

John 5:18-29

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[0 : 00] God's words. This is why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Jesus, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own father, making himself equal with God.

So Jesus said to them, So also the Son gives life to whom he will.

The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. And whoever does not honor the Son does not truly honor the Father who sent him.

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.

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.

[1 : 38] For the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to execute judgment because he is the Son of man.

Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Let's just pause for prayer.

Father, we come to you this morning, and we come to your word, and your word that imparts life.

And so, Father, we pray that we would be recipients of life through your word, via your spirit, for our sake and for your glory we ask. Amen.

[3 : 03] Amen. Amen. It has been said that the Bible is a record of God's love story with humanity. Verses may come to mind, such as, for God so loved the world.

Or God demonstrates his love for us in this, that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Or even this, this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent us.

His son. And naturally, as human interpreters, we come to our Bibles with this idea that the Bible is about us.

That we are God's obsession. And there are grounds for such interpretation. We, as humans, naturally gravitate to these verses where we are recipients of God's divine love.

We like to think of ourselves as the object of his affections. There are few things in life more exhilarating or more significant than knowing that we are loved.

[4 : 10] It's true. It's real. And it's certainly comforting. But in this morning's passage, a rare insight will be given.

One writer puts it this way. This morning, about this text, we tread into a sphere of love that is untouchable. Another writer puts it this way.

It seems as if we have come to the deepest things in the Bible. There are few places in the Bible where we are given an opportunity to behold this love.

Seldom are we able to step into the relationship that God has within himself. In this passage, we peer into the divine relationship.

It was this that the Jews could not comprehend, according to chapter 5, verse 18. They were agitated that Jesus healed on the Sabbath.

[5 : 07] They were indignant that he had made God to be his very Father. This morning, we will explore, touch upon, not the love that moves the Father to save the world, but the love that moves the Father to reveal himself to his Son.

As Christians, we are Trinitarian monotheists. And what I mean is, we affirm that God is one and God is three. He has three distinct persons. There are three distinct persons in one God.

Per the Athanasian Creed in the 6th century, we worship one God in Trinity. Trinity in unity. We neither confound the persons or mix them up.

We don't divide them up in substance. There is one person of the Father. There is one person of the Son. And another of the Holy Spirit. The Godhead, the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit is all one.

Equal in glory, majesty, and co-eternal. And the love that you and I experience as Christians flows out of this relationship.

[6 : 24] And all this by way of introduction. I know it's a very theological introduction this morning. It's rich, it's deep in truth, and it's significant in value. But what we need to see this morning is the text is laden with weightiness.

What you're coming upon is sacred. It's almost, as the writer put, untouchable. How do I know this? Because three times you find this phrase.

Truly, truly, I say to you. Jesus is disclosing something that if it weren't for God making it known to us, we would not know.

You see it in verse 19. You see it again in verse 24. You see it again in verse 25. That Jesus is bringing to bear content that is so weighty, so substantial, that he says it with his double amen. Amen, amen. I need to tell you something. Three times. The passage, arguably, we read only 18 through 29, arguably extends all the way to verse 47.

[7 : 37] Writers have repeatedly said it is unrivaled in all the Bible in that it contains Jesus' self-disclosure. Let me tell you about myself.

This morning's passage is really Jesus' response, and we're about to see to this question. Who is Jesus? You remember the miracle from last week that Jesus healed a paralytic or invalid, and the religious leaders come to this guy, and they say, Who is it that, who is the man that heals you? Well, Jesus is about to tell them who the man is. And the religious leaders are indignant. And the religious leaders are indignant that he has called God his father.

And he says, Well, actually, God has been working all the way up to now, and I work just like my father works. And to put simply, this morning, what we will see is Jesus is answering the question, who he is, and what in the world is he up to.

The work of Jesus is to impart life and pronounce judgment. In Jesus, we will see this morning, we have one who grants life and who gives judgment.

[8 : 59] Well, we see the text opens up, and Jesus expresses an equality with God by declaring himself to be a recipient of a divine blueprint of sorts.

He witnessed divine action in verse 19, and therefore he's able to copy it. The metaphor is rooted in maybe artisans of those day.

They passed their craft to apprentices. In our day, if you are a workman, you find a master craftsman and sit under them. I humorously think of Euro Dreams of Sushi.

If you've seen the documentary on cable TV, Euro is arguably one of the greatest sushi chefs in the entire world.

And there, young men and women come and study under him for not just a few months, but the documentary records that one man, for his entire year of apprenticeship, was to master the craft of making white, sticky rice.

[10 : 11] One year. And there, he would learn and acquire other skills of how to craft additional sushi. But this is what we do.

If you want to master something, you find someone who does it well. And in Bible times, this was often a family business. The master artisan would be the father and would pass down all the trade secrets to the apprentice, who was often the son.

And what you see in this passage is that the activity of God starts from the father and is manifested in the son.

Jesus does what God the father does. Because in love, God the father has revealed himself to his son. The son imitates. He acts in unison with the father.

He is not a rogue agent, but an obedient agent. He's commissioned by the father and does what the father does. And therefore, Jesus becomes the conduit whereby God makes his actions known in the world.

[11 : 20] Jesus does not, cannot misrepresent God. He does not diminish God. He is not a faint reflection of God.

He does not do a mediocre God-like work. We see in Jesus equality expressed as unity in God. The father sends the son. And the son is obedient. Jesus is the loved son of God, sent by God to show God to the world.

Therefore, the text tells us in verse 20 that Jesus is able to display greater works than even those that he had just completed. And John has recorded for us two immediate signs, both life-giving and restorative, both demonstrative in what God was doing in the world.

And Jesus would do even greater things, causing people to marvel. And the greater work of Jesus are these two things. Jesus gives life and Jesus gives judgment.

[12 : 31] The text is clearly laden with life. The father raises the dead and gives life, according to verse 21.

Whoever hears my word and believes him who has sent me, verse 24, has eternal life. He has passed from death to life. When the dead hear the voice of the Son of God, those who hear will live or have life.

For the Father has life in himself, so that he has granted life in himself to the Son. And of course, in verse 29, that there will be those who hear the voice and come out to the resurrection of life.

You see, for John, life, eternal life, is obtained by hearing the Son. Hearing and believing the voice of the Son. It is the Son who imparts life.

And it's encapsulated by this scene that has just transpired. You remember the stunning scene in chapter 5, don't you? Or the end of chapter 4.

[13 : 40] It spans time and space. The one o'clock miracle. You see, people, these days, we go to hospitals in search of healing and restoration.

If our loved one fell ill or sick, our instinct would be summoned an ambulance and send them to the nearest medical facility. We seek treatment at a location. Yet, at the end of chapter 4, when Jesus heals this dying son of the official, it demonstrates that life is imparted.

That Jesus is giving life regardless of location. If you recall the miracle, let me ask you this. Who received life? And from a surface reading of it, you would say, oh, the person who received life is the little sick boy.

And that is true. The little sick boy received physical life. But if you read it closely, at the end of chapter 4, the reality is that in chapter 4, verse 53, not only had the son received physical life, but the official and his entire household received life.

And Jesus is demonstrating for you and I this important principle. There is more to life than physical life.

[15 : 09] There is an eternal life. There is a life where one is spared from judgment and transcends physical death. The life that Jesus offers goes beyond just flesh and blood.

It goes beyond the healthy, breathing infant as it exits his or her mother's womb. This is life. It spans space and time.

If you're into science fiction, this is for you, really. Because Jesus, he does something that every English teacher tells you not to do.

He merges past, present, and future tense. When you write in literature, you're supposed to write in a particular tense. And if you get it all jumbled up, the teacher will say, that's terrible. I don't know what's going on.

Has it happened? Is it happening? Will it happen? And Jesus, or John, comes on the scene, the writer, and says, I'm going to just blend them all together. I'm going to merge space and time.

[16 : 06] And you see this. He fuses it together. Because he tells you that life is given immediately in verse 24 to those who believe.

And then in verse 25, he says, Truly, truly, I tell you an hour is coming in the future and is actually already here that the dead will hear the voice of God and those who hear will live.

And what Jesus does here is saying, there is, I am this science fiction, I don't know what you call it really now, but he is this gateway where the present and the future, what happens in the present becomes effective in the future.

That he grants life now and it is effective eternally. This is the great assertion of the Christian life, isn't it? We who sit in this room, we are, we may be physically alive, but are we truly living?

We eat, move, repeat, and maybe become mechanistic and are robotic. And this is how we feel all the time. But here you see that Jesus is actually disclosing that your best life now cannot be experienced apart from the Son of God.

[17 : 24] Life is more than freedom or self-expression. Living exceeds personal ambition and desire. Being alive is beyond seeking prosperity, comfort, pleasure, success, or even health.

And you and I, we acquire, we plan, we pursue, we obtain with the hopes that I could build my life. And the Bible, very clearly, in this passage, says the life that you want cannot be self-obtained. It is a given life. Wow. Wow. This is a life that no spouse can give.

This is a life that no child can provide. This is a life that no obtainment can bring. This is a life that no wealth can give.

This is a life that no job can accomplish. This is life that only the Son of God gives. It's the only source of this life.

[18 : 34] And you can wander up and down the streets of this world seeking life, obtaining, accomplishing, hoarding, building, acquiring.

And in the end, the life that you want is a life that is given by the Son. Well, Jesus gives life.

Secondly, Jesus gives judgment. The second theme is equally as prevalent as the first. If life is one side of the coin, then the other side is certainly judgment according to this passage.

Verse 22, the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son. Verse 24, He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

Verse 27, the Father has given the Son authority to execute judgment. judgment. And in verse 29, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

[19 : 48] Jesus is a judge. This is not the role that people often associate with Jesus. He's supposed to be a tender hearted shepherd.

He's a soft spoken Savior. Isn't He? He's this inviting, welcoming healer. He's an eager forgiver.

But often, we forget He is judge. Our text records for us that Jesus serves as judge because God the Father has given this divine prerogative to Him.

He has authority to judge because He is the Son of Man, according to verse 27, a kingly figure who had everlasting dominion. And for our contemporary world, the theme of judgment has to be one of the tenets of our faith that is the least attractive.

We want to affirm, and we do affirm, a loving, forgiving, wrath-less God. God. But to do so would actually move contrary to the Bible, the very character of God.

[21 : 10] That God's vengeance is His impassioned love against all of evil. God judges because He needs to right every wrong committed against us.

It is the final justice brought when our human courts have failed. It is the right writing of every intolerant, racist remark you've received.

It is the vindication of all the young girls who have been victimized by atrocities under evil regimes.

It is the victory declared by God for the innocent bystanders swindled by the greed and pride of the rich.

The judgment of God is the guarantee that no one gets off the hook. and evil will never get away with it.

We can think of many cases where we want to see the judgment of God applied. You open your newspaper and you can say this is not right. This is wrong. This is incorrect.

[22 : 13] This is unjust. But when it comes down to it, do you know what bothers us the most about this? Is we don't want it applied to ourselves.

God judged the whole world, just not me. Everyone out there, just not me.

But you see, if God's objective and will is to vanquish all evil out there, he must also do it in here.

if he is, if all the world is his, then he must right every wrong out there. And he must right every wrong in here.

Upon healing the invalid in the earlier part of chapter 5, John records something seemingly obscure. Chapter 5, verse 14.

[23 : 22] Do you remember? So Jesus heals this invalid. Invalid has no clue it's Jesus. Jesus runs off and then he comes back to this invalid. In chapter 5, verse 14, Jesus finds him in the temple, the healed invalid, healed paralytic, and he says, hey, see you are well, and catch this, sin no more that nothing worse may happen to you.

what in the world could be worse than being paralyzed for 38 years?

What could be worse than being on the margins of society? What could possibly be worse than the pitied life of an invalid?

invalid? Well, he answers it. He said, I've restored your health and I've given you life, but make sure you're actually alive.

Because 38 years will pale in comparison to Jesus' loving and just judgment.

[24 : 45] You might look and say 38 years, that's the curse of God. Jesus comes and says, 38 years is nothing.

It's nothing. All judgment, according to this passage, verse 22, all judgment is given to the Son. A world of impunity, exemption from punishment, is hell. A world where injustice is never punished or righted is not the world of the Bible. No, the Bible asserts that the world will fall under divine judgment.

And we know he judges impartially. And we know, at least we have clues from this passage, that judgment is based upon good and evil, according to verse 29.

There will be clearly a separation, a distinction made between good and evil. All evil will be judged, and Christ will be victorious in the end. Yet the question that you might ask is, well, what's evil and what's good?

[25 : 53] Is this a curve or a sliding scale? Because, I mean, I'm better than probably 72.6% of the population.

Is this how it works? Well, I want to point this out, and we'll probably wrap up here because I don't want to, yeah, but it's certainly possible to flesh out the moral and ethical implications of the Christian faith.

But from our passage, this is what I would like us to see this morning. The greatest good that you can do in this passage is found in verse 23.

that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. And the question you're going to ask is, well, how do you honor the Son?

Well, 24 gives you the answer. 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.

[27 : 04] The ultimate good in this passage is to honor the Son. And to honor the Son means to hear his word and believe in him. Do you know, and in doing that, death passes over and you receive life.

The first judgment pronounced in the Bible falls upon the serpent and falls upon these two human characters introduced in the Bible, Adam and Eve. And do you know what their violation was? It was not murder because that comes later. It was not idolatry because that comes later. It was not covetousness or stealing or lying because they all come later. But the greatest evil committed by Adam and Eve was the evil they committed was the rejection of the word of God.

The command of God was heard, do not eat but not believed. So they ate. And therefore the template has been set for the rest of the Bible.

I mean we shouldn't rake sins but in how they occur in the Bible the first great sin is I heard the word of God and I refused to believe it.

[28 : 16] Wait, before murder? Yeah, before, yeah. Did it come before lying and stealing and cheating and infidelity? Yes. Why? Because that is the sin.

You commit that sin against God, Adam and Eve, you and I can commit the same sin by refusing to hear Jesus.

If you reject Jesus, you reject God. This is at the core of Christian theology. God the Father in His love has disclosed Himself to the Son and the Son has the right to give life and to judge.

Well, so what was God doing? He was giving life. life and pronouncing judgment. In the words of another New Testament writer, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against Him.

In Jesus, John shows us two divine prerogatives. The ability to give life and the authority to judge. Only God does those. Only Jesus does those.

[29 : 32] And as we close, the Bible tells us that in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting our sins against us.

And it tells us that God made, for our sake, He made Jesus to be sin who knew no sin so that we might become the righteousness of God. And this is the kicker.

There is a great inversion in the Bible. Because what I have just asserted from John is that Jesus is judge and Jesus gives life.

The life-giving Son in the Bible ends up giving up His life. Son, the Almighty Judge, falls under judgment.

The one entrusted with giving life to the world at the end is giving up His own life at the end of John's Gospel. The one who sat on the judge's bench in all of heaven to pronounce judgment is now suspended from a wooden cross as a guilty criminal.

[30 : 59] Christ's humiliation becomes your justification. Death would not end Him for in Him was life.

And so He took up His own life again after three days. life again and now continues His role as the divine life giver.

And through this act, this inversion, He pardons from judgment for He Himself bore your judgment. He is both the bringer and the bearer of judgment.

And this is the beauty of Christianity. This is the love of God demonstrated to the world. This is the offer of eternal life for all who hear the voice of the Son and believe.

And I can't help but ask, is that you? Are you alive but lifeless?

[32 : 10] then take the Son. Are you crushed by your guilt? By your self-judgment?

Burdened by your inadequacy? Self-condemned? Is that you? And I give you Christ.

Your judgment bearer where you will find pardon and life. Father, we close our time this morning.

And here we have seen the Lord Jesus Christ giving life according to the passage to whoever He would like.

whoever. That's anyone. Tall or short. Wide or thin. Bright or foolish. And for all in this room, I pray that they would cling and they would seize and they would grasp the Lord Jesus Christ and His words and believe.

[33 : 32] and in doing so that they would cross from judgment to life. For Jesus sake.

Amen. Amen. Amen.