

Jesus Son of God

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 24 May 2020

Preacher: Joshua Winters

- [0 : 00] Greetings, all of you who are watching or listening today, and if you're just listening, tuning in for the first time, I'm glad that you are. We've been working through the Gospel of John, the story of Jesus as a church together, and we're going to continue on in that story today.
- If you have a Bible, I encourage you to grab it and to open it up to the Gospel of John. We're in chapter 5 of the Gospel of John. And as we continue on through this, we're about to get into a section here that is really a goldmine.
- It's a place where, I mean, we've seen all kinds of glorious truth about Jesus revealed up until this point through the narrative sections that we've looked at.
- But in these verses, Jesus, all the way from verse 19 to 47, it's all Jesus' words.
- And so this section is just loaded with rich statements from Jesus, which reveal all kinds of wonderful truths, which we're looking forward to seeing.
- [1 : 23] Jesus is going to tell us a little bit more about this mysterious and wonderful relationship that he has with his Father. He's going to talk to us about the extent of his authority and power and where it comes from.
- He's going to talk to us about the gift of eternal life and what we need to do to receive it. He's going to talk to us about the gift of Jesus. He's going to talk to us about the gift of Jesus. He's going to talk about various testimonies which confirm just who he is.
- He's going to talk about how the religious leaders have missed the mark and why, a little bit of why. And he's also going to reveal just what he knows is going on in their hearts.
- So this is a loaded section. It's a gold mine. We could just set up shop here. We could read and study and meditate and memorize and then go back and do it all again and still not get to the end of all that's here.
- So I'm hoping that as we begin to dig into these words today that we'll see something of the riches that are here for us and really we'll just be scratching the surface.
- [2 : 40] But I hope that as you start to see all of these deposits of glorious truth here that you'll kind of be aware of them so that you can begin to dig into those on your own.
- At home. So let's go to the word. But before we do, let's pray. Father in heaven, we thank you that you have given us these precious words which your son Jesus spoke.
- And now as we read and listen to them, Lord, would you help us to see and understand what you want us to see and understand here. Would you allow our hearts to feel the weight of these words and press them into our spirit and our souls.
- Help us to see the glory of Jesus and the glory that you have. We ask this in his name. Amen. All right.
- So verse 19 is where we are at today. And it says this. Jesus gave them this answer. Now, this comes in the context of a larger story.
- [3 : 51] We should probably just remember where we're at. Jesus is in Jerusalem. Jerusalem. And he has just recently healed a man who couldn't walk for 38 years at the pool of Bethesda.

And he did that on the Sabbath day. He told him to pick up his mat and carry it. The man was healed and he was carrying it. And when the religious leaders heard that Jesus was the one who had done this and told him to carry his mat on the Sabbath, they began to go after Jesus.

And John tells us to persecute him. There's a larger story going on here. The religious leaders were already going after Jesus. They wanted him dead.

And John tells us that this charge of breaking the Sabbath was the way that they were trying to get at him and to secure that outcome.

So we saw last Sunday how they went after him back in verse 16, 17, 18 and charged him with breaking the Sabbath. What are you doing working on the Sabbath?

[5 : 00] And Jesus gave this wonderful defense. My father is always at his work to this very day. And I too am working. So he didn't deny that he was working.

He admitted to working on the Sabbath. And kind of got himself off the hook in a sense by saying, well, God isn't guilty for working on the Sabbath.

My father and neither am I. And this response really got to the religious leaders. John told us back there in verse 18 that because he said this, they tried all the more to kill him.

Not only was he breaking the Sabbath, at least in their view, but he was even calling God his own father, making himself equal with God. So this is the thoughts that are going on in their hearts and minds.

Like, who does this guy think he is doing these things, working on the Sabbath and then claiming God as his own father? And that's why he can do these things on the Sabbath.

[6 : 09] And we had a bit of a look at what Jesus really was, I think, saying here. God isn't guilty for working on the Sabbath because that law doesn't apply to him or his work.

And Jesus says, neither am I. And the reason that we pulled out there, drew out, was because the work that Jesus does is God's work. It is the Father's work.

And so the law of the Sabbath doesn't apply. And this comes through even more clearly in another passage in John, John 14, verse 10.

Jesus says this, So he's not guilty for breaking the Sabbath.

Why? Because it's the Father living in him who is working. This is God at work here. And so the Sabbath laws don't apply.

[7 : 20] Well, the religious leaders are upset by this. They hear in this a claim from Jesus to be divine, to be on the same level as God, to be equal with God.

How does Jesus respond to this? That's what we read about in verse 19. Jesus gave them this answer. Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself.

He can do only what he sees his Father doing. Because whatever the Father does, the Son also does. Now we want to slow it down and just look at these words.

We really want to understand this relationship between Jesus and his Father. I mean, this is something that we've already seen glimpses of already up to this point through the gospel.

Let's remember a few of those. Back in chapter 1, verse 14, John wrote this. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

[8 : 32] We have seen his glory. Glory of the one and only Son who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

So, Jesus, the divine Word, the Word who was with God and was God at the beginning before anything was made, he became flesh.

He took on human flesh and lived among us. He is the one and only Son, John says in verse 14, who came from the Father.

There are other ways that Jesus coming from the Father is described. Probably the most familiar is John 3, 16. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son.

So, his coming from the Father into our world is described as being given by God to the world. In the next verse, verse 17.

[9 : 33] For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Not only has he come from the Father and has he been given by the Father, but he has been sent by the Father into the world.

We see the intentionality of God in this. These all describe how Jesus, this man that we see walking among us, got here, where he is from.

But why has he come? Well, we've seen a number of answers to that question so far in John's Gospel as well. In John 3, 16. He gave his one and only Son in order that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

So, God gave his Son to the world so that people of the world might believe in him and be spared what they deserve.

That is, to perish because of their sins against God and instead receive this good gift of eternal life. We see this spelled out for us again in verse 17 of chapter 3.

[10 : 53] For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. So, he has given and sent his Son into the world in order to save people of the world.

Jesus has come from the Father on a rescue mission. He has come to rescue. And not only has he come to rescue, but he has come to reveal to people who God is.

And we saw this back in John chapter 1, verse 18. John wrote this, No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God, and is in closest relationship with the Father.

He has made him, that is the Father, known. So, the one and only Son has made the Father, God, whom no one has ever seen, known.

So, Jesus, not only has he come to rescue, but he has come to reveal just who God is. And we hear in these words that the Son is in closest relationship with the Father, says John.

[12 : 20] There's this closeness, this deep intimacy. There's this relationship between Father and Son. And we see glimpses of this relationship throughout the Gospel.

We've seen a few already. We saw it when Jesus was in Jerusalem at the temple courts. As he was flipping the tables and driving out the sellers and the money changers.

He said, Stop turning my Father's house into a market. We saw this passion, this love, this fierce loyalty to his Father.

And to his Father's glory and honor. We saw it again in, kind of from the other side of the relationship in John chapter 3, verse 35.

John writes there, The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. And now, as we come to verse 19, we're going to see a lot more in these verses which follow.

[13 : 29] A lot more about this relationship between the Father and the Son. So Jesus gave them this answer, Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself.

He can do only what he sees his Father doing. Because what the Father does, the Son also does. Now I want to be careful with these words.

Let's listen to them again in another translation. One that's a little more word for word. The New American Standard Bible has it this way. Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of himself.

Unless it is something he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does.

In like manner or likewise. Now what does that mean? What does Jesus mean as he says this?

[14 : 37] All kinds of questions arise. What does Jesus mean when he says that the Son can do nothing of himself? Unless it's something he sees the Father doing.

What does Jesus mean when he says, sees the Father doing? In what sense does he see the Father doing the things that he's doing? What does it mean that the Son likewise also does the things that the Father does?

We have all kinds of questions as we come to these words. And I think the first place to go with these questions is to our knees. And just humbly acknowledge.

We're talking about the mysterious relationship between the Divine Son of God and God the Father. We don't know just how all this works.

How this relationship works. This is on a whole other plane of understanding, realm of existence that is so foreign to us as creatures, as human beings.

[15 : 52] And so we want to start with humility and realize that this is not something that is easy to understand. I can guarantee you that the disciples are probably scratching their heads at this moment and wondering, what does that mean, Jesus?

Probably having the same questions as we do. And we know this because a little later in the story of John, one of the disciples will have a conversation with Jesus and kind of give away that he still doesn't get it, this relationship between Jesus and his Father.

And Jesus will kind of explain it again and try to help him see it. And so we're not the only ones who come to these words and are wondering, what does Jesus mean by this?

So we want to be careful with these words. But what can we say from these words? Well, I think at the very least we can say that Jesus seems to be saying that he, as the Divine Son of God, does not act independently from the Father.

Jesus, as the Divine Son of God, does not act independently from the Father. Now, where do we get this from?

[17 : 19] Well, let's bring into focus the larger context of the conversation with the religious leaders. They're upset with him. Why? Because he has claimed that God is his own Father, and that just as his Father is not guilty for breaking the Sabbath, so he, because he is the Son of the Father, is not guilty for working on the Sabbath day.

So they understand him correctly. He is claiming to be divine. And if he wasn't, Jesus could very easily just say, very truly, I say to you, I am not claiming to be equal with God.

I am not claiming to be the Divine Son of God, but he doesn't say that. You can imagine what the Jewish leaders are thinking in this moment.

They're thinking of perhaps some of those words from the Scriptures. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

There is only one God, and so who are you, a man, standing in front of us, claiming to be divine with your words? There's only one God.

[18 : 34] I think there's a bit of an answer to that in what Jesus says here in verse 19. Very truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of himself unless it is something he sees the Father doing.

I think, and this is my paraphrase and take on it, that there's a sense in which Jesus is saying, I'm not claiming to be divine in the sense that there are two gods.

I'm not claiming to be another God who the Sabbath law does not apply to. No, there is one God.

I, as the Son of God, am not someone who can just act independently from him.

There's a connection between us and our work. Very truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of himself unless it is something he sees the Father doing.

[19 : 46] So there's this connection, there's this union of my work and his work. And in some sense that goes beyond our understanding, Jesus seems to be saying that he is watching what his Father is doing in any given moment, it seems as though he's saying.

And unless he sees his Father doing it, he can't just go off and do it on his own, of himself.

Their work, their action as Father and Son are unified. They're in harmony and synchronized with each other.

And we see a little more of this in the second half of verse 19. Kind of confirmation, almost a flip side of the coin way of saying it. For whatever the Father does, these things the Son also likewise does.

That's quite the claim when you think about it. I mean, the first one, okay, we can see that. You're not claiming to be a second God, one who acts independently from the one true God.

[21 : 12] No, you're kind of saying that you are in your work tethered to his. but now you're saying it's as if Jesus is saying whatever the Father might do, decide to do and do, the Son also likewise does that thing or is doing that as well.

There's, again, this is, Jesus seems to be saying there's this unity unity to his action and the Father's action and perhaps the place you could just conceive of this best is in a miracle of healing.

In some sense, since we don't understand, it's as if the Son is watching what the Father is doing and seeing what he is doing and as he sees the Father stretch out his hand toward a person to heal them, he too at the same time stretches out his hand to heal.

The picture we get here is that there are two distinct persons at work and yet in this one action there is one God at work.

Now, I'm not going to pretend to have this all figured out or to fully understand how this works, what this is like or feels like to Jesus. This is a mystery.

[22 : 51] I honestly have no idea but this seems to be what Jesus is saying here. And this is really the key truth for today that Jesus the Son of God has this wonderful, special relationship with God the Father that there is a unity to their work, to their action such that the Son does not act independently from the Father.

In fact, it's even stronger than that. Cannot act. The Son can or is able to do nothing of himself unless it is something he sees the Father doing.

There's a harmony, a perfect synchronization of the Father and Son as they act. Why?

Well, we're going to see this a little bit today because there is a union, a deep connectedness between the Father and the Son such as is out of this world, something that we just goes beyond what we can even fathom.

So, where do we see this? Well, let's look through a few other scriptures just to see this truth that we've seen here from Jesus' words affirmed again, but also some additional details that will kind of, I think, bring this into focus for us.

[24 : 27] So, the first place we want to look at is John chapter 5 verse 30. This is just a little ways down the end of this section. Jesus will say a very similar thing here in John 5 verse 30.

He says this, By myself I can do nothing. I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself, but him who sent me.

So, again, very similar, in fact, almost identical language, of myself I can, I am able to do nothing. In his action, which is specifically related to judgment, that the Father has entrusted to him, which we'll talk about another message, in his action, he doesn't do it of himself.

Why? Verse 30, For I seek not to please myself, literally, I seek not to do my will, but the will of him who sent me.

So, here we see again, the son cannot act independently from the Father. Even though he has been entrusted judgment from the Father, he does not do it of himself.

[25 : 56] He does it in unison, in synchronization with the Father, what he hears from the Father. And we see another added detail here, this added detail of how the son is voluntarily submitting himself to the Father.

He's not living to do his own will, but to do the will of the one who sent him, to please him. And we'll see this in more places than just this as we go on.

Let's fast forward to John chapter 8. John chapter 8, verse 28 and 29. Again, Jesus is having conversation with people and he says this, when you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own, but speak just what the Father has taught me.

The one who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him. Here again, you see this idea again that the Son does not act independently from the Father.

I do nothing on my own. In fact, he doesn't even speak independently from the Father, but I speak just what the Father has taught me.

[27 : 28] What he says to me, I say to you. There's a unity, a harmony, not just to the work that the Father and Son do, but to the words that the Son speaks.

They are the words that he has received from the Father to say. And again, we see this idea of submission, voluntary submission, for I always do what pleases him.

There's this commitment not to do his own will, but to do what pleases the Father, to do the will of his Father, the work of his Father, to say the words of his Father.

Let's fast forward again to John chapter 12 verse 49. Again, Jesus referring to his previous words says this, for I did not speak on my own or of myself, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken.

Last half of verse 50. So, whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say. Again, we see the Son does not act independently from the Father.

[28 : 58] He does not speak independently from the Father. They are one in their work. They are one in their words.

The Son says what the Father has commanded him to say, what the Father has told him to say. And again, this idea of the Son submitting himself to the Father's commands and obeying the Father.

And probably the thing that will bring this most clearly into focus is what Jesus says in John chapter 10 verse 30 because he says it's so directly there. We're going to get there later in this series, but this is what Jesus says in John 10 30.

He says, I and the Father are one. I and the Father are one. This is what is at the heart of this unity in their work and in their speaking.

being. It's this deeper reality that in their very beings, being, singular, Jesus and his Father are one.

[30 : 09] Two persons, one God. Jesus will explain it like this in verse 36 of chapter 10. why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said I am God's son.

Do not believe me unless I do the works of my Father. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I in the Father.

Couldn't be said more clearly, I don't think, than this. There is a oneness, a unity, not just of their works, not just of the words, but of who they are.

Father and son together, one God. So truly does the son make known who the Father is and is united with the Father that Jesus will say this in conversation with Philip.

Philip will ask Jesus, he'll say, show us the Father. And this is Jesus' answer. John 14, 9, don't you know me, Philip, even after I've been among you such a long time?

[31 : 44] Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, show us the Father? Don't you believe that I am in the Father and that the Father is in me?

Here it is again, the words I say to you, I do not speak on my own authority, me. Rather, it is the Father living in me who is doing his work.

If you've seen me, says Jesus, you have seen the Father. That's how one they are. So, yes, we do see this truth all through the Gospel of John, that Jesus as the Son of God has this wonderful relationship with his Father in which they are two persons distinct from one another and yet one God acting together, working together, speaking together in perfect harmony, in perfect unison and at the same time there's this element of it's the Father's will that governs and that directs and he's the one who commands and the son is the one who submits and watches and acts in perfect harmony with the Father.

These are lofty truths about Jesus and the Father. Where do these truths hit us today? Well, they hit us in a couple of places.

And I think, now, I've said this before in this series, but I want to say it again. If Jesus is just a mere man, then it matters very little if we listen to him or take his words seriously.

[33 : 42] If Jesus is a prophet, then it matters much if we listen to him or take his words seriously. But if Jesus is, as we've seen, the very Son of God, who when he speaks, it is God who speaks through him, then it matters massively whether we listen to his words or take them seriously.

If we choose to ignore the words of Jesus or reject the words of Jesus or disregard the words of Jesus, we are choosing to reject and ignore and disregard the words of God, the Father himself, the creator of the universe.

And that's not a place that we want to be. But the flip side of this is also true. If Jesus speaks the very words of the Father, of God himself, then this means that it is not just Jesus who offers living water and eternal life and resurrection from the dead to people, but it is God himself, the Father, the creator, who is offering these good gifts.

And if it's God who offers them, we can be certain that he will deliver because only God can do these kinds of things, can give these kinds of gifts to people.

Finally, we read earlier in John chapter 1 verse 18, these words, no one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son has made him known.

[35 : 50] Do we realize just how wonderful this is? That Jesus, as the Son of God, has come into our world so that we could have the gracious opportunity to know the unseeable one, the God who has never been seen.

If they have this kind of a oneness, like has been talked about here, then truly by looking at Jesus, the one who walked among us, we can know God.

What a wonderful thing. Are we taking advantage of this opportunity and looking at him and listening to his words?

He does not just speak on God's behalf, he speaks God's words. He does God's works. And this is a wonderful and gracious gift.

We've been talking all through this series about how Jesus is full of grace and truth. God's grace and truth. He's not gracious and truthful in his speech.

[37 : 16] He is the very embodiment of God's grace and God's truth given and spoken to us.

What an amazing gift. God's God's God's God's love and God's love and God's love and God's love and spoke among us.

I hope and I pray that we do. I want to close with these words of Jesus from John chapter 5 verse 24. This is back in John 5 and we didn't get to that yet but this is what Jesus says.

Hear these words. very truly I tell you whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.

do you hear the word of Jesus? Do you believe the one who sent him?

[38 : 30] I hope and I pray that you do. Let's pray. Father in heaven thank you for sending your son. Thank you for the words he has spoken.

We pray and ask that you would continue to help us see more of the truth in his words and understand them better so that we might know you God deeper, more than we ever have before.

We ask that you'd seal these words in our hearts in the weeks ahead. In Jesus name. Amen. we're going to next week.

in the bye.