Sharing the Word- John 5:19-24 PM

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[0:00] Listen, if you wouldn't call yourself a Christian here tonight, I'm really pleased you came. This was a good one for you to come to. I hope you find this really interesting. If you are a Christian, I hope that you're going to find this inspiring.

I hope you'll find this encouraging. And I've got great news for you. You've got a job to do. Now, let me start by telling you of a business meeting I had with a young guy just a few months ago.
He came to see me for the very first time. And he said this, he said, I've got a great partner. I've got three great kids. I've got an Audi on the drive of a really lovely house.
And I've got a good job. Tell me, Richard, you've been around a long time. That cannot be all there is. He said, I hear that you actually look at the Bible with people.
Is that true, Richard? I said, yeah, it is. He said, well, I think I need, there's got to be more than this. Can you help me? Now, who had prepared that man? Was it me?
[0:58] No, I'd never met him before, actually. It was the Lord. He'd prepared him with an open heart. Don't be surprised when that happens with you. And then I started to go through John's gospel with him.

And we got to the end of chapter four. And I said to this guy who we're going to call Dan, I said, Dan, tell me, how are you getting on with looking at the book of John? He said, Richard, you know when you go to bed at night and your head finally at the end of an exhausting day hits your pillow and you pull your duvet up on your bed over you and you go, ah.
He said, that's how I feel every time I look at the word of God with you. Who's at work? Well, it wasn't me. It's clearly the Lord's at work, isn't it? Because the Lord is speaking to that man through his word.
I can promise you, actually, Dan's not listening to me. Dan is fixated by what the word says. And, you know, I've discovered a real shocker. The world isn't at peace with its promoted lifestyle.
Don't get sold the pup of the lie of the world. You know, Sunday magazines or the adverts you see on television all show you a world, oh, this is going to be the answer.
[2:16] You need to drive one of these. You need to be able to earn this kind of money. You need to be able to go to this kind of vacation. You need this kind of job. Whatever it is you need to be married to. A girl who smells like this perfume.

Whatever it is, is not the answer. And everywhere I go, I discover, as I said earlier, individuals actually craving a peace that passes all understanding.
And the world can't give them that peace. In fact, as I've said before, in very rough terms, do not be surprised that one person in four of your friends may well say, Actually, I'm up for meeting you to have a look at this.
Thank you for your offer. Yes, I'll see you. Now, don't be like the woman who complained at me. This was about four years ago, before the pandemic. Those days, it used to be one person in five. And she wrote me an email the day after I'd spoken. Because that morning, she'd walked out and asked the first person. And they said yes. She said, I wasn't really. I thought I had to ask five people before someone said yes.
[3:23] The first one said yes. So don't have a go at me if that happens for you. But, by the way, that meeting, that statistic, is for people like you and I.

It's not people with him. It's not trained professionals. It's about people like you and I going out into our circle and discovering that actually the Lord's at work in our circle of people.
Now, you won't like this if you are a Christian here tonight. Here is what we've discovered people say when we show them what the word says. And we get this in some form of words all around the world.

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They say this. Why? Why has no one ever shown me this before? You've been running away from the world that you think beats you up as a Christian.
Whereas, actually, when you show them what the Lord has to say, the promises of your Savior, people say, why? Why? I was in a meeting with a man.
[4:21] He thumped his desk. He said, Richard, how is it possible? I've had one of the most expensive educations that money can buy. And no one's ever shown me this before. You don't know how empty people's lives are.

They're ready for answers. Yes, in a world that says life is all about me and my rights today, people of the world actually find it stunningly helpful to see what God has to say to us.
But in their biblical ignorance today, they usually need someone to show it to them. If the Lord has prepared them in some way, they are hungry for you to turn the pages, to understand it, to apply it, to give their lives to him, the one and only Savior.
So, so worthy of honor and our worship. They say yes to looking, never because of your skill, cunning and brilliance in the way that you ask.
In every case, I discover it's because God has been at work in advance. There should, there's something in their lives preparing for when I come along. Let me give you an example.
[5:31] I want to tell you about a guy who I know who lost his wife. Now, actually, he's my accountant. And his practice is 40-something miles from my house.

So I waited after his wife had died for about three months and I drove down to see him. I said, listen, Mark, I think you'd find this incredibly comforting to have a look at what the word has to say for you.
He said yes immediately. On about our third meeting, he said, I never told you why I said yes. He said, when my wife died, our daughter was in Florida training for the British Olympic swim team. And she was sharing a room with an American girl, American swimmer, who actually knew how to show people the gospel. And one day, my daughter rang up from Florida and said, Dad, you won't believe this because as a family, we've not been churchgoers at all, he said Richard.
But he said, my daughter rings up and says, Dad, you won't believe what I'm doing. I'm looking at what the word has to say because this girl who I share a room with has started to show me and I'm finding it so helpful.
[6:36] Now, he said, you didn't know that, Richard. You drive 40 miles from your house. You turn up and you offer me the same thing. He said, I'm not an idiot. He said, I thought, you're probably meant to do this because that's exactly what the daughter is getting as well.

Who was at work? Was it me? Well, I did drive the 40 miles, but I wasn't the one who convinced him to say yes. The Lord had prepared him to say yes. So don't be surprised when that happens.
Now, you might be thinking, well, okay, this is all very interesting, but how do I ask? Well, I can promise you that what I'm about to put up on the screen is my way of asking, but I haven't met well over half a million people who are using these books.
And I certainly haven't been in 90 countries. So you will know how to ask your person. And if you stuff up the invite, it doesn't matter because actually, if the Lord has prepared that person to say yes, they're going to say yes anyway.
But let's just go through what I am saying because I hope you might find this helpful. Haven't you always thought that one day you might get around to reading the book that has sold more copies than any other in the history of printing?
[7:46] Wouldn't you expect that it has probably got some really helpful stuff in it, answers for life? Well, there is one book in the Bible that happens to start with an overview, and I would call it an executive summary in the city.

You may call it just an overview, but if you're in the city, call it an executive summary because that's what it is. I would just go back a second. Sorry, just flip back. Okay. It's unique.
There is not another thing like it, and it makes some outrageous claims. That's true. The first 18 sentences of John are absolutely unique. There is not another passage like it in the whole of the Bible.
He does have some outrageous claims about it, and I get very excited at being able to show it, which I hope you would too. Right. Let's flick to the next one. I would love to show you what are just 18 sentences.

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No, I'm not calling them verses because I'm dealing with someone who isn't from our world inside church. I'm calling them sentences because that's what they are. And by the way, I've got some really helpful notes that go alongside each sentence to assist in looking at them.
[8:55] I now tell people, by the way, those notes have gone, they're an internet sensation. They're booming around the world. It was 80 countries three months ago.

It's 90 countries now. I'm really excited about this overview and would love to show you. Please can I buy you a coffee to do so? And then this is really important.
Before they say yes or no, I tell them how it's going to end. All I will say to you is, did you enjoy that? Did you notice I didn't say, what did you make of that?
Because that's an open question. I'm not embarrassing anybody with this. I'm saying, did you enjoy that? It's a yes or no answer. If they say yes, then I say the second question.
Would you like to see what comes next? Nobody's signing up for a course here. I'm simply saying, have a cup of coffee with me. I'm really excited about these unique 18 sentences.
[9:52] All I'll say to you at the end is, did you enjoy that? Would you like to see what comes next? Well, that's an extraordinarily popular thing. Actually, I'm running at better than one in four at the moment.

But around the world, we'd say it's one in four people. Now, for a very good reason, I've given this talk a title, Have we nailed what sin is?
And it's the reason I asked for the reading of John 5. You see, I've also discovered that Christians and non-Christians alike around the world both get confused as to the difference between sin and sins.
To find out what Jesus says about us and our sinful lives, we need to take apart the reading we had tonight. So we're going to go back and look at John 5. And we're going to look at verse 22 to start with, sentence 22 of John 5.
It says this, Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son. So Jesus is not just the creator of the universe, which is what the first 18 sentences of John tell us.
[11:04] He's been given by God the task of being your judge and my judge. You know, you might be sitting here tonight going, Well, Richard, this is old house.

I know this. You know, please, I know this. What are you going to say? What's the relevance of this to me? Well, I'm going to ask, Have you really thought through the implications of what Jesus says next?
Because I want you to look really carefully at sentence 23. It says this, That all may honour the Son just as they honour the Father.
Whoever does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him. Now, I can tell you, as we go through, John, in my coffee sessions with my friends, when we get to this, this is the big shocker.
It's not what they expected. It causes a real sensation. Why? Because it raises the question that's a vital one. What is my sin?
[12:08] The answer, if I'm not honouring Jesus, giving my whole life to Jesus, because I've understood that he died on that cross to pay a price for my sins, that I cannot pay.

If I'm not doing that, then I cannot be right with God. It's not about whether I've been doing good things in my life. It's whether I have fully given my life to Jesus in recognition of what Jesus has done for me.
It's just not about whether I've been good enough. No, if Jesus is my judge, No, if Jesus is my judge, has taken my punishment for my sins, then to honour him is first of all to believe in him by accepting who he is, and fully realising what he has done for me.
Only then can I talk of giving my life to him. I'll repeat that. Living our lives for him is the natural outcome of honouring him.
Not in my strength, but by putting my faith in him and his work on the cross, and therefore asking my Saviour what he would have me do in his strength.
[13:31] Being right with God is entirely about whether we have truly honoured Jesus, and therefore fulfilment in your life lies entirely in his hands.

You want proof? Well, let's look at verse 24. Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and will not be judged, but has crossed over from death to life.

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You see what the word of God says? Through trusting our lives to Jesus, putting our faith every day in Jesus, not in ourselves, we can have started eternity now.
Right now. Let's read it again. Whoever hears my word and believes him who has sent me has, not will have, has eternal life, and will not be judged.
There's no interview at the gates of heaven in order to get in. People often say to me, oh, but Richard, it would only be fair that there was an interview. Because that's the society that we're told.
[14:38] It's all about judging you. Have you been good enough? Did you give enough money to charity? Did you try your best? That's not the question that's going to be asked. Have you honoured God by honouring his son, and what his son did for you on that cross?

Now look, this body I'm dressed in is like a suit. And I can tell you that in my late 60s, it's showing signs of real wear and tear. For a start, I'm shorter than when I got married.
And I've got to be very careful what I say next, because she's sitting right here. One day, this suit is going to hit the floor, and Elvis will have exited the building. But if you've ever seen someone who has died, you know that this is not the real person.
They've gone. As John writes, they've crossed over from death to life. And for the Christian, that is with certainty. Not in our goodness, but in the saving grace of the Saviour, and the wonderfully fulfilling life that he empowers you to walk.
When we walk towards God at the gates of heaven, what do you think he sees? He sees you paid for, washed clean by the sacrificial blood of the Lamb of God.
[15:57] He sees, not you, he sees his son. You've been paid for. My point today? Well, it's one thing to have taken this in as a truth understood.

It's another thing to worship in every area of our lives, or, as we've just been described, to honour Jesus.
To lay at his feet every part of our lives and ask Jesus, what would you have me do? You've paid for me. You've adopted me.
I'm your child. I'm in your family. Now, look, let's get practical. What do I mean? Well, personally, I think for years I was doing this.
I was going, Lord, I want all the blessings. Please, the blessings are great. Being a Christian, the blessings. Thanks very much. I'll have all of that. Don't touch that area of my life. I've got that sorted. Thanks very much. Keep your hands off that.
[16:55] Don't need you to interfere with that, but can I have the blessings, please? I actually had to realise, no. Kneeling at the foot of the cross, if I really wanted to live a fulfilled life, I had to do this.

Bring it on. It's not going to be easy. I've had corners knocked off me. I didn't even know I had. It's no wonder I'm shorter than I used to be. Literally, I've had to say, no, Lord, bring it on.
And the blessing, the poured out blessing of seeing him at work because he's given me a job to do. He's given you a job to do.
We're his children. What he says to you is this. Don't run away and just sit with each other. Get out there. I've got a job to do. Come and sit with me. I've prepared your friend.
That person in the office, you can't believe would even say yes. The one at school, who you've always found difficult. They may be the one. Go find out who I have prepared because when you sit with that person, I will be with you.
[18:02] They won't be listening to you, by the way. They'll be listening to me. You will be aware of my spirit. You know, I'm not surprised if you're sitting there tonight and the Lord's beginning to put in your mind names of people that you could take this and start doing it with.

Don't be surprised at that. You may have to ask four before you. It might even be nine because it's an average around the world. So don't get put off if you get to four and you still haven't found yours. Keep asking.
It comes out at roughly one in four eventually. But you may well have to find where the Lord has prepared that person because they will be at work, not you at work.
Well, it's a fantastic position to be in. I needed to fall at the foot of the cross and welcome Jesus with open arms to find out what he had in store for me.
Expressed another way, what's your prayer life like? Are we saying to God, please bless today what I have decided, what I am up to?
[19:06] Please bless my plans. Or are we sinking to our knees each day and asking, Lord, what are you up to today in my circle of influence? Please can I have a part to play in what you have

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planned?

In other words, am I really accepting that he knows best what is right for me today? Where am I going to draw most comfort? By worrying myself stupid or by throwing myself into his loving, fatherly arms?
Letting him carry me where I don't even know sometimes how to pray. You see, from these verses, this is the saviour we have.
He is all-knowing, all-powerful, the creator of the universe. He brings the light into my life to guide, to rejoice in the magnificent view from the top of the mountain on a crisp, clear day.
You're so lucky you live near Whistler. You know what I mean if you've seen that view from the top of the mountain. And yet equally, he's the same saviour who will carry me through the fog of despair when I can't see the way ahead.
[20:18] A saviour not to be taken lightly, worshipped only on a Sunday in church, but to be worshipped, honoured, every minute of every day. The key to this life and actually the life to come.

Have we really given ourselves to who Jesus is? Been humbled as to why we should worship and adore him? Really given our lives to him in honour and obedience?
Have we asked him what his answer is for you to grow as a Christian and live a fulfilled life? Well, let me tell you as I come to the end about a guy who rang me from Durban, a big church in South Africa.
He rang me up. He said, are you sitting down, Richard? I said, yes, I am. He said, good, because I've got shocking news. He said, we've discovered that the gospel is by far the most evangelistic tool we've ever seen.
I said, do you seriously rang me from South Africa to tell me that? He said, no, the reason I rang you actually, Richard, is that our church has started to use the word one-to-one. And I'll tell you what it's done to us.
[21:25] What's happened is our church members are taking off in their faith. He said, they go out, they find God has prepared the heart of someone in their own circle of contacts from above the age of 12 right up into their 90s, and they've offered a cup of coffee or a drink, and they see a stunning start of John unfold with their friends saying, why has no one ever shown me this before?

Then they discover that the Holy Spirit is with them as they turn the pages, and that's what I'm asking you to be tonight. Not an evangelist. I'm suggesting you become a page turner, a Bible sharer.
They find the person is fixated by what the word says, not by what the Christian says. And the gospel train, well, that just chugs from verse, sentence, sentence, sentence, and the individual wants to see what Jesus has to say to them next.
He says, as for us as a church, he said, we've never seen a discipleship training program like it. The Lord is training them as they carry out his great commission. It's pushing us now to send them out, say, no, don't come to our training.
Get the gospel. Go take it with the Lord. He'll train you. It's transformed our prayer meetings, he said. No longer is it please pray for my exam. Or please pray for my interview.
[22:55] Or great aunt Agatha's cat has got rheumatism. Please pray for that. That's gone, he said. What's now is George has said yes. Mary is going to reach John chapter 5 next week.

Please pray for Mary. Penny is going to be looking at John chapter 3. Please pray for her as she sees what the Lord has to say. And they're coming back to church and they're getting hold of the likes of Aaron and they're literally getting hold of him.
He hasn't got a jacket on. If he had a jacket on as they did this morning, I got hold of Chris's jacket. We're coming back into church saying, teach me more.
I have now seen the Lord at work amongst my own circle of friends this week. What else is in this book? Teach me more, Aaron. I want to know. And by the way, can I introduce my friends? Because they've started to be interested in Jesus. So therefore, they've started to come with me to church. You know, it's an amazing thing to see the word at work. I want to tell you about a friend of mine called Martin.
[23:59] I bought Martin coffee for 15 months. And one day, I always paid for the coffee. And one day, my phone went and it was Martin. And Martin rang up and he said, Richard, I'd like to buy you a coffee.

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I thought, result, at long last, you're going to buy me a coffee. I sat down with him. He said, Richard, I knelt at the foot of the cross last night. I said, that's brilliant, Martin. What took you there?
It was nothing you said. 15 months of buying the coffee. It was nothing you said. He said, Richard, I never got over the first six words. In the beginning was the word.
He said, it went into my mind like a branding iron on a piece of steak. Sizzle. In the beginning, he said, that guy, Richard Dawkins, that they all talk about, the famous atheist, the man's an idiot. There has to have been a beginning. There's a beginning. And who was there at the beginning? God was there at the beginning. In the beginning was the word.
[25:02] And then he said, actually, John, not you, Richard, went on to tell me who the word was, what the word had come to do, how the word died on the cross for me, how he raised victorious from the grave, and how he offered me a Holy Spirit-empowered life with him.

That's what I've got, Richard. It was nothing you said. Well, isn't that a great relief? It's not about you. It's about the Lord being at work.
Absolutely fantastic to discover what the Lord is doing. I'm addicted to that. I love going out and discovering, Lord, where are you at work?
It's phenomenal to see. Want to stop draining out as a Christian every week? Do you believe that God knows all about your circle of contacts? And just might have prepared someone for you to take his living word to?
And he will be with you as you do? Want your faith to be as on fire as it was when you first became a Christian? as you honour and worship your Saviour hand in hand with his great commission employing you because he's got a job for you to do.
[26:18] And here's the sentence I really want you to think about. Don't let your faith be just about you. Grab word one-to-one and start prayerfully asking your contacts.

Get tickets for Tuesday morning. Oh no, that's sold out. We can't do that. Come Tuesday night and find out how you can actually use this more and more. I'll answer all your questions on Tuesday night.
Do that. You want a peace that passes all our standing? You want to have certainty about your eternity with God? There is just one answer and there has always only ever been one answer.
It's all about honouring Jesus. And it does mean asking him who have you prepared Lord for your word in my circle of connections?
Let's go back and look at John 5 23 to 24 again as I finish. Let's just look at it again. That all may honour the Son just as they honour the Father.
[27:26] Whoever does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him. That's sin. Very truly I tell you whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but is crossed over from death to life.

Let's close with that prayer I mentioned earlier. Lord what are you up to today in my circle of influence? Please can I have a part in what you have planned?
Please put in my mind people that I could take your word to. And all God's people said Amen. Now can I just say this might all be new to you tonight.
You don't know what it would look like to pray to ask Jesus into your life. Well I've got a prayer that has been proven to be very helpful for people all around the world and there are copies of it just down here.
You don't have to ask me for one just come and grab one if you'd like to see what it would look like. You may not feel ready to pray it but it might be really helpful to read it and keep it so that one day you would say do you know what I'm ready like Martin because I've discovered he is the saviour that I've been waiting for.
[28:51] The answer for eternity. Thank you very much for listening.

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