

The Gospel of John

The Equality of Jesus and God

John 5:15-24

INTRODUCTION:

This morning we are continuing in the Gospel of John. I would like to start this morning by reminding you the purpose, according to John that this book was written.

John 20:30-31 (NASB)

³⁰ Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

The question that John most wanted to answer was question "Who is Jesus Christ?".

- The Holy Spirit has declared that He is God in chapter 1.

John 1:1 (NASB)

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

- John the Baptist declared that He is the Lamb of God, the Messiah, the Savior early in the gospel of John.

John 1:29b, 32-34 (NASB)

²⁹ The next day he *saw Jesus coming to him and *said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

...³² John testified saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. ³³ I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴ I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God."

- The early disciples declared that He is God in chapter 1.

John 1:40-41 (NASB)

⁴⁰ One of the two who heard John *speak* and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹ He *found first his own brother Simon and *said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ).

- His authority over the Temple was a declaration that He is divine in chapter 2.
- His miracles are proof that He is divine.

And John has covered all of that.

And then as chapter 5 began, John recorded one of the more important miracles that Jesus ever did. The healing of the lame man at the pool of Bethesda.

Jim made a good point after the sermon last week. He said that there is no indication that the lame man did not believe in Jesus. That is true. There is no record of whether he returned to his sin or not.

He did tell the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus Who had healed him and told him to “**Get up, pick up your pallet and walk.**” The scriptures do not tell us whether it was or was not a betrayal.

The scriptures tell us that Jesus healed this lame man on the Sabbath and deliberately told him to pick up his bed and carry it with him. He knows He is defying the Jews that are always around watching Him. He deliberately performed this miracle on the Sabbath to draw the Jewish leaders to Him so He could explain to them **Who He is**. Jesus gives this discourse as a defense of what He did on the Sabbath. That gives Him the opportunity to raise the whole issue of His identity.

This discussion starts in verse 17 and continues through the end of the chapter. This morning I would like to look at His **claim to deity** in verses 17 to 24.

All Stand and Read Scripture.

John 5:15-18 (NASB)

¹⁵ The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. ¹⁶ For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. ¹⁷ But He answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.”

¹⁸ For this reason 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.

¹⁹ Therefore Jesus 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. ²⁰ For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and *the Father* will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel. ²¹ For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. ²² For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, ²³ so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

²⁴ “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.

Prayer

The first section is 17-24. It answers the question “**Who is Jesus Christ?**”. It is Jesus' Own claim to deity. That He is God.

Now remember, the Jewish leaders had made their decision by now. There was never any question in the Jew's mind that He said that He was God. They got it! That's what they said was His ultimate blasphemy.

¹⁸ For this reason 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.

This is the most staggering claim anyone has ever made! And then He tells us why. So you do not come to Jesus with the option that He is a good teacher. This is what the skeptics have proclaimed through the years so they could claim Christianity and still have a comfortable Jesus.

But that is not an option!

He said He was God!

If it is **true**, He **IS** God!

If it is a **lie**, He is the ultimate deceiver and He has insanely deceived Himself.

We have to make a choice, there is no middle ground. The truth needs to be informed by the truth. The truth is here. Let Him give His own testimony. And then let Him substantiate it, which He is doing in this chapter by more than two or three witnesses.

If you are going to reject Christ, then you must reject the entire Bible. If Jesus is not God, there is no Christianity, the Bible is just a fabrication.

On the other hand any faithful study of the Word of God and the accounts of Christ's life and words, leaves no legitimate doubt that His claims were absolutely true.

Jesus gives this discourse as a defense of what He did on the Sabbath. That gives Him the opportunity to raise the whole issue of His identity.

Now, that Jesus has their attention, He starts preaching. He introduces Himself to the crowds and He clearly implies that He is divine. John 5:18 tells us that the crowd who listened to Him became angry because He “**was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God**”

So here is Jesus' own testimony to His own identity.

I am sure you all understand this. **The heart and soul of the Christian faith, the heart and soul of the Gospel is a correct view of Jesus Christ.**

There are some who see Jesus as...

- Only a man.
- A good man.
- A noble man.
- Maybe an elevated man.
- Maybe a highly spiritual sensible man.

But that is not an option!

Unbelieving scholars and skeptics have argued the identity of Jesus throughout history. The relentless attack to His claim of deity, the fact that He is fully God started with the Jewish leaders. So the question of "**Who is Jesus Christ?**" is very important.

In verses 17-24, Jesus claims to be God in five ways...

- He is equal with God in nature.
- He is equal to god in works.
- He is equal to god in power.
- He is equal to god in authority.
- He is equal to god in honor or worship.

This is, by any measure, **Bold**. It is considered **Blasphemous** to the Jewish leaders. They understood exactly what He was claiming. They interpreted His statements correctly.

Here is where the line is drawn regarding Jesus!

Either He is a liar and a deceiver, and a deadly deceiver at that, or He is Who He said He is. He is God. Those are the choices. There are no others.

Each of these claims could be complete sermons in themselves, but for the sake of brevity I have chosen to summarize each claim.

BODY:

I. HE IS EQUAL WITH GOD IN NATURE.

John 5:17-18 (NASB)

¹⁷ But He answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.”

¹⁸ For this reason 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.

He says “My Father,” and they go ballistic. No Jew would call God His Father because in their view, father and son share the same life principles, share the same essence. Jesus is saying, “I am of the same nature as God.”

“The Father is working until now,” in other words, the Father doesn’t pay any attention to the Sabbath, the Father doesn’t rest, and I don’t either because that’s an affirmation that I’m the same as Him. He’s working and never stops. I Myself am working and I never stop. God never rests, I never rest. He’s working, I’m working. They got it. He was making Himself equal to God in nature.

II. HE IS EQUAL TO GOD IN WORKS.

So in verse 19 He stuns them again by saying, “Not only am I one with the Father in essence and nature, but I do exactly what the Father does.

John 5:19-20 (NASB)

¹⁹ Therefore Jesus 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. ²⁰ For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and *the Father* will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel.

He and His Father are one in nature, and they are therefore one in function, one in duty, one in work. "**The Son can do nothing of Himself**". In other words, He doesn't operate independently from God. Every human being operates independently from God. We couldn't possibly blame God for everything we do. No human being could say, "Whatever God does, I do and that's all I do, I only do what God does, I do nothing else." That is such an outrageous claim coming from the lips of a man, and here stands this Galilean carpenter in a normal Galilean garb with His sandals on and His feet dirty from the dust of Jerusalem, looking into the eyes of these Jewish leaders and telling them that He is of the same nature as the eternal God and that He only does what the Father does. It is something He sees the Father doing. What I do is what the Father wills. You are indicting Me for what God desires and for what God Himself is doing.

III. HE IS EQUAL TO GOD IN POWER.

John 5:21 (NASB)

²¹ For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.

What is the ultimate power in the universe? It is the ability to give life. That's the ultimate power, to give life. We live physically because we were given life through our parents by God.

There is also an invisible spiritual life that we can't see in each other but which is evident. We realize that the whole universe is alive. Whether it is inanimate or animate. Although it is invisible, it is evident. It is all from God who made everything through Christ without Whom nothing was made that was made. Here is this Galilean carpenter standing there saying that He is the one who has created the entire universe and He only gives life to whomever He wishes. Nothing exists that He didn't wish to exist. Nothing came into existence by any random process...nothing. He is equal to God in power. He has the ability to make something exist that previously did not exist.

It's a staggering, staggering claim.

IV. HE IS EQUAL TO GOD IN AUTHORITY.

John 5:22 (NASB)

²² For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son,

Trying to understand the realities of the Trinity are really hard for us to grasp because it's hard to understand that Jesus is God and yet with God. He is God and yet separate from God. It's hard to understand that God is the judge and yet Christ does the judging because we cannot understand the internal workings of the Trinity.

That profound mystery alone should prove to you that the Bible was written by God because men would resolve those kinds of apparent paradoxes. The Father Who is the judge of the whole earth has given all judgment to the Son. In Genesis 1, God creates. In John 1 the Son creates. In the Old Testament God's the judge. In the New Testament the Son is the judge. How can that be? Because the Son does everything the Father does in the same way the Father does it.

V. HE IS EQUAL TO GOD IN HONOR OR WORSHIP.

John 5:23 (NASB)

23 so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

The Jews were fiercely loyal to the Old Testament revelation of the one true God. Look, they had had their idolatry scrubbed out during the Babylonian captivity. They no longer tampered with idols. That went away. They were monotheists to the bone, one true God, no other God tolerated. Here they are face-to-face with a Galilean carpenter who is a miracle working preacher who says they are to worship Him in the same way they worship the one true God. They have to give Him equal honor, equal respect. Equal worship.

This was absolutely more than the Jewish leaders could swallow. To them it was absolute blasphemy.

John 5:24 (NASB)

24 "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.

CONCLUSION:

As I mentioned last week, it is important to understand that what we **believe** MUST be based upon truth. The Bible (God's Word) has proven to be ultimate truth.

Man once believed that the earth was flat, but believing it did not make it true. Some have said that the moon is made of cheese, but believing it does not make it so.

In man's search for God, a new "religious" movement has started called the New Age. It is a huge movement toward a one world religion where all spiritual paths are equally valid (except if you believe in Jesus Christ of course).

I am sure that all of you have heard of Oprah Winfrey. Oprah is right in the forefront of this movement. Oprah is confusing a lot of people because she openly identifies herself to be a Christian. But what she believes about God, faith, salvation, heaven, hell, and a whole host of other things directly contradicts the Bible.

Take a few moments and imagine a religion where Jesus did not come to die on the cross, where there is no heaven, no hell, no sin, no salvation, no doctrine, where all spiritual paths in the world are equally valid and where "god" is in you and in everything else you see.

Listen to a quote from Oprah in a broadcast where she described what she had learned from a book written by Eric Butterworth. **And I quote.** "I thought Jesus came, died on the cross, that Jesus' being here was about His death and dying on the cross when it really was about Him coming to show us how to do it. How to be. To show us the Christ consciousness that He had and that that consciousness abides with all of us. That's what I got. That's what I got." **unquote** (Which was followed by audience applause).

She has also stated **quote** "God is not something to **believe**. God IS. God is. And God is a **feeling** experience, not a **believing** experience. If your religion is a believing experience, if God for you is still about a belief, then it is not truly God." **unquote**

Isn't it interesting that Oprah tells us that there are millions of ways for us to find God

and it doesn't matter which path we take to get there as long as we all get to the same place. But one of the ways that will not work is by believing that Jesus is the pathway to God.

John 3:36 (NASB)

³⁶ He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

Remember Jesus says,

John 10:27 (NASB)

²⁷ My sheep hear **My** voice, and **I** know them, and they follow **Me**; ²⁸ and **I** give eternal life to them. Make sure that the voice that you are listening to is the Good Shepherd's (Christ's) voice which we have recorded in the Bible.

The truth is that we cannot just make up whatever we want about God and about religion.

Despite Oprah's explanation of why Jesus came to this earth, Jesus did not say that He was "A WAY" or "ONE" of the Truths by which you can find Life. Jesus said "I AM THE Way!" And just in case you didn't catch the exclusiveness of that statement, He follows it by saying "**No one comes to the Father BUT BY ME!**" I AM THE ONE AND ONLY WAY to the Father!

When Jesus makes the statement "I AM THE Way, THE Truth, and THE Life" He excludes ALL other ways to God. "**No one comes to the Father BUT BY ME!**"

The Family of God.