
Day 1

Learn: Prayerfully read John 5.16-30. That God was always at work to sustain the universe was an issue the Jewish scholars had debated. However, for this to be a valid defense for Jesus to be working [healing] on the Sabbath, the same factors must apply to Jesus as apply to God, which effectively was saying that he was just like God. Jesus' use of "my father" also made this claim of equality with God to the religious leaders, who would never use such words, though they thought of God as the father of all Jews. We see that the religious leaders rightly understood Jesus' claim to deity, and they all the more wanted to kill him because they considered this blasphemy [v.18]. Jesus went on to explain some very interesting things about his deity in this passage. Jesus made another claim to deity – being able to do all that God the Father does [v.19] – but he also stressed the unity he has with God the Father, a unity in which the Son is not independent, but subordinate to the Father [vv.19, 30], and a unity so great that Jesus can do as he pleases and yet still be totally consistent with God the Father's will [v.21]. God the Father loves Jesus enough to show Jesus all he does [v.20], and Jesus loves God the Father enough to follow his will instead of taking the initiative [vv.19, 30]. Because Jesus has such unity with God the Father and does what God the Father is doing, he perfectly reveals God the Father to us [see John 14.8-11]. While the whole Bible is God's revelation, and thus reveals him to us, in Jesus we have the ultimate in that revelation, the words and actions of God himself. The gospels show us Jesus in action and the books that follow the Gospels in the New Testament clarify and explain the teachings and actions of Jesus.

Reflect: What in this passage was new to your understanding? Underline it in your Bible or write it down somewhere, so you can ponder it more deeply now and again later. Make sure you think through this information, so that you fully grasp it, fully accept it, and fully walk in faith on it. Consider for a moment the unity between God the Father and Christ the Son [Jesus]: is it not incredible that they can be two separate personalities, yet so unified as to share the same will? This is not really understandable to finite minds like ours, but think for a little while on what it means that Jesus is so incredibly unified in thought, action, priorities, and so on, with God the Father. Note again that Jesus either is worthy of our worship or he should be dismissed as crazy or a liar, there is no middle ground.

Day 2

Learn: Prayerfully read John 5.19-30. Jesus expected to exhibit greater things than healing, which would be evidence of his divinity and unity with God the Father: he would raise the dead and give life [vv. 20-21, 26], just like God the Father. The Rabbis had a saying, that there were three things God alone could control: the rain, conception, and the resurrection of the dead. God himself had said that only he could give life [Deuteronomy 32:39; see also 1 Samuel 2.6]. Now Jesus – again claiming oneness with God the Father – claims to be able to give life [v.21], and he would raise a couple of people from the dead during his ministry. God the Father has entrusted the final judgment at the end of time to Jesus [vv.22, 27]. Jesus said that when this time comes, all the dead will hear his voice and be raised from the dead [vv.28-29]. At this judgment, some will be resurrected to eternal life and others to eternal condemnation [v.29]; that is the judgment, and because God the Father entrusts this judgment to Jesus, he also empowers Jesus to resurrect the dead and give eternal life. Jesus came the first time to offer salvation [3.16-17], but those who do not accept will remain condemned. Because of the incredible unity between God the Father and Christ the Son, even when Jesus exercises his right to judge, it will be as God the Father wills it [v.30].

Reflect: Israel understood that the world was under a curse, because of sin [Genesis 3.16-19]. One hope for the Messiah was that he would reverse the effects of the curse. Jesus gave signs that he was this Messiah, by healing and resurrecting people, but the fullness of his work awaits his return to set up his kingdom after the time of judgment. Did you know that Jesus will be the judge of every person at the end of time? Does it comfort you to know he is human as well as divine, and thus understands us?

Day 3

Learn: Prayerfully read John 5.24-30. Jesus will give resurrected eternal life in his kingdom at the time of judgment [vv.28-29]. But Jesus also gives life right now, a life that is authentic, relationally intimate with God, and which will prove to be eternal [vv.24-25]. To "hear" Jesus' voice means to believe and obey it in this context. Those who respond to his gospel message in faith will be given eternal life right now [v.24], will move from spiritual death to spiritual life

[v.25], and will be resurrected to eternal life at the final judgment [v.28]. This life, connected to God, begins now, when we truly believe in the gospel message.

Jesus also describes those who enter into this life as those who have done what is good [v.29]. Please do not think this is talking about a works-based salvation: We know that the one who believes comes into God's light, showing s/he practices truth and good deeds by God's empowerment [John 3.21]. In contrast, those who have done evil loved the darkness and were condemned already [John 3:18-19]. John later will explain that the good work of God is to believe in Jesus [John 6.29], for Jesus is pure revelation from God the Father, and – as revealed throughout the Bible – if we reject God's revelation then we are judged negatively. But the Bible makes clear that our lives will bear out our salvation.

Reflect: How would you explain what is required of you, what you need to believe? If you cannot explain, ask someone in the church to help you! How would you explain the connection between faith in Jesus and empowerment from God to do good? Our transformation is a complex process, but the essential thing here is that if we truly have come to faith in Jesus and his gospel message, then we will be reborn spiritually, indwelt with the Holy Spirit, and empowered to change for the good. Do you see evidence of this growing in you and in your lifestyle? What is it? Do you feel like you have true spiritual life? Why? Do you understand that if you do, it is forever and you cannot lose it? If not, ask for help!

Day 4

Learn: Prayerfully read John 5.22-23, 27. One reason God the Father has appointed Christ the Son to judge all people is so all people will honor Christ just as they do God the Father; and you cannot honor God the Father without honoring Christ the Son [vv.22-23]! Jesus is much more than a human or angelic representative, he is to be given the same honor as God the Father, because he is divine just like God the Father: they are both part of the triune Godhead with the Holy Spirit. Thus, glorifying Christ the Son does not lessen the glory given to God the Father; rather, glorifying Christ the Son *is* one form of giving glory to God the Father, because you recognize God the Father's revelation and saving work through his sending of Christ the Son [see Philippians 2.9-11], and because they are One, so to dishonor either of them is to dishonor the other. This is another evidence of the divinity of Jesus and his unity with God the Father, for God would never share his glory with anyone other than himself [see Isaiah 42.8, for example]. The Old Testament saints did not know the name of Jesus, nor fully understand the triune nature of God, but they were called to believe in a gospel that did include the promise of a savior and greater prophet [Genesis 3.15; compare Deuteronomy 18.15-19 with John 5.46]. Today, we know that savior and greater prophet who could reverse the curse is Christ the Son.

Another reason God the Father has appointed Christ the Son to judge all people is because Christ is also the Son of Man [v.27]. This title refers to the Messiah whom Daniel saw in a vision, to whom God gave all authority, honor, and sovereign power, with all people serving him in an eternal kingdom [Daniel 7.13-14]. Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of Man, and thus he also is the heir to the throne of David and will rule in an eternal kingdom [Luke 1.31-33]. The ideas of the Messiah being the ultimate judge and of our need to honor him were not new, being fully prophesied in multiple Old Testament places, especially Daniel 7.13-14, Psalm 2, and Psalm 110. [These psalms are challenging, but rewarding; you can read teachings on them at www.groben.com: go to the "Bible Study" menu and choose "OT Wisdom"]. Even so, the Rabbis listening to this discourse by Jesus would have believed that only God could judge. The one who believes in the Son of Man lifted up on the cross will receive life [3.15], but rejecting this revelation leads to condemnation [3.36].

Reflect: What are your personal thoughts and feelings about Jesus? How well do you honor him in worship and praise? Do you recognize his right to our worship just like God the Father? Do you honor him by following him as lord of your life, obeying his commands and emulating his actions? In what specific ways could/should you improve?

Day 5

Learn: Read John 5.19-30 once more. While God the Father has anointed Jesus to be the judge and given him the power to give life to whomever he pleases, it is inconceivable that Jesus as Son of God would act outside of his unity with the will and desires of God the Father. Even though Jesus is the divine Son of God, he revealed that he acts obediently to the will of God the Father. In this, he models the proper human response to God.

Reflect: How obedient are you to God and his revelation in the Bible? Do you consider yourself completely submitted to God's authority? Are you willing to apply to your life anything you learn in the Bible? Are there pockets of sin in your life, specific ways that you are not trying to obey what you know is right? Pray about these things.