

John 5:16-30

Like Father, Like Son

Introduction

One of the things I hope we're learning as we make our way through John's Gospel... is that **you may not know Jesus** as well as **you think** that you know Him...

Many of us have **grown up in church** learning about Jesus; we sing songs about Him, we read books, we even tell others about the things that He has said...

In fact many of us have even been around Jesus **so long...** that we've actually started to become familiar with Jesus!

That's actually **one of the dangers** of celebrating Christmas every single year – Christmas starts to become commonplace in our lives – a pragmatic event that we so often **slip right into** rather than stand in awe, wonder, and amazement that God became flesh!

But hopefully if you hang around Jesus for **a considerable amount of time** – I mean really pay attention...

He's probably going to say some things that are **actually quite shocking...** definitely confusing – **perhaps even scandalous!**

He certainly surprised many of His first century hearers back in the days of His ministry... He managed to shock many of the early Christians living in the time of book of Acts and in the time of Romans – He continued to shock those in the days of Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli...

And if we're **really paying attention** friends – Jesus is certainly going to shock **many of us** living in 21st century Brisbane here today...

John 5

And here in our passage, we find a number of **shocking statements** made by Jesus – specifically outlining His divine nature, and the glory He shares with His divine Father!

Jesus **pulls back the curtain** (if you will) – the curtain of His divinity – the curtain of His equality – and He gives to us a number of theological statements **that in hindsight** are actually stunning for us to see!

And hopefully as we consider these claims made by Jesus, that you & I will continue to grow in our love and affection for Jesus more than we ever have, **so that we can honour and love Him in 2022 and beyond!**

Main Point

The main point that I want us to see as we come to this gloriously dense passage of Scripture, is that:

We must honour the Son because of His ability to give life and to judge!

- Jesus gives Life!
- Jesus is the Judge!

Jesus is God

So John chapter 5 **beginning at verse 17** – here's the first shocking claim that Jesus makes:

Jesus responded to them my Father is still working, and I am working also!

Now...remember last time the context in which Jesus is saying these words:

- Jesus has just healed the paralytic man at the pool of Bethesda!
- A man who had been paralysed for 38 years of his life!
- Jesus comes along; He commands the man to take up his mat and walk!
- The man in obedience to the command takes up his mat and walks!
- And then John conspicuously says that **the day upon which** all of this took place was the Jewish Sabbath...

*And so this is why [verse 16] the Jews began to **persecute** Jesus... because He was doing these things on the Sabbath...*

They were more interested in the law being broken than in the man being made whole!

They were more interested in **honouring their traditions** – than **honouring the Son!**

Now the irony of course is that **they thought** they had been honouring the Father, by honouring the Sabbath!

But what Jesus says is that **they need to start honouring the Father** by honouring the Son!

Jesus' Response

And so **in response** to this – Jesus makes **2 fundamental claims** – as to why **He alone** has the power and authority to do these things even on the Sabbath day!

2 **shocking statements** made by Christ as to why **He is equal** to the Father and thus able to do all that the Father does – and the first one is this:

Jesus claims to have **the same divine prerogatives** as God Himself!

This is what we see in verse 17:

*Jesus responded to them **my Father is still working, and I am working as well....***

See among the Jews in Jesus' day there was this debate about **whether or not** God had to obey the Sabbath...

Whether or not God had rested from **everyone of His works** (providence, power, provision, dominion) – or whether He had simply rested from His creative work of speaking the world into existence...

And **by and large** the majority consensus seemed to be that **the One Person** who **could not cease** from doing any work **even on the Sabbath** was God Himself!

That if God were to stop His providential work (of sustaining the world) – then the entire universe would fall to pieces **the moment He chose to rest!**

Because God upholds the **world** by the **Word** of His power!

And so Jesus enters into the debate – by claiming to work **even on the Sabbath** as His heavenly Father – Jesus was claiming to have **the very same power, authority, and status** as God Himself!

Jesus claims to have **the very same prerogatives** as God Himself to **work and to will** on the Sabbath!

So that's **strike one!**

Father

The second thing that Jesus says, is that He claims to have **not just equality** with God – but **divinity with God!**

That is:

Jesus claims to **share in the divine nature** as God's Son...

Have a look at verse 18 – John says:

*This is why the Jews began trying **all the more** to kill Him (so first they wanted to persecute now they want to Kill Him) – because not only was He breaking the Sabbath (which He wasn't), but He was even calling God His own Father, ***making Himself equal to God...****

Now remember last week when Ian **so wonderfully explained** that in Jewish Bible – to be a Son of God meant that you were a **carbon copy** of your Father!

In these days of the pre-industrial revolution sons did whatever their father's did!

- If you were the son of a **baker** – you would grow up and become a **baker**...

- If you were the son of a **carpenter** –you would grow up to be a **carpenter**!
- If you were the son of **blacksmith** – you would grow up to become a **blacksmith**!

You wouldn't go off and do something else – you would **always grow up** following in **the footsteps** of your Father's trade!

This is what Jesus says in verse 20:

For the Father loves the Son and shows Him everything He is doing...

It's the ancient belief known as the doctrine of Sonship!

Sons did everything their father's did – because sons were in the same family business; they were in the same category as their father!

But see the Jews understood that **throughout the history of Israel** – **only in the collective sense** could they be called the Sons and daughters of God...

That only in the *corporate* sense could they be called children of the Most High!

And so **no Jew would ever think** to refer to Himself as THE Son of God; THE Child of God; as THE One who comes from the bosom of the Father!

And so by Jesus claiming to be God's Son – He was **in their minds** making Himself equal to God and thus challenging the very maxim of Jewish religion – He was challenging the very bedrock of their faith – that:

Behold O Israel the LORD our God; the LORD is One!

They thought that Jesus was making Himself a rival deity to God the Father **but in reality** Jesus was simply correcting **their false interpretation** of how they understood the Old Testament Scriptures!

Further Confirmation

And we know this because **Jesus doesn't once try to correct them!**

Did you notice?!?!

Jesus **doesn't once go back on** the claim that He is equal to God!

I mean if ever there was a time where Jesus could have corrected their false interpretation this would be the time!

If ever there was a time for Jesus to say:

No no no – you've misunderstood what I was saying – Now would be that time!

But notice He doesn't do that!

But rather Jesus (**in His divinity**) goes even further into claiming divine status with God Himself!

Life & Judgment

And what we need to see clearly here is that Jesus teaches us that **as God's Son** He has the unique authority from God the Father **to do 2 things**:

1. To give life!
2. And to judge!

And by pointing out those **2 things** I think Jesus here is wanting to include **everything else in between those 2 actions!**

To give life – and to judge!

And at the heart of **these 2 attributes** is the declaration made by the Son in verse 20 – that:

The Father loves the Son...The Father loves the Son and shows Him

everything He is doing...

Friends as I was considering the passage this week and mulling over the implications – I really think that is at the heart of this entire chapter...

That father loves the Son...and shows Him everything He is doing...

And if the Father loves the Son – then **what must our attitude be** toward the Son...but nothing less than loving the Son also!

What is John 5 really about – Love the Son

Life

2 reasons as to why we must love the Son and honour Him as God in the flesh – firstly:

Jesus Christ has the ability to give new life

Verse 19:

*Jesus replied, “Truly I tell you, the Son is **not able to do anything** on His own, but **only what He sees the Father doing**. For whatever the Father does, the Son likewise does these things.²⁰ For the Father loves the Son and shows Him everything He is doing, and He will show Him greater works than these so that you will be amazed.*

The Trinity

Now I think the greater works that Jesus refers to is His ability to raise the dead and to judge them on the final day!

Greater works than simply raising a lame man from a mat – is that the Son of God is going to raise **dead people from the grave** be their ultimate judge in eternity & beyond...

Now know some theologians want to argue here that because:

The Son is not able to do anything on His own...that He's somehow inferior to the Father!

But that **merely misses the point** of what Jesus was trying to do!

Jesus wasn't trying to say He's **inferior** – but He was merely establishing the **sound doctrine** of the Trinity that:

We believe in one God; who eternally exists in three distinct Persons; and even though those 3 persons are co-equal with God; those 3 Persons have distinct roles in God!

The Father elects!

The Son obtains!

And the Spirit applies!

The son submits to the Father – the Spirit submits to the Father & Son – and all 3 Persons are **one in essence** yet distinct in function!

As Paul says in Philippians chapter 2:

Though He was equal to God the Father, He did not count equality with God as something to be grasped but humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death; even death on a cross!

No Rivals

And so Jesus **carefully defines** His equality with God by speaking of it in terms of His submission to God:

That although He is in fact equal to God in essence (John 17:5) – He is **at the same time** submissive to God in function!

What the Old Testament had alluded to in shadowy form – Jesus declares in the full light of day!

And focussing here on His relationship to the Father – Jesus declares that all they do – **they do together!**

It's never the case that one member of the Trinity does something while the others are **disinterested or uninvolved** – but rather Jesus says:

All members **are in full agreement** with the sovereign Plan of salvation!

Application #1

And that's **very good news** for us here this morning – because it means that **there is no divided purpose** within the Trinity!

That God the Father **does not reject** the Son's sacrifice on the cross – but His atoning work was the Father's will!

Knowing that when it comes to our salvation, the Father does NOT regret saving you!

The Spirit does NOT regret making you alive!

You're not surprising Jesus with your sin – but Jesus and God are co-equal and co-operational in their love for you and for one another!

And that's really good news to know that the **whole Triune God** has sovereignly purchased for Himself your eternal soul!

And so:

*Whatever the Father does, the Son likewise does **and at the same time** the Son submits to the Father!*

Eternal Life

So let's keep reading verse 21:

And just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so the Son also gives life to whom He wants.²² The Father, in fact, judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son,²³ so that all people may honour the Son just as they honour the Father. Anyone who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent Him. Truly I tell you, anyone who hears my

word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life and will not come under judgment but has passed from death to life. Truly I tell you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in Himself, so also He has granted to the Son to have life in Himself...

Lazarus

Now if you know John's Gospel, you know that pretty soon **Jesus is going to** raise Lazarus in John chapter 11 – that Jesus will show Himself **to have life in Himself** by raising His friend from the dead – proving that He and the Father are One!

Now that could be what this is referring to here (physical resurrection) — but much **more likely I think** this is referring to Spiritual resurrection...

That Jesus is able to give new life to those who are dead **in trespasses and sins** – and those who hear His voice and believe in Him will pass from death to life!

And so I think this is referring to a Spiritual resurrection – that is **not just something** we get **when we die** – but something we get now; here; today!!!

The healing of the man was a sign for them that **now was the time** for eternal life – **now was the time** to believe in Jesus because of who He is!

Just like the woman at the well – just like the Samaritan city – and just the Official and his son – those who believe His word **have life** – and all those who reject His word have death!

Gospel Call

And this is really at the heart of John's Gospel – this is **the whole reason** why John is writing this account!

That if you are here this morning **NOT** yet **trusting in** Jesus for eternal life – **we are so glad you're here** – but **you are in grave danger** of listening to this sermon; and not trusting in Jesus!

Because **the Bible tells us** that those who hear **the Word of Truth** and yet **reject the Word of Truth** are under **greater condemnation** for knowing the truth but choosing to reject it!

Man

And the truth that we find in the verses is that:

Each and every one of us here this morning are hopelessly lost in our sins...lost without Christ!

We are all sinful, we are all wicked, we are all bad people!

Each and every one of us **deserve nothing less** than the full weight, and punishment for our sins committed against God!

Because we've all broken God's Holy standard and now stand condemned under the full weight of His just judgement!

Christ

But friends the Good News of the Gospel declares to us that although we are sinful – Jesus is sinless!

Jesus Christ Himself **has come into the world** as the light & life of men!

He came **in the likeness of sinful flesh in order to** condemn our sin **in the flesh!**

Jesus Christ is both **Fully God & Fully man** and He lived the life that we could never live – and He died the death that we could never die – **satisfying the eternal wrath** of the Father that our sins had accosted!

And God killed His Son on that Roman tree and He was buried therefore in a **Jewish tomb** showing us that **Christ really did take the payment** we deserve...

Response

God then raises Him from the dead 3 days later, vindicating the claims that Jesus has life in Himself!

And now God calls **all men everywhere** to repent – to turn from their sin and to trust in the finished work of Jesus **Christ** – **so that** the wrath **that we deserve** – is poured out onto the Son setting us free from our sins!

O Friends I hope that you **will not leave here today** without making sure that you have eternal life in the son of God!

Judge

Because Jesus says that if you leave here today **NOT trusting in the Son** – not trusting in the goodness of Christ **for eternal life** – then there is a time coming when you will **hear the voice of the Son of God** and will stand before Him in judgement and wrath because of your sin...

That if you don't receive the Son of God **in this life** – then there will be a final judgement of death for your sin **in the next life!**

And this is what Jesus goes on to unpack in **the second part of our text:**

That we must love the Son because of His ability to **NOT just** give life but:

To judge!

Have a look at verse 28 – Jesus says:

Do not be amazed at this, because a time is coming... now just stop...

Verse 25 had said: An hour is coming **and is now here**...

But verse 28 is saying: A time is coming **that is not yet here...**

So one is immediate – and one is in the future!

One speaks of present eternal spiritual life – the other speaks of final future physical judgement!

Do not be amazed at this, because a time is coming (in the future) when all who are in the graves will hear His voice ²⁹ and come out—those who have done good things, to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked things, to the resurrection of condemnation. ³⁰ “I can do nothing on my own. I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will, but the will of Him who sent me...

Son of Man

So, notice the passage began with the authority of Christ to heal on the Sabbath – but now ends with His authority to judge on the last day!

And Jesus (in issuing this statement) has a **particularly useful** part of the Old Testament to point them to – it’s the Old Testament book of Daniel! –Daniel chapter 7!

So if you wanna know how a first-century Jew would have interpreted the words of Jesus – Daniel chapter 7 is the key to seeing it!

Now **feel free to turn there** in your bibles – otherwise let me just read for you from the Book of Daniel chapter 7...

Daniel 7 beginning at verse 9 – Daniel writes:

*Now as I kept watching thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took His seat. His clothing was white like snow, and the hair of His head like whitest wool. His throne was flaming fire; and its wheels were blazing fire. ¹⁰ And a river of fire was flowing, coming out from His presence. [Now just so you know fire in the bible... sign of judgment; not every time but most times it’s mentioned with the presence of God – it is speaking of judgment] – now thousands upon thousands served Him; ten thousand **times** ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened...*

And then look down just a few verses to verse 13:

And suddenly one like a Son of Man was coming with the clouds of heaven. And He approached the Ancient of Days and was escorted before Him. ¹⁴ He was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, so that those of every people, nation, and language should serve Him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and His kingdom is one that will not be destroyed...

Now friends these are the themes that Jesus takes up with the Jewish Religious leaders **at the time of His ministry** to explain to them **who He is!**

Who is **this one** who has power, and authority, from God Himself to raise a lame man from His mat – or to claim to have the same divine prerogatives as God Himself!

And Jesus in explaining His nature is alluding to this Old Testament passage in Daniel; which is a passage they would know – and **from it** begins to explain to them **His relationship with the Father!**

So that He can show to them that the Father's purpose in entrusting all judgement to the Son **is that** all may honour the Son **just as they honour the Father!**

And He picks a particularly **well-known passage of scripture** they would know – one they had taught, and known and loved in the temple!

And so **in all of this** friends we see what Jesus is trying to do – Jesus is ratcheting up His claim to be God in the flesh:

1. First in His ability to work on the Sabbath!
2. Second in His ability to be The Son of God!
3. Third in His ability to do everything the Father does!
4. Fourth in His ability to have life in Himself!
5. Fifth in His ability to grant that life that the Father has!
6. Sixth in His ability to raise the dead from the tombs!
7. And seven in His ability to judge those who are raised:

- One group will go to eternal judgment!
- The other will go to eternal life!

And the **only difference** between those 2 locations (eternal life & eternal judgment) is **what they will do** with the Son – That's the whole point Jesus is making here:

Whatever you do with the Son will determine whether or not you honour the Father!

John says that those who reject the Word (reject the Son) and reject his claim expose themselves to be:

1. Doers of evil – they will rise to a resurrection of judgement and be eternally condemned in hell because of their sin committed against the Father!

But those **who accept the Word** (who believe in Jesus and trust Him for eternal life) will expose themselves to be:

2. Doers of good – and they will rise to a resurrection of life in Him!

Final Warning

Friends:

I don't know if you've missed some appointments in the these few days, but I promise you this – this is one appointment **you will not miss!**

On the last day our lives will be evaluated fully, fairly, freely, finally, and forever!

And this coming day of judgment is going to demonstrate that all of God and His purposes in this life are going to win!

That you will meet Him face to face whether or NOT you want to – that day will come!

And those who have done evil will rise to a resurrection of judgment – those who have done good will rise to a resurrection of life!

Which means, that in closing, we shall never find the true God except in and through Christ. Or to use the language of Psalm chapter 2: *We shall never worship the Father rightly except by kissing the Son...*

He who does not have the Son, does not have the Father... 1 John chapter 2!

Conclusion

So let's just put away the cute Christmas celebrations that are **merely all about food, family, and fun** – let us put away the niceties & mechanics of Christmas...

And come let us **worship & adore** the king of Kings and the Lord of lords because the Father has entrusted all judgement to the Son – so that we may know the God who made us and who made everyone else around us in His image!

And we can begin to know Him and love Him; and be known and loved by Him!

The One and only unique Son of God who comes to do 2 things:

To give life!

And to judge!

And friends if you don't have the first – then won't wanna be around when Jesus comes to do the second...

Give your life to Jesus – find eternal joy – Kiss the Son – and final be free!

Let's pray.