

John 5-17-24
Like father like son!

Preamble:

GCF is growing...

Some of you came to GCF when it was small... you like small... I get it... but it is possible to have close relationships in a church this size if and only if you are committed to a small group.

Information center—fill out form....

Lunch with a pastor...

Prayer for illumination:

Please join me in prayer....

Sermon introduction:

Aug. 18, 2009—Stan Romanek says he encountered his first UFO on the outskirts of Denver.

"It was just after dark," he said. "And I looked up and there was this big red and blue looking UFO." Romanek's video camera caught a shaky bright light in the sky. Others in the park that same night say they witnessed it too and the video made it onto the local news.

But that was only the beginning for Romanek, 46, who belongs to a growing community of believers who say they have been personally touched by extraterrestrials. Since then, Romanek says he has been abducted by other forms of life...

He even claims that aliens came to his door at 2:30 in the morning." (ABC News)

What should we make of these astonishing claims?

When people make astonishing claims, we often roll our eyes and move on.

In John 5:17-18, last week's passage, Jesus makes an astonishing claim. He claims to be God—equal with the father!!! But instead of the Jews rolling their eyes and moving on, they want to kill him.

This raises a question, why did the Jews have such a hard time believing Christ's claim to be God?

Because the Jews believed that the God of the Bible was immensely powerful (Genesis 1:1). He is described as omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient. He dwelt in unapproachable light. Whenever people encountered God, they were utterly terrified. Yet, the man in front of them was just that—a man. How could Jesus (the Jewish man in front of them) be responsible for creating the universe out of nothing?

Furthermore, the Jews belonged to the most vigorous monotheistic religion in the world. The very first thing that Jewish kids were taught was the shema (Deut. 6:4 "Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the LORD is one"). If Jesus was God, didn't that imply that there were two Gods???

The Jews refused to believe in Jesus's claim to be God!

What about you???

Maybe you too find it hard to believe that Jesus is God, the one true God!!!

Maybe you think that Jesus was a good moral teacher, maybe even a faith healer, but God???

Maybe you don't believe in God at all???

Maybe you believe that science has gotten rid of the need to believe in God???

This brings us to John 5:19-24. In this passage Jesus makes some astonishing claims about himself. Commenting on this passage one scholar writes,

“This section is Christ’s own personal statement of His deity. As such, it is one of the greatest Christological discourses in Scripture.” (J. Mac)

In these verses we learn that... Jesus is equal with the father in deity!!!

Here is the good news...

Jesus’s equality with the father makes him able to save!

Two points...

Jesus is equal with the father!

Jesus is able to save!

First, Jesus is equal with the father!

Jesus defends his equality with the father (i.e., his divinity) by making four statements. Each statement begins with the word “for.” Let’s look at the first statement...

How is Jesus equal with the father?

They are equal in actions!

John 5:17–18 (ESV) — 17 But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.” **18** This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

Jesus is equal with the father... (verses 17-18)

Explain ontological equality

“In the Trinity, there are three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—who together are one being. The ontological structure of the Trinity is a unity (Deut. 6:4).” (Sproul)

John 5:19 (ESV) — 19 So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. **For** whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.

The Jews want to kill Jesus for claiming to be God. At this point, Jesus could have easily said, “Wow, wait a minute, I wasn’t actually claiming to be God. Put those rocks down. Put that club down. Everyone just needs to calm down.” Instead of backing down on his claim, he doubles down on his claim by using the words,

“truly, truly.” In other words, he uses the strongest possible language to declare that he is telling the truth about being equal with God the father.

How does he prove that he is equal with the father? Here we see the first “for.”

Jesus says that whatever the father does, the son does as well. In other words, the father and son are equal because they always do the exact same things. They are equal in their actions. The son does not have a separate will or plan from the father. There is one plan of God, carried out by the father, son, and the Spirit.

The father and son are equal (both God) because they do the same things. They are equal in their actions. Yet, the son always submits to the father and never vice versa.

Ontological equality and economic subordination.

What are the implications?

John 5:17-19 is a crucial text for understanding the doctrine of the trinity. Our text implies that God the father and God the son are two distinct persons, yet there is one God.

God does not exist as three modes.

God does not exist as three gods.

God does not exist as one God in one person.

Christians are trinitarian monotheists. Each word in that last sentence counts.

David, this all seems so esoteric. Why get all worked up about the doctrine of the trinity?

Because Christianity is inescapably trinitarian. Said another way, the trinity is at the heart and soul of the Christian faith. Prove it!!!

The Bible is a message from the father, about the son, understood in the power of the Holy Spirit.

We are elected by the father, redeemed by the son, and sealed by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1).

We pray to the father, through the son, by the power of the holy Spirit.

We are saved from the wrath of the father, through the death of the son, through a belief enabled by the Spirit.

We are adopted by the father, through the son, and this is made real to us by the holy spirit.

The trinity is not a doctrine to be avoided, it is a doctrine to be celebrated, since it is the heart and soul of Christianity.

Back to our text...

Not only are the father and son equal in actions!

They are equal in knowledge!

This brings us to the next “for”

John 5:20 (ESV) — 20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel.

The father has a deep and abiding love for the son. Likewise, the son, has a deep and abiding love for the father, which is why he always does the father's will. The word "love" is in the present tense, indicating that this is an ongoing love! This ongoing love is often called the glue of the trinity.

As a result of this deep love, the father is always showing the son what he is doing. Although in one sense, the son's divine nature already knows what the father is doing!!! Therefore, this must mean that the father is always revealing to the son's human nature what he is doing. Why? He loves the son with a unique love.

What is the point?

Since the father and son are equal in knowledge, they are equally divine.

They are equal in actions!

They are equal in knowledge! In addition...

They are equal in power!

John 5:21 (ESV) — 21 For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will.

The OT makes it very clear that only God has the power to raise the dead and bring new life to sinners (cf. Deut. 32:39; 1 Sam. 2:6; 2 Kings 5:7). Jesus claims that he too can give new life to believers. In the next section he claims that he will raise the dead.

Some day he will raise your body to a glorified existence.

Then all your problems, all your sin, all your stress, all your sickness will be a thing of the past.

Christ's resurrection power makes him equal with the father!

They are equal in actions!

They are equal in knowledge!

They are equal in power!

Thy are equal in honor!

John 5:22–23 (ESV) — 22 For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, **23** that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.

The father has delegated the task of judgment to the son (this needs unpacking). When the son returns, he will judge the world in righteousness. Judgment is the exclusive responsibility of God (e.g., Gen. 18:25; Judg. 11:27). Therefore, if Jesus is going to Judge, he must be divine.

Because the father has given the son this role we must honor the son, just like we honor the father. They are both worthy of honor because they are both God!!!

Then Jesus says, whoever does not honor the son does not honor the father who sent him!!!

Implications...

If you don't honor Christ, you don't honor the Father.

This means that Muslims don't honor the father!!! We don't worship the same God. Controversy at Wheaton college a few years ago...

This means that Jews don't honor the father!!!

This means that Mormons don't honor the father!!!

This means the average person on the street who thinks of Christ as a good teacher does not honor the father!!!

You can believe whatever you want about Jesus and get to heaven, if you are sincere, or a good person!!! We don't all worship the same God!

If you dishonor Jesus, you dishonor God the father!

How we treat the son, is how we treat the father!!!

We must honor the son, and we honor him by trusting him with our lives and obeying his commandments.

They are equal in actions!

They are equal in knowledge!

They are equal in power!

They are equal in honor!

Therefore, Jesus is God!!!

Illustration:

We all know the saying, "Like father, like son."

When of my sons loves music, I love music.

When of my sons is fiercely competitive, I'm very competitive.

When of my sons loves tennis, I love tennis.

When of my sons loves reading, I love reading. He reads all the time...

When it comes to video games, one of my sons is very driven. When it comes to certain things, I'm very driven as well. He will do whatever it takes to get video game time!!!

Why are all my boys like me? Because I'm their dad.

Like father like son!!!

Jesus is just like the father! he is fully divine!!!

Application:

If Jesus is God, he is enough. We don't need anything else in this life.

If Jesus is God, he is more valuable than money, power, sex, and all the treasures of this world.

If Jesus is God, he is omnipresent, which means that he is always with us!

If Jesus is God, he knows all things including our deepest, darkest, secrets, and he still loves us!

If Jesus is God, he is divinely wise, meaning he can help you untangle your complicated problems.

If Jesus is God, he has unlimited power to help you with your problems.

If he is God, he must be worshipped with every fiber of our being.

If he is God, we must honor him in every area of our lives!!! Every area!!! Fashion, music, money, parenting, books, entertainment, etc...

If he is God, his death on the cross is sufficient to atone for your sins (all of them), transform you, and place you in relationship with the triune God... *Jesus is divine!*

This brings us to the next point...

First, Jesus is equal with the father!

Second, Jesus is able to save!

Since Jesus is God, he is able to save. How???

Jesus saves by granting us eternal life.

John 5:24 (ESV) — 24a Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life.

Only an eternal being is able to grant eternal life. Since Jesus is a divine being he is an eternal being, therefore, he is able to grant eternal life.

This raises a few questions...

How do we get eternal life? We simply hear and believe!

Jesus does not say...

Whoever reads the Bible and prays...

Whoever cleans up his life and goes to church...

Whoever recycles and tithes...

Whoever loves and serves his family...

No!!!

Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me.... wow!!! What a promise!!!

What is eternal life?

The word eternal denotes not only the *length of time* that God's favor extends to his people but also the *quality of existence* that they may enjoy as they worship and serve him. (EDBT)

It is not ten-year life, 1,000 year life, or even one billion year life. It is eternal life, it starts now, the moment we believe, and it will never, ever, ever end!!!

Furthermore, it is a quality of life. It is qualitatively better than any other version of life, because it is rooted in knowing Jesus, the fountain of life.

John 17:3 (ESV) — 3 And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

Illustration:

We are all after the perfect life aren't we???
Some of us want a fit life... expand...
Others want a wealthy life... expand...
Others want a fun life (recreation)... expand...
Still others want a meaningful life (philosophy, etc...)
Still others want an educated life (expand)
In High School I wanted the athletically successful life....

Jesus offers us something far better than all of these lives!!!

He offers us eternal life!!!

Application:

Have you tasted eternal life? Maybe it was more real for you in the past??? But you are drifting?

Eternal life is a relationship with Jesus... It is given to us by grace and through faith alone, the moment we believe, but it must be cultivated to be enjoyed!!!

This week, when you are stressed out, lonely, sick, tired, broke, or scared, remind yourself that you have eternal life!!! And it will last forever!

When all the pain and stress is gone, you will still have eternal life!

Jesus saves by granting eternal life! In addition...

Jesus saves by dying in our place!

John 5:24 (ESV) — 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

Those who hears Christ's words and believes the father have eternal life and they don't have to fear judgment. Why?

Christ has taken the judgment they deserve. Have you ever wondered how it is that one person, namely Jesus, can bear the punishment for the sins of billions of people? How in the world is one man able to absorb all of that wrath?

We are talking about billions of sins, billions of sinners, and thousands of years of sinning. How in the world can one person pay the penalty for all those sins in a few hours on the cross?

Answer? Jesus is not just a man; he is the God man! Because he is God, he is worthy enough to atone for the sins of the world. Because he is God, he is a sacrifice of infinite value. His sacrifice of infinite value is able to atone for an infinite amount of guilt.

Because he is God, he is able to fully and finally deal with all of your guilt.

Application:

Here is the good news...

If God judged his son in your place, you will never be judged.
The Judgment has already happened!!!
It would be unjust of God to punish you when someone else already paid for your sins.
This means you have nothing to fear!!!
Since Jesus paid for your sins, you will pass from death to life.

Have you thanked him recently?

On the other hand, if you refuse to repent of your sins and trust Jesus, you will face God's judgment on your own!!!

Conclusion:

In conclusion let me say this...

What we believe about Jesus matters, eternally!!!

In 2020, Ligonier ministries published the results of a massive survey on what Americans believe about Jesus.

52% of Americans polled thought that Jesus was a great teacher, but not God.

30% of self-identified evangelicals thought that Jesus was a great teacher, but not God. To be clear, this means that 1/3 of American evangelicals don't believe that Jesus was fully God!!!

55% of Americans believe that Jesus was the first and greatest of all created beings.

Sometimes the variety of opinions about Jesus cause us to wonder, is the NT unclear about the deity of Jesus Christ? Nothing could be further from the truth.

Jesus claimed to be God! Since he is God, he and he alone is able to save! Salvation is found in no other name!

What do you believe about Jesus?

Will you stubbornly refuse to believe, like the Jews?

Or will you believe?

If you believe you will experience eternal life and you will pass from death to life.

Let's pray...