

St. Peter Lutheran Church  
March 22, 2026  
Fifth Sunday in Lent (Judica)  
John 8:42-59a

**Which of you convicts Me of sin?** Go ahead, and try, Jesus provokes his enemies. How will anyone be able to bring a charge against Him unless it is false? Christ is without sin. His life is blameless.

**And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?** Now Christ defends His teaching—proclaiming it to be truthful in every way. And if He speaks only truth, those who refuse His teachings necessarily remain in error.

These two things—one’s life and one’s doctrine—these are always attacked in Christ, in those who follow him, and in those who continue proclaiming His holy Word. Both attacks must be guarded against by Christians and especially preachers. One’s life must be above reproach so that the name of Jesus is not sullied, and that the teaching of Jesus is heard. One’s doctrine must be true according to God’s word, that He not be misrepresented, and that souls may not be led into error and false faith.

Our preachers are not without sin as Christ was, but nonetheless, they must be blameless in the eyes of men. But their teaching, this must be blameless before men and God, that they might be able to stand in the judgment.

So Christ challenges the unbelieving Jews—boasting both His perfect life and His perfect teaching, daring them to bring a condemnation against Him or speak against His word—for in both cases, they will be made liars.

So Jesus convicts them—He says, **“He who is of God hears God’s words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.”** Jesus words are God’s words. The Jews claimed to worship God, they claimed His Word to be their Scriptures, and yet, the Word made flesh, speaking to them, they will not hear. Why? They are not of God. Which of course means they are of the devil, captives of his kingdom, lost, and condemned. Jesus says to these Jews, sons of Abraham according to the flesh, that they are not children of God. If they were, they would hear Him.

The Jews are inflamed by Jesus’ accusation—how dare He say they are not the people of God? This is their boast, though what they truly glory in is their flesh, and not God. So **the Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?”** Here, they slander both Jesus’ doctrine and His life—‘You are a Samaritan’ is a slandering of Jesus’ life—‘you are among the people that God’s people despise’ they say. ‘You have a demon’ is an attack on his teaching, ascribing them to the devil and not to God. Should one remain firm in God’s word, these arrows will be shot against him, slanders both against his

life and his teaching—those of the synagogue of Satan will feign to be the people of God and accuse the people of God of exactly what they themselves are.

And what is our Lord's response? He allows His life to be slandered by defends His doctrine. So must those do who preach God's Word. For our lives we are willing to give up entirely for the sake of the Gospel should the enemies take them. But the doctrine—the doctrine is God's—and we must defend it. So **Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My father, and you dishonor Me. And I do not seek My own glory; there is One who seeks and judges."** The Father will require it of those who do not receive Jesus and His words.

Then Jesus says, **"Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death."** The very word that they are rejecting is the word that gives life. They are of the devil, who cannot give life, but was a murderer from the beginning. However, those who are of God receive Jesus' words and never see death. God alone gives life. Jesus' teaching is not only true but has power over Satan, death, and sin, and gives eternal life.

Christ suffered and died for our sins and rose again from death to set us free—whoever believes this and is baptized will be saved. And so the Word of Christ must come to us—we must hear His word, receive it, believe it, and believing, have life. We would not know Christ unless He came to us embodied in His word—the Word preached to us, the Word combined with the water that cleansed us, the Word with which he gives us His body and blood. Christ, by His Word, bespeaks us righteous for the sake of his suffering and death. Through faith in His word, we receive all that His death won for us.

Holding onto that Word in our hearts by faith, we never see death. Yes, we die like all the wicked, but for us who hold the Word of Christ in faith, death is no longer a terror that consumes us, but a sweet sleep to await the voice of Jesus to wake us. We will pass through it unharmed to live forever. It cannot hurt us. For the wicked it is not so. For those who despise Christ and His Word, death is an enemy that will take them forever. Eternal death awaits those who despise the word of Christ. So in this battle we face, keep and hold the word of Christ! Sin bites, death presses upon us, and hell faces us—but we keep the word of Christ! We march into death holding Jesus's word, even as the Israelites marched into the Red Sea holding His word of promise. What looks like death and destruction, is for us life and salvation, safe passageway. But for those not holding Christ's word, it is bitter and eternal death.

**Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.' Are you greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?"**

Yes, Abraham is asleep, but he is alive. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. The prophets also now rest in the Lord. But their souls see no corruption, even as their bodies have decayed. And Christ, who redeemed them in body and soul will raise them up on the last day.

Jesus says, **“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.”** And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. But for those who do not hear Christ’s word and believe him, death is their lot forever.

**Jesus answered, “If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God.”** And God does glorify His Son. He raises Him up on a cross to draw all men to Himself, and He raises Him up out of His tomb and seats Him at His right hand, with all authority in heaven and earth given to Him. He is given the name above every name.

The Jews should have known this would be the case—Abraham knew it. For Abraham had known God, while they are in darkness. The One Jesus claims to have come from, they claim to have Him as their God. But they don’t know Him—Jesus knows Him. And Jesus reveals Him to us. In fact, whoever has seen Jesus has seen the Father.

So Abraham himself had seen Jesus and known God, for He believed the promises of God concerning the Christ—that from Abraham’s seed would come forth the Seed in whom the nations of the earth are blessed. Abraham rejoiced to see Jesus’ day—not in fulfillment, but in promise—**and he saw it and was glad.**

The Jews, fixated on earthly things, say, **“You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?”** And Jesus’s response shows why His word has such great power. **Jesus said to them, “Before Abraham was, I AM.”** Jesus speaks of His divine nature, His essence as very God of very God, who is not created or made, but who, in His very nature, exists from before all worlds and into all eternity. I AM WHO I AM. Jesus says He is God.

So, He either is a blasphemer, a lunatic, or His word is true. The Jews selected the first option because they were not of God. And so **they took up stones to throw at Him. But Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.** They would not believe that God should become man. So Christ hides Himself from them and goes out of their temple, so that they cannot find Him, even as they diligently search the Scriptures. **Their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.**

Christ is no blasphemer or lunatic. He honors His Father. He speaks God’s words. He is who He says He is. He is God. If the person who died for us were not God, what help would he give? But since Jesus is God, His death secures blessing and victory for all sinners. His word, kept in faith, delivers from sin, death, and hell. God grant us to hear and keep Christ’s word and protect us from despising it. For His word delivers us from all evil, for He is Lord, and He is God.