will not be condemned, but cross over from death to life. It is my prayer that God will give each of us listening ears for God's Word and that we may participate in the life-giving work of God.

1. Jesus does the work of God (16-23)

Let's look at verses 16 to 18: "So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him. Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working." For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God." Jesus had healed a 38-year invalid man at

the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem. The man was finally able to get up and carry his own bed according to the word of Jesus. This was the one-sided grace of Jesus and the wonderful work of God. The Jews, however, criticized the man because he carried his bed on the Sabbath. After the man had betrayed Jesus, they persecuted Jesus. The Jews ignored Jesus' healing work. Instead, out of envy, they sought only reasons to accuse Jesus. They thought they were upholding and defending the Sabbath law, and pointed their finger at Jesus, "You have broken the Sabbath!" In truth, the Jews themselves did not keep the Sabbath holy by not giving thanks and worshipping God and His healing ministry on that day. They were filled with hatred and wanted to eliminate Jesus from the world. It is characteristic for the enemies of God that they do not remember God's healing grace through God's Word, but deny God's work and try to eliminate God's servants.

How did Jesus deal with the accusation and persecution of the Jews? Let us read verse 19 together: "Jesus gave them this answer: "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." Jesus was not intimidated by the accusations and the murder plan of the Jews. Rather, Jesus testified that he was doing the work of God. Jesus submitted himself completely to the will of God so that he could not act out of his own will. We humans cannot claim that we cannot do anything on our own. Often enough we experience how strong our own will is. But Jesus does everything that the

Father also does. In this respect, Jesus' healing work on the Sabbath was the work of God.

Let us look at verses 20-23. Jesus could only follow the example of his Father. Jesus was perfect so that he could not act according to his own will. Here the author says that Jesus is God. For Jesus does everything that God shows him. As God raises the dead, so Jesus also gives life. As God judges, so also Jesus holds judgment. Let us read verse 23: "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." God gave the Son authority to bring the dead back to life and execute judgment, so that they would all honor the Son. In Philippians 2,9-11 it says: "Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Since Jesus completely humbled himself and became obedient to God even unto death, God gave him the highest name. The leaders of the Jews refused to acknowledge Jesus. Yet they claimed that they would serve God. Jesus admonished them that those who do not acknowledge the Son also despise the Father's rule. To accuse and kill Jesus is the same as blaspheming God and rejecting His sovereign rule.

What does it mean to honor the son? It means to receive Jesus as the Son of God and to become God's children in him. (John 1:12) Because of our sin and pride we were separated from God. But Jesus by his grace made us children of God. Now we have the privilege to call God "our Father" and to do His works according to His will. Although Jesus is God, he learned obedience from what he suffered. (Hebrews 5:8) As Jesus lived in deep relationship with his Father and was obedient to him in all things, so we too have the privilege of learning obedience and working together with God for His life-giving work.

In the past, Apostle Paul rejected Jesus as the Son of God and felt that he had to fight against the name of Jesus. Therefore, he threw the Christians into prison and persecuted them until death. But after he had accepted Jesus as the Son of God, he was changed from a cruel persecutor of the church into God's child and God's chosen instrument. He obeyed God's calling in his persecutions and sufferings. He did the work of God in obedience to the will of God, proclaiming Jesus Christ until his martyrdom. Let us accept Jesus as the Son of God and work together as God's children for the revival work in Europe, whatever the cost.

2. Whoever hears Jesus' word has crossed over from death to life (24-30)

Let us read verse 24: "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life." The Jews diligently studied the Scriptures and believed they possessed eternal life. (John 5:39) Jesus gave them the wonderful promise of eternal life, that by hearing and believing they could have eternal life.

To "hear" and "believe" means to hear and obey God's word. As Apostle Paul says, hearing alone is not enough: "For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous." (Romans 2:13) The first people in paradise had heard God's word, but they did not obey. The consequence of their disobedience was eternal separation from God. Today there are many ways to hear God's Word. Many young people, however, hear what their itching ears want to hear. The false doctrines of the modern spirit of the time say, "Live by your own pleasure, by your own feelings, by your own desires." "Seek first money and success." But none of this can give them eternal life. Some students claim that God's word is outdated and no longer fits our times. They think there is no God, that the Bible is just a fairy tale. In this way, they cannot

experience the life-giving power of God's Word. It is a serious concern that some do not hear and do not obey a single word of God. They remain under the power of death, even if they look very good on the outside and are very successful. People in sin try to suppress their fear of death and the senselessness of their lives in various ways. But neither a healthy diet nor a lot of money, neither a romantic life partner nor the happiness of the family can save them from death and judgment. But the one who hears the word of God and obeys it through faith has passed from death to life. Yes, he has already been rescued from the dominion of darkness and brought into the kingdom of Jesus. (Colossians 1:13) Whoever hears the word of God and obeys it no longer suffers from the fear of death and the meaninglessness of life. Rather, he has the confidence and certainty of eternal life and is always full of strength and joy to live for God.

God's word is living and active. It is sharper than any double-edged sword and penetrates to dividing soul and spirit. (Hebrews 4:12) Whoever accepts and obeys the word of God with a penitent heart has eternal life. Eternal life does not begin only after death. Every person can already have eternal life today. The one who makes a decision today to accept Jesus from the heart and to obey Him has eternal life today, yes, eternal fellowship and a living relationship with God. "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."

A physician used to despair as a youth because he could not overcome the desires of youth, his own feelings and his own will. He grumbled about the circumstances and felt like a loser. But God's word from Mark 8:34 said to him, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." He began to deny his desire and his feelings and took up his crosses of violin playing, high school graduation, computer exams, medical studies and business mission and followed

Jesus. Jesus gave him eternal life. When Jesus came into his heart as the Savior and Redeemer, he became the happiest man. He grew in the inwardness of Jesus day by day and now serves as an excellent Bible teacher and spiritual leader for the revival work in Europe.

In my youth I did not listen to my parents, who constantly served me with the word of God. Instead, I listened to the devil's lie that sin was harmless and I could handle my own life. But the evil desires of youth made me hopeless and completely useless. Although I was active in church and physically healthy, I tormented myself under the power of death. But during my studies God spoke to me through Deuteronomy 6:4.5: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." I realized that I had become so unhappy and spiritually sick because I worshiped not God, but women and money. When I discarded everything I loved in the world, God gave me eternal life, a new and undivided heart and a relationship of love and trust with God. God's love and hope flowed through my heart that I could accept God's call to be a shepherd and Bible teacher for the students.

Thanks be to the Lord, who through his Word has given us eternal life and in the past 40 years has shown us his grace to courageously proclaim God's Word on campus and through common life. When a servant of God studied the Word of God in depth and opened his house church for raising disciples, we could see many fruits of faith through Bible study. We are curious to see how God continues to work through his living Word in the lives of the young people and the next generation, using them for the European and Muslim mission.

In the last months some students were worried about their health, their financial situation and their studies. But what they need most urgently is God's Word. How can the students believe in Jesus, whom they have not heard about? How can they hear without a preacher? (Romans 10:14) Let us

proclaim God's word in life and death this summer semester that the young people on campus have eternal life and rise as a vast army.

Let us look at verses 28 and 29. Jesus admonished the leaders of the Jews not to be surprised by the teaching of Jesus. Jesus knew that they could not understand His teaching on eternal life because they ignored the work of God and did not hear or believe one word of God. Therefore, Jesus taught them again to hear the voice of the Son of God.

Let us read verses 28 and 29: "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." Not hearing God's word and not doing it has bitter consequences: wrath, anger, trouble and distress for every human being who does evil. (Romans 2:8,9) When Jesus returns, no one can hide from the Word of God, not even in the graves. Now is the time for us to repent to God with one Word of God. Jesus invites you now and today to hear his word and to obey it with all your heart: "Come with thy sins to the fountain, Come with thy burden of grief; Bury them deep in its waters, There thou wilt find a relief. Haste thee away, why wilt thou stay? Risk not thy soul on a moment's delay; Jesus is waiting to save thee, Mercy is pleading today." (Fanny Crosby)

Saint Augustine was a very successful and rhetorically talented teacher. But his dissolute life made him spiritually very sick. He wanted to make a new beginning and be baptized. But with his own strength he could not let go of his former life. Then he heard God's word from Romans 13:13,14: "Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature." He was baptized and went to the

Lord Jesus Christ. Then the light of peace came over Augustine's heart and all his doubts disappeared. He received the joy of eternal life in Christ and became an influential preacher of the Gospel.

I know a man who, hoping for worldly success, constantly changed his majors and professions and begged for the love of a girl. But his soul's thirst could never be satisfied. Then he heard God's word from Luke 5:8: "When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" He confessed all his sins sincerely before Jesus. He received eternal life, true peace of heart, and his soul's thirst was quenched forever. Jesus also appointed him as a shepherd and Bible teacher to proclaim the life-giving Word of God to young people at the Faculty of Philosophy.

Praise Jesus, the giver of eternal life. May God grant each of you eternal life through one Word of God. Through 10,000 one-to-one Bible study teams, let us free the young people on campus from the judgment and damnation of having eternal life and serving God as a vast army.

In today's passage the word "hear" is repeated four times. Jesus is the Son of God, who gives eternal life to all who hear and believe God's word. God makes the young people of Europe come alive again through his Word. For the spiritual revival in Germany and Europe, let us hear and proclaim the Word of God to everyone.

Let us read the key verse 24: "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."