

John 5:16-29 Sermon-Based Discussion Guide

Purpose of Discussion: To be willing to examine the validity of our own personal faith in Jesus.

Icebreaker Suggestion: Have you ever had a horticulture failure (gardening, tree, plant)?

Transition: The decision to cut down a tree or pull up a plant can be made for a variety of reasons, but it's often that there is no life in the tree or plant, at least of producing the fruit or flower that we want it to. Jesus wants us to look and examine whether we have true life in ourselves because a day is coming and is in some ways already here when we will face judgment for what we are producing.

Discussion

1. Dave said in his sermon, "We instinctively want justice, but we don't want a judge." What ways do you see a longing for justice? What ways do you see a reticence about have a judge?

Read John 5:16-20.

2. What is Jesus' answer to the charge that he is breaking the law by working on the Sabbath?

Read John 5:21-29

3. Speaking about verse 23, Dave said: "Notice here that Jesus is claiming he is worthy of the same honor—worship—as the Father. Even more, he's saying that if anyone does not honor/worship Jesus, they are not really worshipping God either." Discuss.
4. In verse 26, Jesus says that he has life in himself as the Father does. What does Jesus mean by saying this? What does it say about us?

John 4:26-42 Sermon-Based Discussion

5. In verse 29, Jesus tells us that we are judged on whether we have done good or done evil. How do we put this together with verse 24? Are we saved by doing good or by believing in Jesus?
6. Dave said: "Since it's not what I say I believe that counts, here's what I have to ask myself: what do I **really** believe about Jesus? And that answer is revealed and measured by my actions."
 - Am I more patient with people who slow me down or get in my way or oppose me in some way that I was a few years ago?
 - Is my heart softer toward my spouse? My kids? My coworkers? Toward the poor? Toward people different than me?
 - Am I more humble in my life, less defensive, less all about me, more aware of my need for others?
 - Am I witnessing more to others?
 - Has my belief in Christ affected my bank account? Am I more generous now or spending more and more of my income on myself?

Why is it important that we examine ourselves this way? How do you feel after hearing this?

Summary Questions

7. Consider taking some time this week to do a deeper reflection about this kind of self-examination. Perhaps, we could ask a friend or a spouse if they see these signs of life in the way we live in an imperfect, but growing way. Is there a way we need to respond with a deepening of our faith or a faith-driven plan of action?

Sharing and Prayer Time

Consider having a time of private reflection and confession which is ended with a prayer for everyone's faith in light of the judgment to come.