

Equal with the Father

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Date: 31 May 2015

[0 : 00] Jeff, is this yours? Okay, I'll put it here.
I won't put it there. It'll interfere. Okay, here we go. Sorry. Well, what are you going to do next? Pray.
Never underestimate the significance or the importance of prayer in the preaching of the Word of God.
A Bible truth is that all of us in this room, every one of us, have issues and challenges that complicate the process of life.
Wouldn't you agree with that? Every one of us. And there's not a part, there's not a moment of our present existence that is not kind of troubled a little bit by the reality of our ongoing struggle with indwelling sin.

[1 : 32] Everybody here. And I am so very thankful for the clear, explicit teaching of the Word of God that preaching, which is a very important part of church life, is something that relies first upon the clarity and the undeniable authority of the Word of God.
I am not up here to do anything less than to make the Word of God clear. You didn't come here. You didn't come here to hear my opinions.
By the way, my opinions change periodically, as yours do. You are here in some sense to hear what does God say.
And thankfully, we have Bibles to help us know that. We are also dependent upon the enabling of the Spirit of God because apart from the Spirit of God, we all have ten ears.
We don't hear very well. Is that true? How many of you? We don't hear very well. It was a little while ago. Is Judith in here this morning? Ah, we're...

[3 : 03] You know, she's my darling, my bride. But a while back, she said to me, she said, Honey, I don't know if you're having early signs of Alzheimer's or you're just not listening well.
Now, that was a very challenging thought to me because I had two very uncomfortable choices. Now, some of you out there are young and you think, what's the deal with that?
But for me, it was like, oh, let's see. And so I opted for that I'm not listening very well because, you know, the Alzheimer's case is like a whoa. So it's like, we don't listen very well.
And the natural tendency is that we're all here this morning listening to ourselves more often than we ought to be.
Wouldn't you agree with that? We're listening to ourselves. We're listening to the world. We're listening to our own moodiness.

[4 : 04] Our inclination to not put Christ at the center. And this morning, as we take the text in hand, I'm going to appeal to you that you who know Christ would do something in the flow of preaching.
Number one, that you would pray for me as I preach. But number two, that you would pray that the Holy Spirit would help you listen. Now, I'll tell you ahead of time what the outcome will be if that earnest and humble prayer.

How many of you understand what I just said? If that earnest and humble prayer is prayed, it will be that in the week that follows, you will be a better listener to Jesus.

Don't you like knowing ahead of time what happens when you do the right things? I mean, really. Wouldn't it be nice next week to be able to walk in here and say, Hey, listen, as a result of the Word of God making a difference in my heart, and as a result of the enabling of the Spirit of God, I am not so caught up with myself.

And in those moments where my heart has been inclined towards sin, the Spirit of God has brought back to my mind the sweetness of the Scriptures and has rescued me from that natural inclination that I have.

[5 : 39] Now, know ahead of time, the purpose of preaching is to put you on the spot where you respond with humility to what God has to say. Not just now, but the whole week long.

Wouldn't that be nice? How many of you admit that if you were listening more often to God, your life would be less messy? Smile at me so I know you know I'm talking to you.

My life would be less messy. Earlier this week, boy, I hate to tell stories on myself, but it just shows the progressive, the carnality of the heart.

We have window shakers. How many of you know what window shakers are? We're in the remodeling stage. When I get to heaven, it will be all done. But before that, I'm always remodeling. And we don't have central air.

We have little window shakers we bought off of Craigslist, and they're insufferably loud. They do keep the house moderately cool. But I was downstairs, and Judith was upstairs, and I was trying to get her attention.

[6 : 50] She came down the steps and said, You're yelling at me. I said, I am not! Now, that was the air conditioners kind of prompting that, you know.

And then, truthfully, you know, I'm 66 and a pastor, so, you know, I knew, stopped him.

That's not good. But later on, I was driving somewhere to take care of something, and I found myself beginning to struggle with anger. Does anybody else have a problem with kind of working on their anger still, still working at that?

You know, it's like I was just, I mean, I was livid inside. Now, you know, settled and wasn't saying anything outside, you know. But inside, and I thought to myself, it was just a couple, about three or four minutes of driving in the car, and I was just beside myself, and I thought to myself, I could hear the Spirit of God say to me this, the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God.

And then I heard the Spirit of God. Now, what do I mean by when I heard the Spirit of God? I don't know how to hear the voice in the right ear, you know, because the left ear is a little deaf. But I, here's what I believe the Scriptures say in John 16.

[8 : 05] It says, the Spirit brings to mind the Scriptures. That's his job. And so the Spirit of God was prompting me, saying, Tim, not only do you need to remember that passage in James, but there's all kinds of texts in Proverbs that tell us that an angry man is just a, you know, kind of a walking disaster.

And they're, bang, bang, bang, bang. I thought, you, stop while you're ahead. You follow that? I bring that up because this morning, the center of our passage is this issue.

Listen to Jesus. Listen to Jesus. And the truth of the matter is, is every single one of us here, whether we are saved or not, whether we've come to faith or not, we need to hear what Jesus has to say because it is a matter of life and death.

It is a matter of eternal blessing or eternal heartache. And there's not a one of us in here this morning that does not need the help of the Holy Spirit to enlarge our heart and open our ear to hear the sweetness of the communication of the glorious Savior that came into this world for me and for you.

With that as kind of a background and an outline or an opening, and I'm kind of sympathetic to David, who's back there trying to figure out, when does he start so I can snap up a slide, I want you to know that what we're looking at this morning in John chapter 5 is kind of the after effects of what happened when Jesus came back to Jerusalem.

[9 : 51] You remember, he came into Jerusalem, he cleansed the temple, a lot of pushback on that, and he went off for a period of time back to his area in Galilee, he stopped at the well at Sychar, and many came to know Christ.

But then he comes back to Jerusalem, and immediately upon arriving back in Jerusalem, he kind of walks down to the pool at Bethesda, and he heals someone. He heals someone.

And it's very interesting when you kind of look at the healing situation, Jesus walks up to a guy and says, hey, what's the deal with you? Do you want to be healed? And the guy hasn't even figured out who he's talking to or who's in front of him or what is needed.

He says, yeah, yeah, yeah, well, I can't get down to the pool. And Jesus says, take up your bed and walk. And the guy does. He listens to Jesus. And so here he is, kind of, just imagine this.

He is walking through the streets of Jerusalem, carrying his bed with him, and there are Pharisees who are saying, see that guy?

[11 : 02] Hey, how come you're taking your bed and walking like that? And the guy, he says, the guy who healed me said, do it. I mean, after all, the person who heals you has a right to tell you what to do.

Would you buy that? And so here the guy is. He's marching down the streets, carrying his bed. That was not something you did on the Sabbath. And they were kind of really wigged out about this.

Look at what happens in verse 17. Jesus, when he had interaction with them, he said, yeah, how come you're telling him to carry his bed on the Sabbath? You know, and Jesus says, hey, my dad's on the clock right now, and I am too.

I mean, that was just like a slap in their face. Do you follow that? And so what we read in verse 18 is this. It says, this is why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, bad thing to do, but he was even calling God his own father, making him equal to God.

What we find from chapter 5, verse 19, to the end of this chapter, is a very careful and pointed response that Jesus gives to his religious challengers to make it clear that he indeed is the Son of God.

[12 : 28] One of the things that a lot of people seem to believe today about Jesus is that, I mean, not people who've come to faith, but a lot of people kind of, Jesus was a pretty nice guy if he existed at all.

And he kind of, you know, trundled along through life and was a little misunderstood, but after all, he was really about just doing good things. And, you know, he's really not a bad guy to follow and model our lives after, but he really wasn't into kind of letting people know that they had a major problem with sin and he came to be the Savior.

That's not true at all. Jesus very intentionally made the issue of his mission clear, both to the spiritual leaders of the day and to all who would listen.

And we're going to see that here this morning because we have religious leaders who come to him and say, yeah, and who are you? And Jesus said, well, I'm glad you asked. Let me tell you.

So the first thing we want to see is as he points out there in verse 19, he says this, Jesus said to them, truly, truly, and by the way, when you hear the word truly, truly, what is it?

[13:48] What is it? It's a literary device, the same as using a highlighter or a yellow marker in your notes. What is that for? Pay attention. Get this. Pay attention. This is important.

And so here's Jesus as he starts in. He's going to say, listen, I'm equal to the Father and so let me help you understand that. He says, 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, the Son does likewise.

Jesus responded to his critics who were really upset that he called himself God's Son and equal by pointing out that his actions and his Father's actions were exactly the same.

How many of you heard the saying, like Father, like... Come on. There we go. Yeah? Like Father, like Son. And there's an element of truth to that in broad terms.

I mean, our fathers affect the way we think and the way we act, and we hope that's favorable. In this case, certainly was. Jesus makes the point. He says, I do nothing, absolutely nothing, except what my Father once done.

[15:02] I want you to fix that in your minds. So the takeaway from that is this. Jesus healed when the Father wanted him to heal. Now look at the passage again.

Jesus said, Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord. Now the implication is not that Jesus was kind of some robot over here, and when the Father said, you know, that's the way it kind of played out, you know, it's like, you know, going over here to the pool and doing the guy.

Jesus was just saying, listen, my dad and I are like this, okay? And I'm doing what he wants me to do. I'm doing exactly what he wants me to do, and I'm doing it exactly the way he wants it done.

Look at verse 19 so that we understand this. When he says, I can do nothing of my own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing, there are two pieces in this that I want you to understand.

For one, he's saying, I do exactly the things God wants done for the reason he wants it done. I do exactly what the Father wants done for the reason he wants it done.

[16:12] Jesus had walked down to the pool at Bethesda. He had walked past hundreds. I don't know how many were there, but we can guess it was a gathering place of many, many very infirm and troubled people, and he walked past all these others, and he goes to the man, and he says, hey, do you want to be healed?

Right here. He passed the others. He says, do you? The reason God, that Christ healed that particular man was because that was the man that God the Father had intended for Jesus to heal, and he did it according to the Father's will.

Furthermore, not only is it a matter of doing something for the same reason, but it's also doing it exactly the Father's way. doing something for the same reason and doing it the same way.

How many of you eat on the backside of your fork? Hello? Anybody out here? If I were in England or in India, how many of you know that English do not eat with the scoopy part up?

they eat with the scoopy part out. Now, how that works, I don't know. Well, I do know because they always use a knife to push the food up on the backside.

[17:40] How many of you know that food wants to crawl down the fork when you have it upside down like that? So, where do kids learn to eat with the scoopy part of the fork aimed the wrong way?

At home. Right? They do it the same way their dad does it. And here is Jesus saying, I do things for the same reason as my father and I do them exactly the same way.

Imagine the absolute smack that this was to his critics who are all kind of bent out of shape about the fact that Jesus was healing on the Sabbath and here's what he says to them. Let's get this straight.

He says, I healed on the Sabbath because that's what my dad once done and I did it exactly the way he wanted it done. On the Sabbath. So, here's the question.

As we grow to be like Jesus and is he interested in you growing to be like Jesus? What's the answer? Come on, everybody look up because I think this is important to understand. If you are here this morning and you are a child of God, do you understand that he's left you here instead of taking you home so you grow to be more like Jesus over time?

[18:52] Stop and ask yourself the question, am I still as moody and as self-centered and as easily irritated as I was 10 years ago? If that's the case, there's a problem.

Everybody agrees, don't you? You understand that? If you're, how many of you know what an OI is? This is maybe a new word for some of you. The word OI refers to offendability index.

Write that down on your notes so you don't, you can use it with other people. Don't apply it to yourself. This is for others. A high OI is people who have a high offendability index.

If your offendability index is not kind of diminishing going down, there's something wrong. Would you agree with that? You see, as we grow to be more like Jesus, we become more gentle.

We become less irritable. We're not as bent out of shape about as many things as we used to be. I understand that's the way you used to be.

[19:50] But as we grow in grace, there should be indications of the fact that we're changing. And so, here is Jesus responding to his critics and he says, hey, let's get this clear.

I'm doing exactly the way my dad wants things done. So how often are the things that you do and the reason for you doing them like Christ?

How often are you responding and acting and doing things exactly because Jesus wants them done? That's a fair takeaway, isn't it? Let's look at the second point, verse 20.

Equal in communion. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. Now, everybody knows Jesus loves me, this I know.

There's another little song that goes along with it. Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world, red, yellow, black, and white. You follow that? Jesus loves a lot of people.

[20:52] God loves a lot of people. What was Jesus saying here? It goes back to that sign, my father and I are like this. He was saying that his relationship with his father was one of unbridled love.

Jesus was not simply claiming affection and a tolerant love that a superior has for a subordinate.

He was speaking of the kind of love that comes in a intimate communion where both parties are completely open and free and sweet in their relationship.

And I want you to understand that no Jew would ever have made this claim that I am in this sweet, unbelievable love relationship with the father in which as a result of that I know what he knows.

Turn back in your Bible just for a moment to Deuteronomy chapter 29, 29. Deuteronomy chapter 29, 29. Here is Moses preaching his concluding sermons.

[22:11] And in 29, 29 he makes an interesting statement. It says this, the secret things belong to the Lord our God.

How many of you have had to come to grips with that? There are some things about God that you haven't figured out yet. In fact, can I tell you a little secret? You never will. You never will. I remember earlier this morning as I was praying and having time with the Lord I came up a chrono.

How many of you have kind of wrapped yourself around a particular thought and it just kind of, it's like looking at the sun. It's too much after just a couple of seconds. I remember, forget what it was, but it was like, oh man, let's get, Jared, where are you?

Jared? Jared speaks about his brain hurting sometimes. It was one of those, I was having a brain cramp thinking about these two beautiful theological truths.

and here's what it says. It says, the secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever.

[23 : 18] That we may do all the words of this law. There's some things about God that you and I don't get, but what Jesus was saying is, hey, I do get them.

And I get them because we are in sweet and intimate communion. And my relationship with the Father is of such a nature that I understand the picture clearly.

As I was meditating and praying about this passage, I got to thinking, what would it have been like to have just been able to sit in when God the Father and God the Son were talking about the plan of redemption?

Do you follow that? I mean, we know that our salvation was planned before the foundation of the world. And can you imagine the conversations between God the Father and God the Son?

And man, I have this wonderful idea of how to save fallen mankind. You know, those wretched, miserable rebels who hate me and hate you? Here's my idea.

[24 : 22] Why don't you go down there and die? And Jesus says, right on. Man, that's phenomenal.

And I'm with it. And I love it. And I'm, see, Jesus is saying, go back to that passage in John chapter 5. He says, hey, listen, the Father loves me.

And he has shown me all that he is doing. as Jesus marched towards the cross.

He was not walking towards the cross with a quiet resignation. It tells us in Hebrews chapter 12 that for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross.

Do you follow that? He anticipated the blessing and he came with an understanding of the work of the Father in its details. He says, let me tell you something, Pharisees.

[25 : 28] My dad and I are like this. There's one other thing that I want you to see there. It says there in the latter part of verse 20, it says, in greater works than these will he show him so that you may marvel.

Well, what are those two works? One is, Jesus makes it clear and we're dealing now with the matter of equal in authority and glory. Okay?

Equal in authority and glory. And so, we're recognizing here that Jesus is telling him, you want to know who I am? I am God the Son and I have the right to speak the way I do because my Father and I are close.

What are the two things that he speaks of here that are miraculous, significant works that are going to cause people to marvel?

One, the Son will raise the dead to life. Jesus made this statement. He says, I am the resurrection and whosoever believes in me shall not die, perish.

[26 : 33] Memorial Day, my sister and I went out to where my dad is buried. He's buried quite close to where Tom Parsons is buried and quite close to where Hal Burchett is buried.

And I remember walking past Hal's grave, sweet man that served our fellowship as just an unbelievably godly deacon and Tom Parsons, what a blessing he was to us in our fellowship in so many different ways.

And I remember walking past Hal's grave and walking past Tom's grave and past my father's and thinking to myself, hey listen, the day is coming that this little place of ground is going to be ripped apart and Jesus is going to raise him up from the dead and we are going to go wow.

You got that? I don't know what we're going to say on the way up but probably Tim's going to say wow. And I was like, yes. Jesus said it.

He says, I am the resurrection and the life. And here he is telling the Jews ahead of time, he says, listen, you're going to see some things that are going to make you go.

[27 : 43] What was that? He says, you watch me. I'm going to raise people from dead. And he did that, right? He did that. Widow with a bunch of people trundling her little boy out to the cemetery where they're going to bury him and Jesus stops the whole crowd.

I mean, can you imagine standing out in the middle of 270 when the hearse is going by and says, stop. Open the car door, walk out, get this guy out of here. I'm going to heal him, raise him up.

And here's Jesus, raises that guy. And do you know that his spectacular displays of power were of such a nature that his enemies could do nothing except try to plan to undo the evidence?

Turn in your Bibles, if you will, to John chapter 12 just for a moment. John chapter 12. Jesus made it clear, I'm going to raise the dead, that's what he says there in chapter 5.

But look at John chapter 12. John chapter 12 is kind of a follow-up to what happened in John chapter 11 where you'll remember that Lazarus, Jesus' friend, died.

[29 : 01] Remember how that plays off? Back there in John chapter 11, Jesus makes it clear that he's the resurrection of life and raises Lazarus from the dead.

Well, here's how the religious leaders handled the evidence of Christ's power. John chapter 12, verse 10. So the chief priests made plans to what? Read it.

Kill, to put Lazarus to death as well. When you don't like the facts, destroy the evidence. How many of you got that one? The best way to not get in trouble when you've done something wrong is get rid of the evidence.

Do you follow that? And here's Jesus heals someone. They couldn't deal with the evidence and say, let's figure out how we're going to destroy the evidence. Well, Jesus said, going there in John chapter 5, he says, let me tell you something.

As the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. The Son, Jesus, will raise the dead to life.

[30 : 11] Secondly, the Son will judge all mankind. Let me have you think with me just for a moment back to the passage in Genesis chapter 18. And just for the sake of time this morning, understand that in Genesis chapter 18 is where God reveals to Abraham that he's going to trash, he's going to destroy the city of Sodom and Gomorrah.

And he's going to destroy them for their wickedness and for their sexual misbehavior. And here is Abraham who knows that Lot is in that city and he starts out his little appeal, he says, shall not the judge of the whole earth do right?

That's his, God's the judge of the whole earth. Now, we have some wishy-washy theology out there that, have you ever heard somebody say, well, I'm not the judge?

That's true. That's true. You don't have the right to send anybody to hell. Clear that one out of the air. But do you have the right to call a rotten watermelon a rotten watermelon?

The answer is yes. Huh? Do you have the responsibility of identifying what is right and wrong according to the authority of the word of God?

[31 : 34] Yes, we don't condemn. We don't, we're not the ones who execute the judgment but we are the ones who can recognize right from wrong. And here's Jesus saying, let me tell you something, I'm not just the one who recognizes right and wrong, I'm the one who will be the judge.

And when Jesus said what he did, look at that, verse 23, 22, the father judges no one but has given all judgment to the son.

I want you to think about this very carefully. I want you to look at me. I want you to look at me. Here's the deal. The day is coming when all humanity will be judged.

And those who have resisted the grace of God and refuse to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are going to find that the one who judges their unrepentant and rebellious spirit will be the very one who died for their sins.

That's pretty significant. That is a profound, that's a profound indication of the sympathy and the tenderness of God.

[32 : 57] Do you understand what I'm saying? He gives to the one who came to be our Savior the right of condemning those who refuse what he did for them.

Turn in your Bibles so you follow the thought here over to Acts chapter 17 verse 31. Acts chapter 17 is Paul preaching in the Agora in Athens.

The Athenians did not have TV. They didn't have Netflix.

But they found entertainment in sitting around and just jawing about various, you know, philosophical and theological ideas. They were great at debate. They go on and on about everything, you know.

And they heard, hey, Paul's in town. You know what? He believes in the resurrection. You're kidding me. So they had Paul show up and he preached a wingdinger of a sermon.

[34 : 10] Started out pretty gentle, but let's get down to verse 31 because that's where the real, he pulled the trigger on the truth. He says, it's not that he didn't pull it earlier, but here he says, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.

The very one. God the Father. God the Father. Sent. To this world. To die for my sins and for your sins will be the one who judges you in the eternal day if you reject him now.

And it says in the book of Hebrews what a sober thing it is to face the wrath of a God who in his holiness judges sin and who his mercy has sent the Lord Jesus Christ to be our Savior.

when you walk away from that blessing and say, I am not going to yield my life and my own eternal destiny to anybody but myself.

So let me have you close by looking at verse 24. Truly, truly. And by the way, what does truly, truly? That's yellow marker. That's an ink line underneath the verse.

[35 : 43] You know, it's a truly, truly. Jesus is saying, hey, get the point. I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. Is Jesus talking to you this morning?

And the answer is yes! He is. Those who hear and believe have life. Those who refuse will be judged for all eternity.

whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me, that's God. The Father who sent him has eternal life. He does not come into judgment but has passed from death to life.

I want you to stop just for a moment. If you're sitting here and you do not know Jesus, here's what I want you to do. I want you to think with me. I want you to think just for a moment, just kind of, you've lain in bed at night and thought about some of the wicked, despicable things that you've done.

We've all done that. Here's what the Bible says. Romans chapter 8 says this, there is now therefore no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.

[36:51] Do you understand that? Why is it that there is no condemnation? It's not because God just kind of says, eh, no big. No, sin's not a problem for me.

It is a supreme problem for God. And yet, He sent Jesus Christ to die in your place, to die your death, and to satisfy the penalty of a holy God against your sin.

And He has provided salvation if you will come with humility and brokenness and say, I stand justly condemned before a holy God. But I believe what Jesus did.

He came in my place and He died my death and He has satisfied my debt and I believe in Him. And those who believe in Christ, they move from death to life.

Death to life. I want to encourage you this morning as you listen carefully, I want you to understand that at the heart of your faith, if you're here this morning and know Christ, is that if you are a child of God, one of the things that characterizes you is that He has opened your ear and given to you the ability to hear Jesus better.

[38:12] Isn't that right? Isn't that right? Isn't that right? So a practical question this morning is stop and think. Do I hear Him better today than I did a year ago?

Is there less dissonance? Is there less selfishness? Is there less bitterness?

Is there less covetousness? Is there less anger? If you are His child, one of the things that I can tell you is that the grace of God will work to help you grow.

And my appeal to you would be this. If you're His child, be one who seeks that growth rather than resist it because guess what I can tell you about when you resist His grace when you're His child?

He's going to get you there anyway. And so I would appeal to you this morning, hey listen Lord, I want to grow. I want my life to indicate an ear to the Word of Christ.

[39:25] I want you to bow your heads. And as Jeff comes up to lead us in our closing song, I want to quietly ask you a very pointed question without anybody looking around this morning.

I want you to stop and ask yourself the question, do I know Jesus Christ as my Savior? That's not complicated.

Yes or no? Do I want to continue resisting the prompting and the pleading and the gentleness of the Spirit of God that is working to convict me of my sin?

Do I want to keep resisting that? Or will I with humility and brokenness humble myself and say, I recognize I am a sinner, bankrupt and broken and one for whom Jesus died and rose again?

Will you in the face of the reality of the condition of your soul respond in faith and say, Jesus, I need you to be my Savior and I trust you to save me?

[40:48] And if that's the prayer of your heart, I would plead with you this morning to humble yourself and slip up your hand and say, I trust Jesus as my Savior.

Slip your hand up. Lord Christ, we are thankful for the fact that the Word makes the issue of heaven and hell clear and your Spirit is actively at work bringing people to a point of saying yes or no to the clarity of Scripture.

Thankful also, Lord, that your winsome and gentle Spirit continues to deal with us after we leave this place.

And I would plead that you would draw those who are here that need Jesus to the cross and that you would convict those that are His children and your children to grow in a desire to hear your voice more plainly and more clearly and to be more like you.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Let's stand together as we sing our closing song and as we're singing this it might be that Spirit of God has prompted your heart this morning.

[42:05] There's something you need to respond to.