

John, Part 16: "Jesus is God"

John 5:19 ESV So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. **20** For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. **21** For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. **22** For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, **23** that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. **24** Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

25 "Truly, truly, I say to 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. **26** For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. **27** And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. **28** Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice **29** and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

- I. Last week we spoke about Christ's 3rd miracle in the book of John; how he healed a man who had been paralyzed for 38 years, lying by the pool of Bethesda.
 - A. But we also saw that the Jewish leaders were unimpressed by Christ's healing power, and were deeply offended that he had violated the law of the Sabbath by healing this poor man on that day.
 1. But do you remember Christ's response to their offense? He simply told them **John 5:17b ESV** "My Father is working until now, and I am working."
 2. This response from Christ enraged them all the more because in saying that God was his Father, he was making himself equal with God. This would happen more than once...
 - B. **John 10:30 ESV** "I and the Father are one." **31** The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. **32** Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?" **33** The Jews answered him, "***It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God.***"
 1. The Jews were not at all unclear about who Jesus was claiming to be, and they determined to kill him for it!
 2. What we read last week in 5:16-18 was actually the beginning of a discourse by Jesus about his authority and identity that will last through the end of the chapter. Because of the power and fullness of what Jesus has to say in this passage, we are breaking it into 3 parts. Today is part 2, and Pastor David will bring us home next week.
 - C. What we'll be studying is very important because while the Jews understood what Christ was claiming, many people believers, will stand intimidated before an atheist, agnostic, materialist or secularist as they say that Jesus never claimed to

be God. The question we will ask this morning is, are they right? Did Christ claim to be God or not?

D. Let's look at our text and see what Jesus actually claimed. Was He claiming to be God, or just an extraordinary human being? Remember that Christ has been accused by the Jews of claiming equality with God - which offended them because they saw it as another way of saying that he was God.

II. **John 5:19 ESV** So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. **20** For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel."

A. At first glance it would appear that Jesus is taking a definitely subordinate position to the Father. This could lead us to possibly conclude that Jesus is not claiming to be God, but someone decidedly beneath God. "the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing."

1. But is that what he is really saying? Does willing submission to the Father indicate that Christ is some how *less* than the Father? Not at all. Rather, It shows us the depth of the Son's connection to the heart of the Father, and his loving desire to please him.

2. Christ is saying that he is uniquely linked to the Father to such a degree that he lives not independently, but dependently. He is saying that every thought he has is inspired by the Father; His every action is enabled by the Father, and his every choice is authorized by the Father.

3. All of this is motivated not by being *subjugated* beneath the thumb of the Father, but instead by *submission* originating in the will of the Son, birthed out of love.

B. Jesus says he can only do what he sees the Father doing. What does this tell us?

1. First, that his gaze is fixed *only* on the Father, high above earthly things like his circumstances, worry and anxiety.

a) He knew that there was nothing else worth looking toward; therefore, Christ never had a single moment of the insecurity or self-consciousness that so plagues us as our gaze is pulled down by sin's gravitational pull.

b) How would you benefit from taking your gaze off of yourself, the weaknesses of others, and your surroundings and circumstances, and casting it upon God alone?

2. Second, we see that the Son, during the incarnation, functioned solely on the impetus of the Father's revelation. He said he only does what he "sees" the Father doing in verse 19, and in verse 20 says that Father "shows" him all that he is doing. He "sees" as the Father "shows". That is the two sides of revelation.

a) He received revelation from the Father because he looked only to him for guidance. In order to receive revelation from God we must be looking toward God! If we are looking, the Father will be showing!

b) How often have we said that god doesn't show us anything? The problem might not be what God isn't showing, but where you're not looking!

- c) How much avoidable trouble has resulted in our life because we are attempting to figure things out with our best thinking, instead of inquiring diligently of the Lord and looking alone to God to guide us?
 - d) **Psalm 34:5 NIV** Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.
- 3. Lastly, this verse shows Christ's insistence on imitating the Father as opposed to giving free reign to his emotions and desires. He said "I **do** what I **see** the Father doing."
 - a) Revelation from God without imitation of God is meaningless!
 - b) **James 1:22 ESV** But be **doers** of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.
- C. Christ makes a clear statement of equality with God when he says, "For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise." In the Jewish mindset, only one equal to God (which they believed impossible!) could make such a claim.
 - 1. What follows in this passage are several examples of Christ's equality to the Father, but before we move on, notice this...
 - 2. Christ sets up the next part of his discourse with the Jews by telling them, **John 5:20b ESV** And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel.
 - a) Here is talking in the immediate sense of the resurrection of the dead (as we will see momentarily), but in the greater sense, he is speaking of his own resurrection and the salvation which it will usher in for mankind.
 - b) He is saying the if they think that one isolated healing of one paralyzed man offended them because it insinuated that he was divine, that they hadn't seen anything yet! Soon they would marvel at just how clear his true identity would become!
- III. **John 5:21 ESV** For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. **22** For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, **23** that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.
 - A. This is speaking of both the resurrection of the dead at the end of the age (which we will see more clearly in a moment), but also the spiritual "resurrection" of those who Ephesians 2:1 says were "dead in their trespasses and sins."
 - B. So after Christ states that he is equal with the Father because he does what the Father does, he gives a clear example of what he means by that with his reference to bringing dead things to life. To the Jews, this is the undeniable domain of God alone. Just look at some of their scriptures...
 - 1. **Deuteronomy 32:39 ESV** See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and **I make alive**; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.
 - 2. **1 Samuel 2:6 ESV** The Lord kills and **brings to life**; he brings down to Sheol (the place of the dead-MS) and **raises up**.
 - C. He was saying that is is on equal footing with God as the life giver; one who has power even over death, and can give life to whomever he wills to give it!

1. This statement, "to whom he will" says not only that Christ is powerful, but that He, like the Father, is sovereign, that he is governed by nothing less than his own perfect intentions.
 2. **Psalm 115:3 ESV Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.**
- D. Christ follows this with perhaps an even more astonishing claim, that the Father has reserved all judgement to him alone. "For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son".
1. What does he mean when he says that the Father judges no one? I seem to remember a world wide flood wherein God judged every living thing on the face of the planet! Or a rebellious people who, after challenging the authority of Moses, his chosen representative, were swallowed alive as the ground opened up under them. And what about when the entire nation was sent into Babylonian captivity for 70 years because of their idolatry? Surely God judges! What could Jesus possibly mean then?
 - a) First, it means that the Father has delegated final judgement to the Son. This means that when everyone is judged (and the bible makes clear that we all will be!) that it will be Jesus doing the judging.
 - b) Secondly, it means that Jesus is not only equal to the Father in that he has the prerogative to execute judgement, but that he is now the **basis** for the judgement that will come upon the earth.
 2. Under the Old Covenant, the Law carried with it a long list of curses (see Deuteronomy 28) for anyone who would not live up to it's moral demands.
 3. But under the New Covenant, wherein the curse of sin, and the shame it produces, and the demands of the legal code that stood opposed to us have been forever dealt with by Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, the terms of judgement have been altered.
 - a) We will no longer be judged by our inability to keep the Law of God, we will be judged for our rejection of the Father's perfect remedy.
 - b) Most people spend a large percentage of their lives attempting in vain to satisfy the conditions of the Old Covenant by trying to be good little boys and girls, when we will actually be judged solely on the basis of whether we have cast ourselves on Christ alone or not. And to trust in the law rather than Christ is of no benefit to you in avoiding judgement.
- E. The result of this prerogative that has been granted by the Father to the Son to judge is **"that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father"**. This is an additional claim to deity on the part of Jesus.
1. A synonym for "honor" would be "worship". Christ is saying that as the judge, he **deserves** worship. If he were not God, this would be a claim most blasphemous!
 2. More astonishingly, He claims that he should be honored, "just as they honor the Father". This means that whatever type of worship is appropriate for the Father, is appropriate for the Son! This was a earth-shaking statement.
- F. He adds that whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Many people want to have a cloudy respect for something they call "God", thinking there is some benefit from this. But Jesus is saying that you **cannot** worship God in reality at all, without worshipping **Christ as God**.

IV. **John 5:24 ESV** Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

A. This is a very important verse for us to be able to understand what has transpired in the life of a Christ-follower. Notice the tenses in this verse. There are three present tense verbs I want to look at.

1. Jesus says that the one who “hears” and “believes” (in the present tense) “has” (again, present tense) eternal life. He is stating clearly that an action you take now (hearing and believing) produces a result now (having eternal life) instead of later (in the “sweet by and by”).

2. This matters because most have believed that “eternal life” happens shortly after we’re placed in a box and the preacher lies about us in front of all our relatives. But Christ’s intention is that we be experiencing a “partially realized” Heaven here and now!

B. Although Jesus has stated that he has the authority to judge, he says that the one who hears and believes, **right now**, “does not come into judgement”. While the whole world stands waiting in line for judgement day, for those who hear and believe, Christ removes the velvet rope and lets us in to experience and enjoy eternity in the here and now! You “have passed” (not will pass) from death to life.

C. This is a contrast to Christ’s authority to judge, as he will further emphasize...

V. **John 5:25 ESV** “Truly, truly, I say to 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. **26** For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. **27** And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.

A. Jesus is tying these thoughts together. First notice that he is reiterating that it is not a future date, but rather that the hour is **now here** when the spiritually dead will hear his voice and live.

1. But the spiritually dead will not be raised to a second helping of an “Adam and Eve” kind of life, rather they will live a new kind of life; the kind of life that the Father has in himself, and has granted the Son to have in himself.

2. When Christ says, “It has been granted”, it does not mean that the Son was created by the Father, but that the Father has authorized the Son to be the one who imparts life to dead souls. Even as the Father knelt over the first man, and breathed into his nostrils, and he became a living soul; so now the Son shall impart life to those dead because of sin who hear and believe. This is yet another statement of his deity: He has the power to impart life. **John 1:4 ESV** In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

B. But he also reiterates his authority to judge, as a stern warning to those who would flippantly disregard him, and he adds a curious statement as a qualification for that judicial authority when he says, “because he is the Son of Man.”

1. If you are familiar with the Gospels, you will notice that the “Son of Man” is Jesus favorite title by which he refers to himself. It indicates that he was not only fully God, but also fully man; in fact, the perfect representative for all of humanity.

2. But it means so much more than that. You see the title “Son of Man” is from a prophecy in the OT book of Daniel. Lets take a look at it together.
- C. **Daniel 7:13 ESV** “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one *like a son of man*, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.¹⁴ And *to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom*, that *all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him*; his dominion is *an everlasting dominion*, which shall not pass away, and *his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed*.
1. This verse says that when the Son of Man appears before the Ancient of Days (God the Father) that he is given eternal dominion, glory, and an indestructible kingdom, in addition to the service of the entire world. These are things that belong (and can only belong) to God!
 2. When Jesus says to the Jews in John 5 that he has authority **because** he is the Son of Man, I assure you that the Jews knew exactly what he was saying, even if we Gentiles in the Western world have missed it. Jesus is God, and he was clear and unapologetic on that point!
- D. **John 5:28 ESV** Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice **29** and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.
1. Jesus says that every man, woman boy and girl will rise from actual, physical death to stand before him as the judge. You will not escape it. You cannot negotiate your way out of it. You do not have enough money, power or influence to avoid it.
 2. His verdict will be final, and it will be just. No one is getting an unfair trial. Those who have heard his words, and have believed him because he is God, will rise to eternal life, then fully realized. Those who have not honored him as God, and have been carried along on the winds of their own wicked passions will rise to face a most terrible judgement.
- E. Are you ready? How do you know you are? What will the end of your life reveal about who you truly believe he is? He stands before you, as you have heard the evidence, saying as he did to his own disciples, **Matthew 16:15 ESV** “But who do you say that I am?”