

The Father and the Son

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Date: 24 July 2022

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[0 : 00] Hello, everybody. Oh, quite a full house today. I didn't expect that. A very warm welcome to you all, and I want to say a particular howdy to the Texans.

Where are you? Raise your hand for me. Oh, there's a whole bunch of you. Okay, hiya. Good to see you. All right, howdy's rather not original at this point, but I thought I'd say it anyway. I'm sorry? I've got, yeah, oh, that wasn't intentional. I've got cacti. Yeah. Thank you, Asema. Yeah. Well, if you have your Bibles with you, please open them at the book of John chapter 5, and I should have taken that slide out, so let's move that on.

Let's put this a bit closer. Now, I know that everybody that's here wasn't here last week, so I'm going to give you a little bit of context. We are running a bit shorter on time than we usually do, so we'll just go through this a bit quickly.

Okay, so the story in this chapter has followed Jesus to Jerusalem, where he met a man who had been paralyzed for 38 years, almost as long as I've been alive.

[1 : 14] Jesus said, pick up your mat and walk. And the man did just that. He was healed. This was much to the annoyance of the Jewish leaders, because it was a Sabbath, and they constructed a system of very particular rules of things that you cannot do on the Sabbath because they constituted work, like to carry one's bed mat.

The Jewish leaders soon found out from the healed man that it was Jesus that had made him well. And that brings us to our text today, where we see a confrontation between Jesus and the Jewish leaders.

So as per the reading, we're covering from verse 16 down to 30. The text says this response from Jesus to the leaders was his defense for doing healing things on the Sabbath, for doing those miraculous things.

It's a lot of text. More than that, it's a lot of complicated text. More than that, there's a lot of complicated theology within the complicated text.

So we're going to break it down into four main sections. We have verse 16 to 18. This is Jesus' defense. It's his claim to be equal with God.

[2 : 38] Verses 19 to 24, we see Jesus' nature, why he's equal to God. 25 to 27, I've told this, resurrection and judgment now.

Proof that he is equal to God. And finally, verses 28 to 30, resurrection and judgment soon. Everybody will see that he is equal to God.

And to quote Johnny Cash, everybody won't be treated all the same. Now, if your name happens to be me, you might find this a wee bit intimidating.

Ultimately, though, all of these subjects, they point us to ask one most important question, the most important question a person can ask. And that is, who is this Jesus that can make these amazing claims?

So my plan for this morning is not to really dive in and tackle all of the complicated theology that's in this text, all the complexities, but rather try and gain a broad understanding of what Jesus is saying here.

[3 : 51] And by God's grace, by the end, we shall find an answer to that question from this text. Does that sound good to you? Yeah, I don't have much of a choice at this point. Okay, let's dive in.

Verses 16 to 18. Jesus' defense. So because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him.

The beginning of our passage is also a massive turning point in history, a massive turning point in this story. Jesus came to earth to die.

That was the objective, so that he may defeat death, rise again, and go to be at the right hand of the Father. I'll slide him on. Yeah, that's right.

This mission was planned back from the very beginning of creation down to the hour of his death.

We heard it in John 2, where Jesus tells his mother his hour had not yet come.

[4 : 56] John 7, no one laid a hand on him because his hour had not yet come. John 8, no one seized him because his hour had not yet come. John 12, Jesus said, now my soul is troubled.

And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name.

Jesus came to die. And it is the Jewish leaders that will have him executed. This confrontation that we see is all part of God's plan.

Without Jesus' death, there could be no resurrection. Without the resurrection, there could be no judgment. And without the judgment, there can be no forgiveness of sins. Verse 16 tells us that the work of Jesus is already provoking the Jewish leaders to persecute Jesus.

But it's Jesus' reason for why he's doing these things on the Sabbath that takes the persecution to another level.

[6 : 00] Jesus says as a defense, my father is always at work to this very day, and I too am working.

So in our language, in our culture, it might not be so obvious what Jesus was saying, but to the Jewish leaders, this was absolute blasphemy. Jesus is declaring his status as God's son, to have the very same nature as God.

He didn't soften it either, did he? He didn't say, you know, come over mine, have a cup of tea. You know this thing about me and the things I do? He didn't do that. He's put it down on the table as it is. My father is always at work to this day, and I too am working. God is always at work. Back in Genesis 2, when God rested on the seventh day, he might have rested from creating, but he didn't stop being God.

God says, I will never leave you or forsake you. Period. Not, I will never leave you or forsake you, except for weekends and bank holidays. That's not how he works.

[7 : 13] If you plant a seed, does it stop growing some days, because God's taking a break? No. If you pray on a weekend, or bank holiday, do you think God won't hear you?

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. His mercies never come to an end. God doesn't take time off from being God, ever.

So Jesus is saying to the religious leaders, in his defense, that as God's son, he does exactly what God is doing. He holds the same authority, he's Lord of the Sabbath, and he's stating his equalness with God.

And in doing this godly, miraculous work of healing, we see the love, the power, the compassion, all of those things that you would expect from God's son. But all the Jewish leaders could see was work on the Sabbath.

We're blind to who Jesus really is, his identity as the son of the father. They simply saw him as just a lawbreaker and blasphemer, so they tried all the more to kill him.

[8 : 31] So in verse 19 to 24, we hear amazing truths about Jesus' nature. The very core of who he is and what he does.

Jesus opens this discourse with the words, very truly, or your translation might say, truly, truly. Literally, it's, amen, amen. There's a big emphasis here that everything to follow is absolutely reliable truth.

And yet the first thing that Jesus says is, the son can do nothing by himself. He can only do what he sees his father doing, because whatever the father does, the son also does.

That might rattle us a little bit, because we're not used to hearing this kind of language. Jesus isn't saying he's weak or powerless. We know that because he healed the sick.

Jesus isn't saying that he's just some kind of robot. We know that because he has uniquely authority to judge and seeks to please the father. Now you can see that in verse 30.

[9 : 41] What Jesus is saying is he does not operate outside of the father's will. He can do nothing that is inconsistent with the qualities and the attributes of God the father.

It's a picture of perfect harmony and unity. where he is one with God the father in nature. So we hear the word nothing and because it's in a negative form, we assume that the impact is going to be detrimental to Jesus' character.

That's not so. It only serves to make him more incredible. Because it means that just as God is holy and just, so is Jesus holy and just.

perfect unity. Not the same person, one in nature. Chapter 3 of John says this about Jesus. For the one whom God sent speaks the words of God for God gives the spirit to him without limit. The father loves the son and has placed everything in his hands.

[10:52] When Jesus says anything, when Jesus does anything, we see God in all his fullness working by his spirit.

The holy trinity at work. Three different persons, one God. If this gives you a headache, that's perfectly normal. It certainly does when you're trying to prepare a sermon on it, I can tell you that. This grinds against us because people don't work in perfect unity, do we? There's always different purposes.

We always have different ideas, contrasting pictures and friction within relationships. That's normal for people because of our fallen state, because of sin.

Not so for God. In God there is perfect harmony. This is hard for us to picture and almost impossible for us to understand. But I'd like to present an idea to you.

[11:57] Here's a picture of a bird. I don't know if you have these in the States. We call them starlings. You have them. Okay, cool. Well, there's a starling. Here's another picture.

That's also a starling, but it's not the same bird. You know what happens when starlings get together? Yeah? There's a lot of nodding here.

Yeah? Yeah? I'll play you a video. This is something I took earlier this year. If it works. How do we do this? Play. Play.

Play. You see that? Isn't that incredible? Perfect harmony and unity in there, isn't there?

As they fly. Who could have designed that? I wonder. It's almost like they're perfectly in tune that they know what each other are thinking and doing, that they're of one mind.

[13:03] And the result is beautiful harmony. And I thought I'd show you that because for me it's a good way to picture the Trinity. So I'll ask you this question.

No? Don't replay. Next slide please. Thank you. I'll ask you this question. Who is this Jesus that can do whatever the God the Father does in such perfect harmony?

It's a rhetorical question. This relationship between the God and the Father is built on a foundation of love. for the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does.

Verse 20. This is not a business only relationship. They don't part ways once the work is finished. It's not impersonal. Nothing is kept secret. Eternally secret.

I mean by that. It's a relationship built on perfect love first and foremost. And I would say if you want a model of love to aspire to that's where you look.

[14:05] Jesus goes on to reference the healing he did with a paralyzed man and says that the Father will show him greater things than these so that you will be amazed.

Those greater things being giving life and resurrection power. I ask you what's more amazing than life? It's variation. It's beauty.

It's intelligence. It's power. You can almost guarantee that somewhere in the world someone's looking at some form of life and going wow. We just did. Nothing speaks of the difference between man and God more than the ability to create life.

Humans cannot create life. The common objection to this claim usually comes from parents doesn't it? I've heard it. I don't know if you've heard it but they say well we created our child.

No. When a gardener plants a seed and it grows into a tree the gardener doesn't say hey look I created a tree. To say that he would have had to design the seed the soil the nutrients that make it grow the water and the sun that sustains it the atmosphere photosynthesis.

[15:21] Humans cannot create life. The power to give life is exclusively in the hands of the one who designed it which is God.

Without God there is no life. And Jesus here is saying in the same way he too has the authority to do that. The secrets of life that completely baffle scientists and baffle us that make us go wow how does that work?

There's no secret to Jesus because as we heard in John 1 through him all things were made. Genesis 2 verse 7 says finish this for me then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

Jesus is as the Father is he's the giver of life. Another rhetorical question for you who is this Jesus that he could give life as the Father gives life?

Moreover the Father judges no one in verse 22 but has entrusted all judgment to the Son. Let's pause there. The role of judge of all mankind has been given uniquely to Jesus.

[16:43] This doesn't mean that the Father is independent from the Son but is again harmonious in the process. This is the theme that we see throughout the text. Since Jesus judges by the Father's will people.

See that down in verse 30. We'll look at that a bit later. Completely harmonious. This is another factor that again makes Jesus both eternally one with God the Father and yet totally distinct in identity.

Moreover the Father judges no one but has entrusted all judgment to the Son. Here's a key text. Whoever sorry that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father.

The reason is that the Son may be honored exactly as the Father is honored. This is the Father's will that all may honor the Son.

Which leaves a question what if you reject Jesus? Can you still praise the Father? Jesus makes it clear. whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.

[17:55] If you reject the Son you reject God. You reject God's work. Let's remind ourselves at this point who Jesus is talking to within the narrative. The religious leaders of the day.

The very people that claim to be the absolute authority on God are standing before his Son who is telling them who he is who is proving it by doing miracles.

They have the scriptures all the evidence of the miracles. In this context it healed a man that has been paralyzed for 38 years. And how did they greet him?

With murderous fury. They were, as you might say in Texas, madder than a wet hen.

Is that a thing? Madder than a wet hen? Oh, I read that on the internet. See, that's why you shouldn't believe everything you read on the internet. I still like it. I'm going to keep that one. So you can have all the books.

[19:05] You can pray all day, sing hymns all day, say all the right things, attend as many meetings as you like. But if you reject Jesus, you reject God. And you're wasting your time.

Jesus said in John 14, 6, no one comes to the Father except through me. So there's a decision to be made. If you want to know God, you need to accept Jesus. Because choosing to honor him is the path to eternal life.

Very truly, I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes in him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but is crossed over from death to life. Jesus' promise of eternal life and escape from condemnation, not the judgment itself, are for those exclusively who accept his word and believe God the Father.

This is perfectly compliant with God the Father's will. For God, this is John 3, 17 to 18, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through him.

Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. Without Jesus, everybody stands condemned.

[20:23] There is no way into eternal life. And what Jesus says next is as amazing as he claimed it was. Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.

For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. Why is this so amazing? What does Jesus say? Finish this for me.

A time is coming. A time has now come where the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. This is happening now.

Isn't that amazing? People right now are being spiritually raised to life by believing in him. You might say, well, who are the dead?

I don't feel dead. It's a common objection. I don't look dead. raise a hand. Has anybody ever heard of the activity called air softing?

[21:36] One, two, oh, a whole bunch of you. You all know air softing. This is great. Yeah, at the top there. Yeah, well, for those who don't know, it's a team game. It's based on military simulation.

I'll give you the very vague picture of it. Basically, you have two teams of people and they all have guns which fire high velocity plastic pellets, BB guns. And they go into the woods of these two

teams and they shoot each other.

It's fantastic fun. If you ever get the chance, try it. I love it. But the game is based on an honor system, right? So when you get shot, you shout out, hit, and you raise your hand and you keep your hand up and you walk off the field to join the rest of the dead.

You wait for the game to finish. Sometimes, as you're walking off, one of your team might say to you, where are they? Who shot you? Tell me. You can't answer because technically you're dead, right?

So you just say, this is the thing to say, dead man walking, and you ignore them and pretend they don't exist. The dead, in our passage, are the people that don't hear Jesus.

[22 : 48] Not just with their ears, but really not hear Jesus. Hearing and believing. Jesus says, if you hear my voice and believe my father, I'll give you new life.

In other words, when you really hear Jesus, when you really hear him and believe him, something physical, something tangible, observable, and miraculous happens right now.

It stops you in your tracks. You're born again by the Holy Spirit. You stop walking the path of the dead and you walk a new path. It's not a passive experience.

This is observable. Galatians 5 draws a clear contrast between these two paths. Those who belong to Christ, Jesus, have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Since we live by the Spirit, let's keep in step with the Spirit. Two different paths. And God has given Jesus all authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

[23 : 52] We're in verse 27. Son of Man, you might not notice that at first. You might prick up your ears and say, what? Son of Man? Isn't he the Son of God? This title of Son of Man isn't at the expense of his title as Son of God.

It simply addresses the fact that Jesus has full knowledge of what it is to be human, except that he did not sin. Hebrews 4.15.

Jesus maintained both his perfection as God and yet as man endured every temptation that we could experience.

So if anyone is best in a position to be judge of all mankind, it is Jesus. The text says those who have crossed from death to life will not be judged, again meaning condemned.

In the future, final judgment on the last day. They'll still be there, but there'll be no condemnation.

The scripture says there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.

[24 : 59] And guess what? That's also now. You don't have to see what happens. You don't have to wait around to be assured of your salvation.

If you are truly in Christ Jesus, there is no condemnation on that day. That's the promise now. This picture is a spiritual resurrection and it happens now.

Let's move to verse 28. Resurrection and judgment soon.

Towards the end of our passage, Jesus gives us another picture of resurrection. resurrection. This resurrection is still to come. A time is coming.

He doesn't say and is now come. This one is still to happen. In the book of Matthew chapter 25, Jesus speaks of this event in much more detail. And people do, I'll just say this, people do refer to the chapter in Matthew 25, the sheep and the goats, as a parable.

[26 : 10] Actually, it's not. It's a true event, but it has parabolic elements. So we can gain some insight from there. There Jesus tells us, when the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne.

All the nations will be gathered before him. Jesus is going to come back. The Son of God who lived, killed, was killed, was resurrected, went back to heaven and sat at the right hand of the Father, is coming back.

This was witnessed and written about. This will happen. So if you're not a Christian and you're listening, just let that sink in for a second. The Son of God is coming back.

And we wait eagerly his return. We don't know when he's coming back. He'll come like a thief in the night. He will come in all his glory, not just the Son of Man, but as the Son of God, King of Heaven, with all his angels with him and all the nations before him.

As our text says, all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out. There is no escaping this event. The spiritual resurrection is heard by a distinct group of people.

[27 : 27] Those who hear Jesus and believe in the one who sent him. Here, the physical resurrection to come, all people who are in their grave shall hear his voice and come out.

Whether they believe or not, there will be that resurrection for them. All nations, all people who ever live will be raised from the dead to face judgment.

And Jesus will be the judge. Now you might say, well, what if you're cremated? I've heard that a couple of times. Whether you've been buried, cremated, shot into space, whatever's happened to your old body.

1 Corinthians 15 says this, there are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies. But the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. The sun is one kind of splendor, the moon another, and the stars another. A star differs from star in splendor. So it will be with the resurrection of the dead, the body that is sown, there's the image of a seed being sown, is perishable, but it is raised imperishable.

[28 : 38] We all get new bodies. It may differ a little bit in what that looks like. I don't think we know that. The fact is, you're going to live forever whether you want to or not.

The question is, where will you go from the resurrection? Verse 29 says, Jesus says, those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned.

You think, oh, hang on a minute. Well, in that case, can't we say if we do enough good things, we can get to heaven? No. It's a fallacy.

It seems to worm its way into everything. Humans come up with this idea that if we're good enough, we can be God. Uh-uh. No one can stand in God's presence by working their way there.

People are sinful beings. All have fallen short of the glory of God. Every single one of us, whether you want to admit that or not. If you want proof of that, simply turn on the news.

[29 : 47] If humankind is so enlightened, why all the war? Why all the hate? Human sinful nature needs to be dealt with before we can stand in God's presence and only Jesus can do them.

The good that Jesus is speaking of in this chapter is the good that's done through a love for him. James 2 says this, What good is it, my brothers, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. One of you tells him, go in peace, stay warm, be well fed. But does not provide for his physical needs. What good is that? So to faith by itself, if it does not result in action, is, keyword, dead. This is a relationship of doing good things with Jesus at the center.

Eternal life only comes through a relationship with Jesus. This is the good that the Father seeks. in the final judgment, brothers and sisters, believers in Jesus, who have done good through the faith, through faith in Jesus, shall not be condemned.

[31 : 15] It should make us erupt in joy, shouldn't it? Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. You can say it. Hallelujah. We stand not condemned. How great is that?

What better way can we go into a Sunday and say, we're not condemned. We go to be with Jesus in his kingdom forever. Those who haven't believed in Jesus, those who just carry on walking, are like those dead.

They stand condemned. They will not enter into Jesus' kingdom. Verse 30. The last verse in our passage is yet again a reminder of who Jesus is in relation to judgment.

As one with the Father, he does the Father's will perfectly. He judges perfectly. There's no sinful human nature that will cause Jesus to go and do his own thing apart from the Father and get the judgment wrong.

There is no incorrect judgment when it comes to Jesus because he perfectly pleases the Father and that's what he seeks. I'll ask you a question. Who is this Jesus that can be the righteous judge of all mankind?

[32 : 42] Here's some conclusions. At the beginning we ask this question, who is this Jesus? I've been asking this all the way through.

Let's extend that question a little bit. Who is this Jesus that can do whatever God the Father does in such perfect harmony? Who is this Jesus that can give life just as the Father gives life?

Who is this Jesus that can resurrect the dead with just a word? Who is this Jesus that is the righteous judge of all mankind? The answer can only be God himself.

Jesus is God in the flesh. Don't let anybody tell you otherwise. He is distinct from the Father and the Spirit but one with them in beautiful harmony.

He is God. And this very passage which is the truth of who Jesus is sparked the very anger and the fury of the Jewish leaders that would ultimately go on to mock him, to beat him, to torture him, nail

him to a cross where he would die.

[33 : 59] Leaves one question. Why? Why would God give his son over to suffer and be killed like that? He's standing before the people who would go on to execute him.

Why be so bold? Why say, yes, this is who I am? We've seen a lot of deep theology stuff which is difficult to understand in this passage but you don't need that to understand the purpose.

There's only one answer. He did that for you. He did that because he loves you and he wants you to be in his kingdom with him for eternity.

Someone had to pay you the price of your sin and that was Jesus. He came and he paid that price in judgment so that he can smile upon you in judgment and say, not guilty.

I know that because I took the punishment. This is our saviour. And all he asks in return is that you believe. So I ask you today is the question, will you accept that offer of life if you don't know him?

[35 : 09] Or will you be thrown, this is what the Bible says, to an eternity of darkness outside the kingdom? I am the resurrection and the life.

The one who believes in me will live even though they die. And whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this? John 11. I believe that.

You believe that? Amen. Let's leave our text there and I'll leave you with a picture of heaven as quite often I do from the book of Revelation. It's chapter 7.

And one of the elders asked me, these in white robes, who are they? Where did they come from? I answered, sir, you know. And he said, these are they who have come out the great tribulation.

They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb. That's Jesus.

Therefore they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.

[36 : 12] Never again will they hunger, never again will they thirst. The sun will not be down on them nor any scorching heat. For the lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd. And he will lead them to springs of living water.

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Amen.