

John 5:17–23

- 17 But Jesus answered them, “My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.”
- 18 Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.
- 19 Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.
- 20 For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.
- 21 For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.
- 22 For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son,
- 23 that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

***“The Son and the Father”***  
**John 5:17-23**

INTRO:

The last time we were here in this text, we watched as Jesus did something absolutely marvelous. He gave grace to an undeserving sinner. As common as this seems in our lives, we must never lose sight of the wonder of God’s mercy as Jesus extends to us the grace of salvation! When we began our study in **John 5**, we wrestled with the question, “*Why did John (and the Holy Spirit of God who directed him) choose to put this account in his book?*” We settled on the idea that John, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, wrote this for two reasons. **(1)** First, he recorded it to illustrate how God’s grace works. **(2)** Second, he put it here to set the scene for the discussion that followed with the powers that be. Today, we will wade head first into this discourse.

***I. The Issue (v. 16-18)***

***II. The Explanation (v. 19-23)***

## ***I. The Issue (v. 16-18)***

A. John set the scene for us in **verses 12-16**.

***“Then they asked him, ‘Who is the Man who said to you, ‘Take up your bed and walk?’ But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, ‘See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.’ The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath.”***

They are ready to kill Jesus, simply because He has healed someone on the Sabbath day.

B. Although John is not clear on what specifically is happening here, it is obvious that somehow Jesus is given an opportunity to answer the Jews’ desire to kill Him. His answer positively “shocks the socks off” the Jewish authorities.

1. If we were to translate this into the vernacular of our day it would say, ***“My Father works on Sunday and so must I.”*** The Jewish authorities of the day accepted the fact that although God set the pattern in resting on the seventh day of creation, He did not take one day off a week from His work. Still, they were not ready for the Lord’s statement in **verse 17**.

***“But Jesus answered them, ‘My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.’”***

2. **Verse 18** tells us why this statement was so shocking to the Jewish authorities.

***“Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.”***

It wasn’t because Jesus insisted that God the Father worked on Sabbath days. It was because He said God was ***“his own”*** Father, making Himself equal to God.

C. It is amazing the way that some folks read **verse 18**.

1. Some assert that the Jews totally misunderstood what Jesus said. They say that Jesus didn’t really mean to communicate that He was equal to the Father, the Jews just misunderstood. The problem with this position is that it is his equality with the Father that Jesus is explaining in the verses that follow.

2. Others say that John was reading this into the actions of the Jewish authorities, they didn’t really understand Jesus to say this. But even if this is true,

it is clear that John understood Jesus to be saying this. The fact that the Jewish leaders wanted to kill Jesus leads us to believe this was precisely what Jesus intended to say.

D. There is only one true and living God. The Old Testament is very clear on this point. In **Isaiah 44:6** we read,

***“Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: ‘I am the First and I am the Last. Besides Me there is no God.’”***

God said it again in **Isaiah 45:5**,

***“I am the LORD, and there is no one else, there is no God beside me.”***

If there is only one true and living God, how can Jesus claim that He is equal to God?

1. Is He a separate God who is equal to God the Father? Is He a competing God? If He is, then there is a problem with what the LORD said in **Isaiah 44** and **45**.

2. Our Lord Jesus is not a separate but equal God. Our God is one God. But this One God eternally exists in three persons. Jesus explained this in the passage (v. 19-23).

## ***II. The Explanation (v. 19-23)***

A. Jesus explained how He is equal to the Father by showing that His equality with the Father is expressed in submission to Him and to His will.

***“Then Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.’”*** (v. 19)

The importance of this phrase is shown in how the Lord introduced it. He says, ***“truly, truly.”*** Listen up this is important!

1. The Son only does what He sees the Father doing. The Son does nothing out of His own volition. He is submissive to the Father in everything.

2. While some people find in this an admission that Jesus is somehow not God, in actuality, this is a very strong statement of His deity. If God the Father could somehow show me everything He is doing, I would not be able to do those things because I am not God. He is sustaining all creation. I cannot do this because I am not omnipotent. In fact, no created being could do this because created beings are part of the creation He holds together. Jesus can do this because He is God the Son. Therefore, there are no conflicts within the Godhead. There is subordination but not inequality!

B. Second, the Son's equality is expressed in His revealing the Father to the world.

The Father actively loves the Son and is showing Him greater things that He will do.

**v. 20** ***"For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel."***

1. Our Lord is describing divine actions in human words. The relationship between the Father and the Son is not competition, it is love. The Father loves the Son and evidences that love by a perfect disclosure of all that He is and does. The Son then shows all that the Father is by doing His works before mankind. The Son reveals the Father to the world.

2. The use of the word **"show"** does not imply that Jesus lacks omniscience. Rather, He helps us understand how the Father initiates the revelation of the Son. When I show my wife that I love her, I am not showing her something she doesn't already know.

C. Third, the equality of the Son is shown in His giving life to the dead.

**v. 21** ***"For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will."***

1. Modern medical science can do amazing things, but one thing modern science cannot do is to bring the dead to life. Only God can do that. In the Old Testament we discover that God raised folks from the dead several times. The incident of Elijah and the son of the widow of Zerephath comes readily to mind. Jesus says just as God the Father resurrects from the dead, so will the Son give life to those whom He chooses!

2. Our Lord Jesus also physically raised people from the dead. First, remember Lazarus in **John 11**. Second, this must also refer to the great resurrection in the last day. In that day He will come and call all those who have died in Him to rise from the grave and to ever be with Him. (**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**). Only God can do this!

C. Finally, the equality of the Son is expressed in His judgment of all mankind.

**v. 22** ***"For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son,"***

From the beginning, the Old Testament recognized that God the Father is the ultimate Judge of mankind. In **Genesis 18:25**, Abraham in his intercession for Lot said, **"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"** Now, the Lord Jesus tells us that Father has committed all judgment into the hands of the Son. This makes Paul's questions and answers in **Romans 8:33-34** even more precious.

***“Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.”***

D. All of this is done for one purpose, (v. 23), in order that we might honor the Son as we honor the Father. We must glorify the Son of God just like we glorify God the Father. If we do not do this, we dishonor the Father.

**Now why is all of this important?**

1. It is important because if we are to believe on the Lord Jesus as our personal Savior and be saved, we must know who He is! He is not a created being, nor is He an exalted man. He is the Son of God in power. He is God of very God. He is the one who calls us from being dead to sin to being alive in Him!

2. This is also important because someday we all will appear before His judgment seat. Some will appear at the Great White Throne of Judgment as condemned sinners without hope. Others will appear at the Judgment seat of Christ. We will be saved, but we will answer for our stewardship. We must be prepared to meet our God.

3. Third, this is important because we need to understand that the purpose of our lives needs to be to glorify Him!

**Hymn #387 O To Be Like Thee!**