

## John 5:19-24

<sup>19</sup>Jesus answered them directly, “Amen, Amen, I tell you: The Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing. Indeed, the Son does exactly what the Father does. <sup>20</sup>For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing. And he will show him even greater works than these so that you will be amazed. <sup>21</sup>For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to those he wishes.

<sup>22</sup>“In fact, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, <sup>23</sup>so that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. <sup>24</sup>Amen, Amen, I tell you: Anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He is not going to come into judgment but has crossed over from death to life.

## Greater Than

### I.

Deflect. That’s what they determined would be the best course of action.

To this day deflection is a common strategy. Something happens. It is undeniably not what had been expected. It is something that goes against the grain. The thing that just happened threatens the status quo. There are people that depend on the status quo. The status quo is where they make their living. The status quo is the place from which they derive their power. The status quo must remain status quo or everything they have worked for will be destroyed.

The status quo was threatened. It had been happening with more and more frequency. This person had been doing things that no one who was part of the status quo was capable of duplicating. To look at the thing square in the face would, at the very least, threaten the power of those firmly entrenched in the status quo.

What to do?

One option might have been to abandon the status quo and throw your considerable weight behind the new challenger. Of course, that option would diminish those who were firmly entrenched in the status quo, but at least they would still have a little bit of power and influence.

Another option was to double down. Throw even more energy into validating the status quo so that the upstart couldn’t gain any traction. This option would mean that, if victorious, the challenger would soon be forgotten.

Part of doubling down, in this case, was to deflect. Rather than to call even more attention to the things he had proven capable of doing, thereby diminishing themselves, they would accuse him of something else entirely. “So the Jews began to persecute Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath” (John 5:16, EHV).

### II.

The various factions of the religious leaders among the Jews were the status quo. Their influence came from keeping their fingers on the proverbial levers of power that the laws of Moses seemed to give them. The laws said: “no work on the Sabbath Day.”

Jesus had just healed a man on the Sabbath Day at the pool of Bethesda. Deflect. It wasn’t the *things* Jesus did, but *when* he did them. It wasn’t the *healing* Jesus performed with a mere word, but the fact that Jesus commanded the healed man to carry the burden of his mat on the Sabbath Day.

“But Jesus answered them, ‘My Father is working right up to the present time, and I am working too’” (John 5:17, EHV).

*That* statement was, they thought, a gift from heaven. “This is why the Jews tried all the more to kill him, because he was not merely breaking the Sabbath, but was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God” (John 5:18, EHV). They were convinced that Jesus had just given them another way to deflect. Blasphemy! This Jesus was actually calling himself God!

Just as the religious establishment had doubled down in their efforts to maintain the status quo, so also Jesus would soon double down. He would soon give a number of “I am” statements, by which he would point them to the truth that he was the same “I am” God who had spoken to Moses.

Even now, he doubled down. “Jesus answered them directly, ‘Amen, Amen, I tell you: The Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing. Indeed, the Son does exactly what the Father does’” (John 5:19, EHV). Jesus says it is impossible for him to break any law, even the Sabbath laws, because he came to earth to do the Father’s will. In fact, he says, everything the Father does is part of the Son’s work—part of Jesus’ work.

His enemies must have been apoplectic. The efforts to deflect attention from Jesus’ miracle to Jesus command to the healed man which seemed to violate the Sabbath laws caused them to completely miss something far more important.

“For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing. And he will show him even greater works than these so that you will be amazed” (John 5:20, EHV). The miracles of Jesus were impressive. Literally dozens of people were waiting for the waters to be stirred so each one could have his or her helper get them to the water first, which was said to be able to heal them. This man had no one to help him. He was the most pathetic figure pool-side. There was no way he could ever be the first to make it to the water, but day after day he held out hope regardless. He had been trying for 38 years without success.

All Jesus did was to say: “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk” (John 5:8, EHV). It was a stunning display.

Those in the status quo thought only about their power. The crowds of people who experienced Jesus’ miracles of feeding the masses thought only about their stomachs and what he could do to keep them warm and well-fed. Those who saw miracles of healing thought about how wonderful it would be if and when Jesus would do away with any need for hospitals and medical care.

Jesus said there would be “...even greater works than these” (John 5:20, EHV).

Do *you* focus on the miracles? No, not the ones Jesus performed in the Bible, but those you ask him for today. When things go wrong in our lives today, we often look to God and hold out hope. After all, we say, God can work miracles. That is certainly true. There is nothing wrong with praying to the Author of life to send healing, if it his will.

But do we get so focused on the problem right out in front of us that we forget that Jesus has done even greater works than these? After all, in the overall scheme of things, healing and food and turning water into wine are small, even insignificant things.

### III.

“For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to those he wishes” (John 5:21, EHV). Here’s one of those greater things. This should have gotten the attention of everyone who heard him that day; it should get our attention, as

well. The Jews had accused Jesus of being a lawbreaker, but if he had the power to raise the dead, they should have figured out that it would be best to leave him well enough alone.

Jesus had the power to raise the dead because of his own perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world. To be sure, that lay in his future as he spoke these words, but it was as sure and certain as if it had already happened. Jesus had said: “The Son does exactly what the Father does” (John 5:19, EHV). The will of God the Father and God the Son are perfectly aligned. Jesus knew the plan and was carrying it out to perfection. It was the perfectly-carried-out plan of redemption that made it possible for Jesus to raise people from the dead. His work of redemption was a far greater work than these little miracles Jesus performed. Raising people from the dead was a far greater work that came as a result of his miracle of redemption. Rather than looking at the little things, we want to fix our eyes on the *real* miracle and the real prize—heaven awaits because Jesus did even greater works than these.

#### IV.

“In fact, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, <sup>23</sup>so that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father” (John 5:22-23, EHV). Today is the Sunday called “Last Judgment” in our church year. Jesus, because his will and works are completely aligned with the Heavenly Father, is entrusted with the judgment of the world. What an honor!

“All should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him” (John 5:23, EHV). Those who once denounced him in an effort to maintain the status quo did not honor the Son, and therefore did not honor the Father who sent him. All others who focus on miracles or the example of Jesus or anything else to the exclusion of the greater things of his suffering, death, and resurrection for the sins of the world do not honor the Son and therefore do not honor the Father who sent him.

“Amen, Amen, I tell you: Anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He is not going to come into judgment but has crossed over from death to life” (John 5:24, EHV). Listen to Jesus. Believe in him and the Father who sent him. With the gift of faith, you experience the greater things than that—you experience the eternal life Jesus won for you and *wants* for you.

“For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing. And he will show him even greater works than these so that you will be amazed” (John 5:20, EHV). Be amazed. Every day—be amazed. The greater works Jesus has done give you real hope for your eternal future. Nothing can be greater than that. Amen.