

EXPOSITION OF JOHN

Message #24

John 5:17-24

A number of years ago, I worked for a Christian publishing company. The company had a bookstore and at the bookstore location, the company decided to buy three houses that were behind the store. One day a big bulldozer pulled in and started knocking down the houses. Some of the neighbors wondered who had the right to do this? These were houses that had been in that neighborhood for a long time. The company said - we are doing it and we have the right to do it because we own the houses.

When Jesus Christ was here, He rubbed many religious people the wrong way. He would not and did not submit to man-made rules and regulations. Last time we were together we saw that He healed a paralyzed man on the Sabbath day and that made these people very angry. This, as you shall see, made these religious leaders so angry that they wanted to kill Him. But Jesus had the right to do whatever He wanted to do and this text makes that point very clear.

Christ decided to address not only why He did what He did, but who He was:

**THE REASON WHY JESUS CHRIST WAS SO HATED IS BECAUSE HE WAS GOD .
IN THE FLESH DOING THE WILL OF GOD AND PROCLAIMING THE WORD OF
GOD AND THAT IS HATED BY MOST RELIGIOUS PEOPLE.**

The pure true work of God will **NEVER** win popularity contests in this religious world. Jesus Christ is basically saying - I am God and I can do whatever I want to do because what I do is always the will of God and what I say is always the word of God and religious people don't like this because it takes away their clout. **Religious Pharisees are not about to submit to any authority, because they have come to believe they are the authority.**

Now there are four stinging points that Christ wants to make:

STINGING POINT #1 – The Father is God and I am God and we both are continually doing the same work. 5:17-18

Now the context in this is critical - the religious Jews hate Christ because He was doing things on the Sabbath day and what Christ says in this verse is this - whatever I do is the work of God because the Father and I are involved in the same work. If I heal on the Sabbath day, that is the work of God the Father. If I eat on the Sabbath day, that is the work of God the Father. If God stopped work on the Sabbath day, the whole world would be in total chaos. People would instantly die and there would be no restraining of any sin.

This opening statement is profound and as you will see from the next verse - it makes a stinging, true point - I am God, just as My Father is God, and both of us are always doing the same work and when I do something you don't like, it is because you don't know God and you don't know the work of God.

This is an amazing claim. **Jesus is making the claim that He is equal with God.** If this claim can be proved, then people need to very seriously think about their relationship with Jesus Christ. Religious leaders hated Christ because He was so different from them, He didn't fit their norm: 1) He was outside their circle; 2) He had power they did not have; 3) He refused to submit to their man-made codes; 4) He didn't have their training; 5) He had great power in His speech.

Now I want you to carefully notice **verse 18** - the Jews, the religious leaders, knew full well what Jesus Christ was claiming in **verse 17** - **He was claiming to be God on the same level as God the Father and He was making Himself equal with God.** As a result, they hated Him and wanted Him dead.

This takes hatred to a new level. Most things people hate, they don't seek to destroy. For example, I hate liver. I don't seek to destroy all liver in the world. God hates certain things in Proverbs 6:16-19 and we are to hate "evil" (Romans 12:9). However, we do not go on some rampage and seek to destroy and kill those who do what we hate. These religious leaders did. They hated God and were out to destroy Him.

What is so bizarre is that the Jews actually thought they were doing the will of God in hating and killing Jesus Christ. It is possible for one to become so deranged and deluded in his thinking that he convinces himself he is doing good when he is doing the worst evil possible. I knew of a man who left his wife and I knew of a wife who left her husband with no Biblical basis and both actually thought they were doing right, when in fact they were doing wrong.

Most people who get lost and die in the mountains believe they are going the right way, when in fact they are heading to their death. What they need is to look at a map and believe it. When it comes to salvation, there are ways that seem right to people which are in fact the ways of death. Most who will be eternally condemned believed they were going in the right way. What they need to do is look at the Divine map, the Bible and believes it. Jesus Christ is God and salvation is only found in Him.

If you ask most people who Jesus Christ was - they will claim He was a good man, a wonderful prophet, a good teacher. He was godly, like we can be godly, a great example. Well friend, you better get this into your mind - **He makes Himself equal with God. He said He was God.** If that is not true - then He is not a good man, a godly example or great teacher - if it is not true He is a liar. The Jews were out to kill Jesus Christ because He made Himself equal with God because He is God - the second member of the Trinity.

You cannot look at this text honestly and say the Bible does not claim the deity of Jesus Christ. It clearly does right here in this verse. Jesus made Himself equal with God the Father and that is why the Jews hated Him and, as one writer said, they will not stop "until they fold their arms beneath His cross."

STINGING POINT #2 – Everything Jesus Christ does, He does because He actually sees the Father doing what He does. 5:19-20

Notice how verse 19 begins, "truly, truly" which means this is dogmatic certainty and truth.

William Van Doren said what Jesus Christ says here has never been fully comprehended by any human (*Gospel of John*, p. 450). This is a remarkable claim.

Now the verb tenses indicate that it was impossible for Jesus Christ to do anything on earth apart from the Father and everything He did do He was continually able to see the Father doing. The verb “sees” is present tense, meaning Jesus Christ continually saw what God the Father would do in every single situation. There was such correspondence and harmony between God the Father and God the Son that **in every single situation, Jesus Christ not only knew what the Father would do, He saw what the Father would do.** Jesus Christ is a perfect replica of God the Father in everything and every way. Whatever Jesus Christ did, He did because He knew and saw that it was the will of the Father for Him to do. **This is amazing and absolute Divine equality.** You and I struggle at times with the will of God; Jesus never did. He always knew what the will of God was and He always did the will of God. Now this statement alone establishes that Jesus Christ is fully God. There are many times in our lives when we have no clue as to what God is doing. Christ always knew and saw what God was doing because He is God. **This is not just equality of action, but equality of Person.**

Now verse 20 begins with a conjunction “for” which gives us greater explanation of what is being discussed. Now I want to point out something from this verse that is very unique. The word for “love” is not the word “Agape” which is used of God’s love for the world and God’s love for us. This word is the word “Phileo.” God the Father has a love relationship with God the Son as non-existent in any other relationship. This word expresses an affection which arises from an actual relationship. In other words, there is a unique love relationship that exists continually (present tense) between God the Father and God the Son that does not exist with us. **God the Father has a special emotional bond with God the Son because God the Son is as righteous and as God as God the Father.** Because of that unique relationship, the Father shows the Son everything that He, Himself is doing and Christ does those things and those who see it stand in awe.

Every time Christ said or did anything, He did it because of special revelatory information He had from the Father. He did every miracle because He saw that that is what the Father would do. When Christ forgave the Samaritan woman, He did so because He saw the will of the Father. When He raised the paralytic, He saw that is what the Father wanted Him to do. **But here is what is so practically amazing about this, when Jesus Christ saved you, He did so because He saw you were one the Father wanted to be saved.**

STINGING POINT #3 – Every thing Jesus Christ does and will do proves He is God. 5:21-23

Now the “for” of verse 21 introduces us to a further explanation of the kind of things Christ does, which He sees the Father do and it also explains the “greater works” of verse 20. Both actions described here are Divine and if Christ can do them, He is equivalent to God the Father.

(Divine Action #1) - Christ gives life because He sees the Father give life. 5:21

The assumption here, and of the entire Bible, is that only God can give life to that which is dead (Deuteronomy 32:39; I Samuel 2:6; II Kings 5:7).

Jewish leaders taught that only God held the keys to doing three great things: 1) God could open the heavens and send rain (Deuteronomy 28:12); 2) God could open a womb and give conception (Genesis 30:22); and 3) God could open a grave and give a resurrection (Ezekiel 37:13) (Warren Wiersbe, *Be Alive*, p. 64).

Jesus Christ can actually see resurrections which are wrought by the Father and He, Himself, has the power to raise from the dead. He could see His own resurrection. Christ knew that you could put a dead body into the ground and God the Father could bring a new alive body out of the ground that has life. Only God has the power to reverse death (John 11:41-44).

Now carefully notice what is said here, Jesus Christ can give life to those He wishes. He has the power to reverse the process from death to life. Every person is spiritually dead. Now don't overlook the doctrine being presented here - **eternal life is a gift that comes from Jesus Christ**. It is His to give, and it is His gift to you. If you have eternal life you have it because He gave it to you. You didn't earn it and you don't deserve it.

Many speak of a gift of healing, but they don't realize that this gift carried with it the ability to raise the dead.

The ability to give life is a prerogative of God and God alone.

(Divine Action #2) - Christ will judge everyone because the Father has turned all judgment over to Him. 5:22

The Scriptures are clear that final judgment belongs to God. Genesis 18:25 says, God is judge of all the earth. Deuteronomy 1:17 says, "Judgment is God's" business. It belongs totally to Him. What is presented here is that Jesus Christ will judge, which again is further proof He is God.

Every knee will bow before Jesus Christ one day (Philippians 2:9-11). Jesus contextually connects Himself to judgment (5:22) to the resurrection (5:21) and to life and He does all these things.

Now listen very carefully - you will stand before Jesus Christ and you will be judged by Jesus Christ. **Jesus Christ holds your judgment in His hands**. If you refuse to acknowledge that Jesus Christ is God, the second member of the Trinity, you are calling Him a liar because that is what He claimed and you will be sentenced to hell for demeaning Him. **The destiny of every human being depends on one's relationship with Jesus Christ**.

Our judgment will be handed to us directly by Jesus Christ and we had better understand who He is. He didn't do the miracles for the fun of it - He was proving He was God and we will face Him as judge. When Christ judges, some things are going to be dramatically reversed:

- 1) The poor person will be the one who devoted his life to gaining wealth.
- 2) The immoral person will not have any thoughts of pleasure anymore.
- 3) The fool will be one who thought he was so smart and wise, he didn't need the Bible.
- 4) The profane will shudder because he must now face the God he insulted and mocked.
- 5) The arrogant will be silenced because he is about to be leveled and humbled.

The judgment of Jesus Christ will be the true reversal of fortune.

Now notice verse 23 - eventually “ all ” will honor the Son for He is - God: 1) He will be honored as God by all; 2) He will be honored by salvation; 3) He will be honored by judgment. Christ gives life and judges so that all will acknowledge Him as they do the Father. You must honor Jesus Christ as God. You must think about Jesus Christ at the same level you think about God the Father. If you do not honor the Son at the same level as the Father, you do not honor the Father. You are committing high treason against the Godhead.

STINGING POINT #4 – Christ will give life to any who will believe only in Him for life.
5:24

Again notice the “truly, truly” presenting dogmatic certainty and truth. Here is absolute dogmatic truth about becoming spiritually alive from being spiritually dead.

Look at verse 24 - whoever will hear this truth and believe this truth “has” eternal life. That verb “has” is present tense; it is a continual possession right now. This person will not be condemned in judgment. You have Christ's word on it.

You must believe that Jesus Christ is at the same level as the Father. You must believe that He is the only means of salvation. The one who does believe this, is the one who will be given life.

Any condemnatory judgment will pass from you if you will believe on Jesus Christ. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. Will you believe on Jesus Christ and be saved?