

# Why We Worship Jesus

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Preacher: Rev. Aaron Roberts

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Good evening folks, welcome. My name is Aaron, I'm a minister for the service. I haven't met you, I'd love to meet you. Come and grab me after the service. About 3 o'clock, 3am last night, I felt a great disturbance in the force. Like approximately 4 million voices crying out at the same time. It was about that time that New Zealand suffered a huge defeat at the hands of the Australian cricket team in the finals of the World Cup of Cricket.

So if you are here and from the former prison colony of Australia, on behalf of New Zealand, founded by hardworking farmers, no criminals, I would like to extend my congratulations to that incredible victory. We shall speak no more of this.

So our passage today is, we've heard it read, it's mostly about the relationship between Jesus the Son and God the Father. It doesn't mention the Holy Spirit, that will come later. But what it does do is it gives us an inside, a bit of an inside look on the Trinity. I don't know if you've given the Trinity much thought. It's a pretty big deal. I think for some people when they think about the Trinity, it's, they think problem, or conundrum, or philosophical oddity. Perhaps theological liability.

Because, you know, how can one God be three persons? It all feels a bit untidy, like a big unsolvable mystery that, you know. Well, the Bible does reveal some things about the nature of God as Trinity, and it does that, not so we can have this kind of airtight definition. That's probably not going to happen, but it does that so that we can know Him, so that we can enjoy God and do what David does in Psalm 27.

And that's delight in His beauty. So let's get into it. Now the passage, I think, breaks into sort of three rough sections, which will form the sections of the sermon. If you can have the Bible open, it'd be super helpful, because it's really dense. So 18 to 20, if you kind of just slide your eyes down there, you'll see that that's a bit about the kind of relationship that the Father has with the Son.

[ 2 : 3 1 ] And then 21, 22, that's like an example of how that plays out. And then 23, 24, that's a bit of a so what section, like what does it mean? So again, one, relationship, the nature of the relationship, two, an example of it, and three, an application for us. Now, let me remind you of where we are, okay? So we're in a series, we're looking at the Gospel of John, and Jesus has just come back from healing a man who was an invalid for 38 years. The religious leaders wanted to kill him because, one, he healed on the Sabbath, and that was a pretty big deal, that was a no-no. But more importantly, Jesus said this, he says, my father works on the Sabbath, I work on the Sabbath, paraphrase. So the religious leaders are saying, well, he's making himself equal to God, and the punishment for that is death. We're committed to killing him now. They want him dead. So what Jesus says in the passage we just read, that is Christ's response to those leaders. So it says right at the start, so he said to them, okay? Okay, so that's where we are. That's a bit of context there. And here is what he said, just the first section, 19 to 20. Truly, truly, I say to you, the son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the father doing. For whatever the father does, that the son does likewise.

For the father loves the son and shows him all that he himself is doing. In greater works than these he will show them, so that you may marvel. So Jesus is making huge claims here. Huge, huge, huge claims here. The big one, the first big one, is that he's saying God is not just one person. And that's where we start getting into the Trinity here. So I thought before we sort of look at what the passage says about the Trinity, I thought it might be helpful if I just do like two minutes on a general kind of overview, basic Trinitarian theology, and then we'll come back into the passage. Okay, so the Trinity in general terms.

There is one God, three persons. So, three persons, Father, Son, Holy Spirit, and they're each made of, now I could say this in really dense theological words, but let me just say it as simply as I can, because I don't really understand the words either. It's this, they each made of the same God stuff.

Made of the same stuff. Made of the same stuff, right? Here's the problem with when you're talking about the Trinity. At any point, if this was my sermon here, at any point, if I change one word, heresy, heresy, heresy, right? So, so, there you go. So they're not, they're not three roles. So the three persons aren't three roles that God takes on. So it's not like God is the Father for like ages, and then he puts on his son hat for like S-O-N hat for like 30 years, and then, and then he puts on his Holy Spirit hat, and he's, you know, doing the real cold face kind of stuff, right? That's called modalism, and that's a heresy. It's a heresy, okay? So no, three persons. What it doesn't mean either is this.

It doesn't mean as three gods. That's another heresy. That's called tritheism. No, there's one God, and that God is they, three persons. So how do these three persons relate? Well, a phrase that theologians might use, or a couple of phrases theologians might use that describe the relationship between the son and the father of these. Ontological equality, relational submission. Don't fall asleep, okay? Don't stay with me. This is fantastic, okay? Ontological equality, relational submission, okay? Ontological equality. Ontology is the study of existence and being, and it's, it's saying, ontological equality, it's saying the three persons of the Trinity are equal. They're equal. They're each self-aware. They're equal. That's what it means, and the passage hints at that. It says the Pharisees, the reason the Pharisees want to kill him, it's, as Jesus says in verse 17, my father's working, I'm working. There's, there's equality there. But our passage we're looking at focuses significantly less on that, not a ton on that, mostly on the relational submission. That's the second phrase, verse 18. The son does nothing of his own accord. He does what he sees the father doing. So the father sends, commands, commissions. The son, Jesus, responds, obeys the will of the father.

[ 6 : 59 ] We've already come across this idea, actually, in chapter one, verse three, where it says, all things were made through Jesus. Jesus is the agent of God's, the father's will.

Now, this does not mean the father's like management and Jesus is like middle management and he's kind of waiting for orders. Another example of this would be like this. When I'm driving in the car, I asked my wife if I could say the story. When I'm driving in the car, Amy likes to give me lots of advice. Go there. You would have been faster to go there. You went past it, but you've already passed three car parks. Why don't you turn around? You're going too fast, you're going too slow. And I do everything she says because I value her constant input into my driving. Right? So that is not what the Trinity looks like.

Not some kind of moderately poor drive, you know, like, I don't know what I'm doing. I don't know what I'm doing. You should do this. You know, it's not like, you know, Jesus is getting these orders and is otherwise sitting around doing nothing. He doesn't know what he's doing. The son can do nothing of his own accord, the passage says, can do nothing of his own accord because Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are completely unified in will.

There's no separation between God's will going, oh, I think we should do this, and Jesus going, no, that's not a bad idea. There's no separation there. They are completely unified in will.

Okay, that's enough in general terms. We've kind of dipped in the passage already, but let's get back to the text. So we're talking about the unity of the will of the three persons of the Trinity. What does that unity look like? What is the basis of that unity? What's the basis of the unity between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, specifically Father and Son? Have a look at verse 20. It's beautiful. The Father loves the Son and shows him all he is doing.

[ 9 : 03 ] The Father loves the Son. This is the heart of the unity. It's love. The Father and the Son are in perpetual, eternal communion with each other. Now, I don't know where you guys are all at here with Christianity, and I don't know what you think about God, you know, but Jesus is telling us this, and this may be a shock to you. I don't know. That Jesus is saying to us here is that God the Father, God is not some vague force, an abstract being, a celestial nomad. If you've ever watched any Star Trek, every third episode, it's some like God-like creature that has all-encompassing powers and just wanders around causing trouble. No, no, God is not like that. It's not just an intellectual idea that makes us feel nice. No, God, God is Trinity. God is a community. God is a community. It's a community that has eternally existed, and at its heart of that community is love, and when you follow Jesus, you are drawn into the life of that community, a life of love. It's been there forever. Michael Reeves wrote a book that Jordan recommended to me, and I read little chunks of it this week. It's fantastic.

It's called Delighting in the Trinity. Let me read a couple of, or let me read one quote. The Christian life is one of being brought to share the delight the Father, Son, and Spirit have for each other. I'll say it again. The Christian life is one of being brought to share the delight the Father, Son, and Spirit have for each other. So do you see what this means?

Here's an implication that you might not have thought of here. When we think of God's love, we like to think of it as it primarily relates to us. When we think of Jesus' love, we like to think of it as it primarily relates to us. Now, Jesus does love us. God does love us.

But what is this saying here? What was Christ's primary motivation for going to the cross? The love of the Father, because he loves his Father. That was his primary motivation, love that resulted in perfect obedience. So Jesus went to the cross first out of obedience and love for the Father. I mean, this is one of the great truths of the Trinity here. Now, it doesn't mean that Jesus doesn't love us. And it doesn't mean that part of it was like, of course, God so loved the world, right? But you take Trinitarian theology really seriously, number one motivation, primary motivation, obedience to the Father. And this means this, that the love that we receive from God exists only because we're connected to an eternal community that loves each other. We're just buying into that love.

Okay, so where are we in the sermon? God is three persons in one, equal, but the Son is the agent of the Father. Does the will of the Father, does it out of love, love given, love received.

[ 12 : 07 ] Now, if you look at verse 21 and 22 here, we have two examples, very interesting examples of the Son as God's agent. And the two examples they give is the Son gives life and the Son judges.

Let me read those passages for you. 21, for as the Father raises the dead and gives life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. 22, the Father judges no one, he has given all judgment to the Son. Now, in Jewish monotheistic faith, right? So only God gives life and only God can judge.

And in our passage here, we see the breadth of the responsibility and authority that the Father has given the Son. Son, you have my authority to give life. We've already seen it, just previous, right? Jordan preached on it. Lazarus basically gave him his life back. He was an invalid.

And the Father has given Jesus the job of judging, which is sort of a harder pill to swallow. But I mean, this means that everyone who's ever lived, at the end of time, who will they face? They'll face Jesus. You will face Jesus and make an account of your life. And Jesus will be the judge. And he will send you to everlasting life or everlasting death. This is what the Bible teaches. So why have these responsibilities been given to Jesus? Verse 23, so that they may honor. This is the next verse.

It says, here are the responsibilities the Father's given the Son. Verse 23, so that they may honor the Son. And then it says, if you don't honor Jesus, you're not honoring the Father. Isn't that interesting?

[ 13 : 43 ] The way to honor God the Father is to honor the Son. Let me condense this down again. Jesus the Son is the agent of the Father. He's been given expansive authority to do the Father's will.

Authority that covers life and covers death. And the reason is so that people will honor the Son because in honoring the Son, they honor the Father. Implication. Implication. There are many faiths that try to honor and elevate God, maintain God's divinity. And one of the ways they do that is by reducing Jesus to like a prophet or really good man or a really, you know, great guy. Examples would be Baha'i faith, Islam, Unitarianism.

The Bible teaches the opposite of that. It says, if you don't honor the one God sent, you're not honoring God. This is big, right?

To honor God, you must honor a real living man who lived in space and time, who made amazing claims. And so the question is, the big question you must ask yourself, the big decision you make, Christian or non-Christian, is not, the biggest decision is not, what church do I go to? It's not, how can I be a nice person? How can I be a good person? It's, what do I do with Jesus? Am I honoring Jesus? Am I honoring the Son? Okay, how's everyone's brain doing? Is everyone doing okay? Nothing I've said is heresy at this point, I want to assure you. I had, actually Jordan and I had, we had that conversation with David Short Thursday afternoon. Thursday afternoon, so for about half an hour, we talked to David Short about the Trinity. And after about half an hour, it was probably the hardest work my brain has done in ages. And I just, I wanted to go home and I just wanted to watch Dora with my daughter. And, but Dora was too hard because like, because there's so many choices. She's like, if you've watched it, it's like, go to the cave or into the jungle, go to the cave. Shut up. Like,

I've just been talking about the Trinity. Just how do I get to the Mayan ruins? Just need to get the thing so we can free the unicorn. All right. Uh, we're sort of heading towards the last five minutes here. So if you have wandered off your brain for a little while, come back, come back to me, come back to me now, because we're going to talk about application.

[ 16 : 26 ] Verse 24. Truly, truly. Oh, Dora's a cartoon, by the way. Like a children's cartoon. It's fine.

What's the application in the passage? Uh, helpfully the, the passage gives us the application. You don't have to think of it too hard, but the first one anyway, the manger one, I think. Truly, truly, I say to you, verse 24, truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. Whoever hears me, believes me, it's, you've got eternal life, Jesus says.

You, you, you pass, you don't come into judgment. You've passed from death to life. So, so, uh, East Berlin, West Berlin, uh, during, during, uh, that whole drama where there was, you know, like a wall and stuff. And there was a, there was a checkpoint called, which the Americans called Checkpoint Charlie. So you could be in communist East Berlin if you wanted to get to West Berlin. I mean, you really couldn't. Diplomats could go in from west to east, but the other way was very, very difficult. And because it incredibly well guarded, obviously massive wall, you know, these, these, um, uh, you know, killed German shepherds, machine gun turrets, barracks, the whole bit. And, and, I'll read it on the weekend. There's these stories about people escaping from East Berlin to West Berlin, you know, hot air balloons, some senior citizens who dug, who dug a tunnel under their chicken coop through the wall.

Uh, and I read about this one guy who, who drove up to the barrier at Checkpoint Charlie and an Austin Healey, which is a sports car, like a kind of sixties kind of sports car, really, really, really low off the ground. And they didn't notice that the windshield was missing, right? So he's in his sports car. And, you know, the soldier comes over and said, and he says, oh, I want to get through. Obviously you can't get, you can't go, you can't go through.

Go away, go away. Come, actually come with me. And as the guy said, come with me. He just floored it. And the guy had calculated that his car was so low, he actually could just drive under the barrier through. And, and once you got to the other side, you were free. You were like, you were out of it and you're totally accepted. And you were like this kind of like political refugee on the other side and you're, and you're, and you're totally cool. You, you passed from one political realm to another political realm. Now this is, this is what happens when we believe in Jesus. That was a big example, but it's, I want to picture for this, right? I'll picture for you. This is what happens when you believe in Jesus, when you hear him and trust him and believe him. You pass from being under God's judgment.

[19:04] You think that's so harsh. God, judgment, I'm nice. God, God's judgment is like, if you've spent your life rejecting God saying, God, I want to do my own thing, even if you're kind of a nice person, you're still saying, God, I don't want you in my life. He will just honor that decision and, and he will leave you alone for eternity. That's what hell is. Okay.

So you pass from being under God's judgment because you've rejected him. You pass from that realm to being a child of God, participating in the love of the Trinity. You pass from death, you pass into life. Now, if you're not a Christian, trust Jesus, believe him, and that change will happen immediately. You might not even feel anything, but it will happen immediately. You know, all the verbs in this, I mean, this, this document, this Bible, this end part of it, last part of it, New Testament, written in Greek originally, and, and they have different sort of tenses and stuff. But this tense here is this, is this, is this present tense. It's all present tense, the verbs here. So it means eternal life for you starts now if you trust Jesus, if you believe in him. You enter eternity with God starting right then.

Jesus declares you free today. You changed realms. It doesn't happen when you die. It happens now. Second application is a bit more sort of implicit. The passage has given us an inside look into the life of the Trinity. And knowing more about the Trinity helps us see the beauty of God, helps us enjoy him. But that picture of the relationship between the Father who loves and the Son who sins, the Son who in love is obedient, that picture is also a model for us.

It's also a picture of how we are meant to live and how we are meant to respond to the Father. And it tells us about the upside down kingdom. It tells us the way to contentment in life is to follow the way of Christ the Son. This is the way of service. It's a concept repeated throughout the Bible. The way to find life is to lose your life to God. The way to power is to serve.

The way up is down. The way to find happiness is to seek the happiness of others. And from the outside it sounds like madness. It sounds like suicide, doesn't it? You know, it's just, but it's the way for the liberation. It's the way to freedom.

[ 21 : 31 ] This is the life of Jesus. Equal to the Father, but perfectly submits to the Father. Philippians 2, which is read at the start. Fantastic scripture which explains this.

Have this mind amongst yourself, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, this is Christ, who was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself. Taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and being found in human form, he humbled himself to becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross, which we'll celebrate next week.

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name. And it starts that whole description there with this. Have this mind amongst yourselves. This is how you live. It's saying the life of Christ in the Trinity, it's the model for us.

We submit our life to God in order to find life. And in that submitting, there will be suffering. Jesus' life is a perfect example.

But we submit. We submit. And why do we do that? So imagine you've got a little boy. He's got a wooden toy, like a truck.

[ 22 : 42 ] A truck breaks. And he's sobbing, sobbing, sobbing, sobbing, sobbing. And then you come into the room with a letter, a real letter from a lawyer, and it says, hey, your great aunt has died.

She's left you a million dollars. Like, here's the letter right here. The boy, he'll keep crying. He's like, oh, the truck, the truck, the truck, you know. What's the boy's problem?

It's not the truck, right? The boy's problem is the vantage point. It's his vantage point. So when your vantage point is like this high, life is all about you.

You live to please yourself. But when you lift your eyes and you actually see life through the lens of the Trinity, we can live for the Father. Because we have that vantage point.

We have an eternal vantage point. We have a heavenly advantage point. And we're actually willing to suffer in our obedience. Because we have that eternal vantage point. Because we have that perfect example in Christ. So I'll end now.

[ 23 : 40 ] This passage is dealt with the Son and the Father. And it deals with the way they relate to each other. And how we relate to them separately, together. And so I'll finish with this quote from, another quote from that book, Delighting in the Trinity.

We cannot choose what we love. But always love what seems desirable to us. Thus, we will only change what we love when something proves itself to be more desirable to us than what we already love.

I will then always love sin and the world until I see that Christ is better. Folks, I hope, this is my goal here, I hope that through this passage, as you learn about the Trinity, as you contemplate the Trinity, that you'll see how much better Christ is.

How wonderful Christ is. This is somebody you can trust with your life. This is somebody you can follow. This is somebody who can save you.

This is somebody you can love. With your whole life. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.