

Sermon Notes & References

Jesus Works His Father's Works

John 5:17-30

April 3, 2016

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A. A Sabbath Day's Events

1. The Pool of Bethesda

- a. it has been several weeks since we were in our last study from the book of John and we should take a moment to re-familiarise ourselves with the events leading up to our passage today, John 5:17-30
- b. Jesus had come up to a feast in Jerusalem and had gone to the pool at Bethesda where sick people congregated awaiting for an angel to stir up the waters so that one might step in and be healed
- c. it was the Sabbath day and people came there as usual, one being a man who had been disabled for 38 years: Jesus healed him on the spot and at Jesus' command, took up his bed and walked

2. The Reaction of the Rulers

- a. when the rulers saw this they did not rejoice at the man's healing but instead condemned him for carrying his bed
- b. later they found it was Jesus who had healed the man and told him to take up his bed and walk, so they condemned Jesus
- c. if, instead of Jesus, it had been the stirring of the waters by an angel that had healed the man on that Sabbath day, which one would they have condemned; the man for being healed or the angel?

3. Jesus' Defence

- a. was that God, His Father, was always working, even on the Sabbath – specifically the Father does not rest from doing good on the Sabbath
- b. Jesus was working His Father's works, and therefore He, too, does not rest from doing good on the Sabbath, in healing this disabled man
- c. in charging Jesus with Sabbath breaking, they were charging God
- d. with these words Jesus presents "... a formal, systematic, orderly, regular statement of His own unity with the Father, His divine commission and authority, and the proofs of His Messiahship ..." (Ryle) —{2}.

4. the Unity of the Son with the Father

- a. is principally, though not solely, proclaimed in these verses but the fact that the works the Son does are the works of His Father
- b. specifically, that they are works that only God can do and does do

- B. Unity in Actions 5:17-20
1. In Their Working (v 17)
 - a. **But He answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working."**
 - b. God rested on the seventh day of creation, and the devil would have us think that this was the end of it, He left the world and its people alone
 - (A) the OT shows God's continual working in His creation
 - (B) He created the universe with a plan; He will see His plan through
 - c. the Father and the Son are united in their working
 - (A) for both it is continuing and ongoing
 - (B) for both it is according to God's plan
 - (C) for both it is for the good of believing mankind

 2. In Their Equality (v 18)
 - a. **For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.**
 - b. Jesus called God, "Father", but in a way that differs from us
 - (A) Jesus called God, "My Father", whereas we, having been made His children through rebirth and adoption, share together in calling God, "our Father"
 - (B) Jesus taught us to speak of God as "our heavenly Father" or "our Father in heaven", ever emphasising the greatness of the distance in nature between Him and ourselves
 - (C) but Jesus could properly leave out that word "heavenly", for there was a eternal intimacy between the Father and the Son – this is My Beloved Son – which continued into His time here on earth
 - c. the truth that Jesus stated in so addressing God, was recognised by the Jews – and never contradicted by Jesus – that He is equal with God
 - (A) an equality that never robbed the Father of His Nature
 - (B) an equality that added nothing to the Son's eternal Nature

 3. In Their Coordination (v 19)
 - a. **Jesus therefore answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner."**

- b. as boys we tormented our Sunday School teacher with those questions that began, "If God can do everything, can He ...?"
 - (A) but actually the Scriptures tell us of a number of things that God cannot do, as for example, He cannot lie
 - (B) here is something the Son cannot do
- c. it is not simply that He DOES NOT act independently of the Father, but that He CANNOT act independently of the Father
 - (A) He CAN ONLY do what He sees the Father doing
 - (B) It is not that He imitates the Father, but that they have the same Nature, and thus the Son must act in perfect unity with the Father
- d. in this verse it is expressed as His seeing the Father, in a later verse as His hearing the Father
 - (A) the two expressions have the same result
 - (B) the Son and Father are in perfect communication, the one with the other, so that at all times they act in coordinated harmony
 - (C) this brings us to the next verse

4. In Their Companionship (v 20)

- a. "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and greater works than these will He show Him, that you may marvel."
- b. you have probably heard of the words Greek uses for love
 - (A) eros, which is the love or passion between a man and woman
 - (B) phileo, which is friendship love
 - (C) agape, which is love that seeks the other persons good
- c. here it is phileo word that is used; it is the pleasure of what in human terms we would call friendship
 - (A) but of a much higher order than we can understand
 - (B) the eternal sharing of all things among the Persons of the Trinity – only Two of the Three are in view here – marks this unity

C. Unity in Shared Qualities 5:21-23

1. Respecting Life (v 21)

- a. "For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes."
- b. in the OT, it is God who is the giver of life
 - (A) it is He who forming man out of the dust breathed into him life

- (B) "See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded, and it is I who heal; And there is no one who can deliver from My hand." (Deuteronomy 32:39)
- (C) and this is what marks Him pre-eminently as God
- c. but Jesus as the Son of God also is the giver of life
 - (A) and this He does on His own initiative
 - (B) He gives life to those whom He wishes
 - (C) so that in this matter, Father and Son act in concert, in unity

2. Respecting Judgement (v 22)

- a. "For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son,"
 - (A) now the OT presents God as the final judge of all mankind
 - (1) "The Lord judges the peoples; Vindicate me, O Lord, according to my righteousness and my integrity that is in me." (Psalms 7:8)
 - (2) "Before the Lord; for He is coming to judge the earth; He will judge the world with righteousness, And the peoples with equity." (Psalms 98:9)
 - (3) "For the Lord will judge His people, And will have compassion on His servants." (Psalms 135:14)
 - (B) but the actual judgement is to be carried out by the Son
 - (C) what a comfort this is to the believer, that the One who is our Judge, is also our Saviour and hence our Advocate, our defence!

3. Respecting Honour (v 23)

- a. "in order that all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent Him."
- b. the OT shows that God's glory belongs to Him alone
 - (A) in prohibiting idolatry it says, "—for you shall not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God—" (Exodus 34:14)
 - (B) "I am the Lord, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to graven images." (Isaiah 42:8)
- c. but the Father and Son share that glory; this shows their unity
 - (A) in Gethsemane, therefore, Jesus could rightly pray, "And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." (John 17:5)
 - (B) to give the Son honour, is to honour the Father

(C) we are to honour the Son EVEN AS we honour the Father: in the same fashion, in the same degree, by the same means

d. these then are attributes or qualities of God which are shared by the Father and the Son

D. Unity in Our Salvation 5:24-29

1. Present Existence (vv 24-26)

a. Spiritual Life (vv 24-25)

(A) "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live."

(B) these verses 24-29 parallel the truths that are found in that great 20th chapter of revelation, speaking of this spiritual resurrection first and then of then of the physical resurrection, concluding that "blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power." (Revelation 20:6) – we cannot do justice here and today to this study;

(C) but, let us rather rejoice in the salvation given to us by this; for,

(D) what a wonderful, assuring passage is Ephesians 2! For it tells us this, "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ... But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." (Ephesians 2:4-7)

b. Life Is In the Son (v 26)

(A) "For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself;"

(B) one of the key names for the Lord in the OT is "the Living God"

(1) this contrasts Him with idols of wood and stone

(2) but it also characterises the Lord as the One in whom life resides, of whom life is an essential characteristic

(3) it is embodied in His Name, "I AM THAT I AM", the one who exists because of His own being, who defines existence and life

(C) the Son has that same life in Himself and is therefore able to impart that life – eternal life – to whomsoever He will – so, "When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory." (Colossians 3:4)

2. Future Existence (vv 27-29)

a. The Son as Judge (v 27)

(A) "and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man.", or, more literally, "because He is Son of Man"

(B) this means that the Son is fitted to be our Judge because

(1) either He is the Messiah – Son of Man – announced in Daniel 7:13-14 "One like Son of Man"

(2) or by His incarnation as a human, He has been qualified for the role of being mankind's judge

(C) in either case it is His voice that men shall hear, being called to ...

b. The Final Resurrection & Judgement (vv 28-29)

(A) "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment."

(B) there are two resurrections, if not in time, but certainly in result

(C) as already noted, those who have participated in the first, need not fear the second, for their names are written in the Book of Life

E. Unity in Purpose 5:30

1. "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."

2. Lord willing, we shall come back to this verse as the introduction to next week's message: The Four-Fold Witness

F. Conclusion

1. The Father and the Son are One

a. this is a truth that surfaces throughout this gospel of John

b. these verses in John 5 are carefully stated to leave no doubt about this

2. Jesus' Words Call for Decision

a. they were spoken to His enemies

b. William Barclay describes the Decision: "... the listener must either accept Jesus as the Son of God, or he must hate Him as a blasphemer and seek to destroy Him. There is hardly any passage where Jesus appeals for men's love and defies men's hatred as He does here." ^{3}.

- c. do not, therefore, be surprised by the reaction of the world to those who decide to follow Christ; those making the right decision

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ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version of 1769
NAS	New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NLT	New Living Translation © 1996 Tyndale Charitable Trust
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version © 1989 National Council of Churches of Christ
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 National Council of Churches of Christ; Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Some of the commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

Bruce	--	<i>The Gospel & Epistles of John</i> , by F. F. Bruce, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI; 1983
BM	-	<i>Biblical Museum</i> , Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870
EBC	-	<i>The Expositor's Bible Commentary</i> , © 1986 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 49530, MI: <i>John</i> , by Merrill C. Tenney
EGT	-	<i>The Expositor's Greek Testament</i> , Hodder & Stoughton; 1903 <i>John</i> , by Marcus Dods
NICNT	-	<i>The New International Commentary on the New Testament</i> <i>The Gospel according to John</i> , by Leon Morris
NTC	-	<i>New Testament Commentary</i> , by William Hendrickson; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI; 1954
RWP	-	<i>Robertson's Word Pictures of the New Testament</i> , by Dr. A. T. Robertson

2. NICNT, on *John 5:19*

3. NICNT, in *fn 53, John 5:19*