



Jesus' Strategy of Sharing the Truth

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Kick Start:

How did God speak to you through this message?

Main Point:

It's plain to see that Jesus didn't have only one tactic for engaging with people around matters of sin, faith, and salvation. Jesus heals a man on the Sabbath to expose the religious leaders' lack of belief and works-based religion. Jesus feeds the 5000 in order to show their need for salvation, only to reveal their superficial faith. They all see the *miracle* but missing the *meaning*.

Introduction:

The book of John is different from the other gospels in that it presents a snapshot of Jesus' life was in such a way that whoever would read it would be given everything that they need for saving faith. Chapter 1 presents Jesus as the *Word*, who sent here as God to bring the message of salvation. Chapter 2 begins His public ministry of signs to authentic His message. Chapter 3 underscores presentation of salvation by spiritual birth. Chapter 4 opens the door of salvation to those outside Israel, the Samaritans. Chapter 5-6 is the beginning of the end for Jesus as He begins to confront unbelief and wrong beliefs within the Jewish nation.

Message Outline:

I. Confronting Religious Leaders

While Jesus was changing lives, the leaders were playing religion. They saw a great miracle of healing and yet focused on the breaking of the Sabbath rule. The Sabbath, a day of rest and worship, became a burdensome stranglehold of legalism that was choking the Jews—they had turned it into something that God never intended, and were using it to further their agenda and control, and were willing to commit murder to protect it. Jesus reminded them that the Sabbath belonged to God, and Jesus being equal with God, owned it and had the final authority over it. God's work is continuous, even on the Sabbath.

John 5:16-18

Talk About It:

1. How does Jesus' healing on the Sabbath challenge the traditional understanding of the Sabbath, and what does this teach us about the nature and intent of God's commandments?
2. What does Jesus' healing on the Sabbath reveal to you about trusting Him more deeply instead of clinging to routine or tradition?
3. How do Jesus' Sabbath healings redefine what it means to "keep the Sabbath holy"?
4. In what ways can we see God's continuous work in our own lives today?

5. What are some practical ways you find rest in Christ amidst your busy life?

II. Calling Out the Crowd

After feeding the 5000, Jesus recognizes that there is a flaw in the crowd's reaction. Rather than seeing the miracle as a sign, the people are merely pleased with the idea of getting a divine handout— They didn't want Him, but His blessings. This incident not only allows Jesus to teach important truths about Himself, but it also demonstrates some of the spiritual barriers which keep us from properly seeking God. In response to His miracle, the people will regress from seeking, to complaining, to bickering, and finally to abandonment

John 6:26-29; 48-69

Talk About It:

1. In what ways can we shift our focus from temporary satisfaction to eternal fulfillment in our daily lives?
2. Some of the crowd had trouble believing Jesus' words, even after seeing miracles. Why do you think people struggle with faith? What helps you trust in Jesus more?
3. How can we ensure that our pursuit of spiritual nourishment remains focused on Jesus rather than on religious activities (v.28)?
4. What is the significance of Jesus' statement to eat His flesh and blood?
5. What does the reaction of the disciples in John 6:66 reveal about the nature of true faith and commitment to Jesus?
6. In what ways does John 6 challenge or encourage you? What changes do you need to make in your life to better align with God's character and will?

Conclusion:

In answering the people's request for continual bread, Jesus explained the process of personal salvation. The preaching of the Word of God always leads to a sifting of the hearts of the listeners. God draws sinners to the Savior through the power of truth, His Word. Those who reject the Word will reject the Savior. Those who receive the Word will receive the Savior and experience the new birth, eternal life.

Make It Practical:

The Gift of Rest

Our culture tends to wear busyness like a badge of honor. We work long hours; we juggle family, church, and school responsibilities; and we often take our work with us when we go on vacation. When people ask us how we're doing, though exhausted, we take pride in sighing, "Busy!" We need to ask, "Are we doing all this just to be seen, valued, and affirmed?"

While God initially gives His instruction for Sabbath in the time of Moses, we see a beautiful breakdown of the purpose of Sabbath in Isaiah 58:13-14 - *"Keep the Sabbath day holy. Don't pursue your own interests on that day, but enjoy the Sabbath and speak of it with delight as the Lord's holy day. Honor the Sabbath in everything you do on that day, and don't follow your own desires or talk idly. Then the Lord will be your delight. I will give you great honor and satisfy you with the inheritance I promised to your ancestor Jacob. I, the Lord, have spoken!"*

Stop

The word Sabbath comes from the Hebrew word shabbat, which literally means "to stop" or "cease." But it can also mean to rest, to delight, and even to worship. The first time that shabbat shows up is in Genesis 2:1-3. God finishes the work of creation, and it says "he rested [shabbat] from all his work."

When we live without Sabbath, we go against the rhythm that God the creator himself built into our body and into the fabric of all creation. We can suffer the consequences: burnout, stress, trashed immune systems, brain fog, frayed relationships, distance from God, etc. But it's also true on the positive side—when we do sabbath, we reap the rewards: peace, health, and delight, just to name a few.

Rest

To practice Sabbath is to draw a line in the sand against all external and internal forces that would encroach upon your apprenticeship to Jesus and formation into his image. It's to say "this far you shall go, but no further." It is to defy some of the most powerful forces known to humanity as an act of non-cooperation done in love for community, for the poor, for the Earth, and ultimately for God himself. (Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Exodus 5:1-18)

Delight

Sabbath is a discipline of celebration and a delivery mechanism for joy. It is one of the most important disciplines by which we become people who are full of joy, like our God. Let's delight in God Himself. It's so easy to lose sight of just how much goodness is in our life, which is why we fill our Sabbaths with gratitude and thanksgiving for the ways God has been good to us. (John 16:33; John 15:11; Philippians 4:4-8)

Worship

In Exodus 16, we read, "Tomorrow is to be a day of sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord." That phrase, "a holy Sabbath to the Lord," can be translated "set apart for the Lord" or "dedicated to the Lord." The Sabbath is an entire day that is set aside, not just for rest or celebration, but for God. Put another way, it's a day for worship. Anything we do to center God and to direct our heart in love to his glory, his goodness, is a form of worship. (Genesis 2:2-3; Exodus 16:23-30)

Prayer Points:

- Thank you for the different ways you've reached us and prompted our belief in you.
- Help us to have the same heart toward others in speaking truth to them in love as you did.
- Help us to rest in you and fill us with your peace and presence.
- May our works be out of love for you and not for earning favor. Keep us steadfast in our faith and faithful in our thoughts, words, and actions.
- Pray for the needs of the group.