

John 5:1-47 The Work of the Son (part 2)

Last week, we considered the story of Jesus healing the man who had been crippled for 38 years. And as Jesus always does, he uses the occasion to teach WHO He is, not just in his flesh, but as He has always been. Here, he teaches (them and us) that the VERY ways in which God works, He ALSO works. And by teaching this truth he makes himself EQUAL to God. Look at vv. 17-19: **“But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.” 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. 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.”** In other words, the VERY AUTHORITY reserved for God alone, Jesus claims for himself. In chapter 5 I want to highlight 3 ways Jesus works as God works: 1) He works as the Lord of the Sabbath. In other words, Jesus was, as John says 1:1-3: **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.”** So, Jesus is saying, *“I was there in the beginning with the Father. In my essence I created the Sabbath. And, NO I am not breaking the Sabbath. And at the same time, I may do as I wish on the Sabbath.”* Look again at v. 19: **“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.”** I think of the Chronicles of Narnia when Aslan says to the Witch: *“I was there when the deep magic was written.”*

Today, I have two more ways in which the Son works: 1) The Son works as the giver of life, 2) The Son works as the great judge.

1. The Son works as the giver of life. Look at v. 21: **“For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will.”** It’s pretty simple. As the Father gives life, so the Son gives life. This also is what John has been saying from the beginning of his gospel. In 1:4: **“In him was life, and the life was the light of men.”** Now look at vv. 25-26: **“Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself.”** If you go back to the OT, over and over the Word tells us that God is the giver of life, both in the sense of creation, but also more importantly for us He gives LIFE from the dead.

I think back to the Book of Ezekiel as the prophet sees a dry valley filled with bones, a place of death. And God asks Ezekiel, **“Can these bones live?”** And he says, **“God you know.”** And then God says to Ezekiel, **“Speak to these bones and tell them to hear my Word.”** And what happens next? They hear the Words of the prophet and suddenly they flesh is formed around them and the breath of life is given to them (Ezek. 37:1-6). Brothers and sisters, the VERY POWER of God, WORK that ONLY He can do, is also given to the Son! This is also HIS WORK. He is not only

the Lord over creation and the Sabbath; He also gives life. Do you remember the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well in John 4? Jesus says to her, ***"If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water . . . everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that will give him will never be thirsty again."*** And a little later Jesus tells his disciples, ***"My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work"*** (4:34). As God gives life to Israel in the OT, so the Son gives life to all who come to him. This is the "work" of the Son.

We will see the same later in John 6. After feeding the five thousand many come to him and some of the Jews say to him, ***"Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness . . ."*** And Jesus says to them, ***"It was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world"*** (John 6:31-34).

So, what does this mean for us? What is our application? Well, in and of ourselves we need life! Why? Though we walk around and move and live in the flesh, we are separated from God because of sin. Listen to the words of Paul in Eph. 2:1-5: ***"And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ . . ."*** And this "life" comes only through faith in the Son. As v. 24a says, ***"whoever hears my word and believe him who sent he has eternal life."*** Those who do not believe in the Son "come into judgment" (v. 24b).

Also, eternal life isn't merely some aspiration of the future. To have eternal life NOW is to have EVERYTHING we need for life and godliness. To be a Christian is to have the POWER of God, the POWER of the Son, the POWER given through the Holy Spirit. If you walk an aisle or raise a hand or pray a prayer and you are not supernaturally drawn to love for the Son and then follow that with a life of godliness (with repentance and faith in the Son who died on the cross and rose again) . . . you are NOT one who is truly born again! As Tit. 2:11-14 says: ***"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works."*** To be a Christian is to have LIFE! And this life comes down to us from the Son in whom IS life.

2. The Son works as the great judge. Look at vv. 22-23: ***"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.” Look also to vv. 27-29: **“And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. 28 Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice 29 and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.”** There is much to say about the judgment of God in the history of this world and the days to come. But, for our purpose here, I want to highlight the truth that the Son has the SAME authority as the Father regarding judgment. I see this is the point Jesus is highlighting with his accusers.

Do you remember when Abraham prays to God for Sodom and Gomorrah (wicked cities)? And as he thinks of God’s coming judgment, he says to God, **“Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?”** (Gen. 18:25). In Zeph. 3:5, speaking of the great sins of Jerusalem, we read: **“The LORD within her is righteous; he does no injustice; every morning he shows forth his justice; each dawn he does not fail . . .”** God is just. He is holy. Everything He does is right. And ALL JUSTICE flows down to the world from HIM ALONE. Yet, in our passage we see that the Son of man has the SAME authority. What is the title of this sermon? (The Work of the Son). As the Father has the authority to judge, so the Son.

Now, this is a deep, mysterious truth when we consider the work of the person of the Son in his incarnation. It is easy to say the Son, in his deity (in his essence), has the same authority as God. But, when these Jews were accusing him of making himself equal with God (v. 18), they could only see the man. Yet, this man . . . is also God. Look at v. 27. John refers to him as the “Son of man,” to emphasize his humanity. This means when we consider the incarnation of Jesus we cannot separate his humanity from his deity when it comes to judgment. As the “son of man” Jesus has every right to judge. And he does make right judgments. But, in the time of his incarnation (33 years on earth) he did not come in judgment. Do you remember at the beginning of his ministry at a synagogue in Nazareth? He was asked by the leaders to share from the Scroll of Isaiah? So, he stands up and reads these words from Is. 61:1-2: **“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD’S favor . . .”** After reading these words, Luke tells us that he sat down and said, ***“today, in your hearing, these words are fulfilled”*** (Luke 4:16-21).

Now, what is interesting about those words in Isaiah is that the VERY NEXT words say, **“and the day of vengeance of our God.”** Why does Jesus stop there and not read the rest of Isaiah’s words? . . . Because the “day of vengeance” was yet to come. In the days of Jesus’ flesh, he came, YES with ALL AUTHORITY TO JUDGE. But, that time was not yet. John tells us in the story of Nicodemus (John 3:17-18) that Jesus says, **“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.”** This is why, in vv.

28-29 Jesus looks forward to the ultimate day of judgment saying, **“Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.”** Now, for the Jews of that generation, great judgment will come in 70 AD. And Jesus speaks of that time (See Matt. 24). But, this is only a prelude to the final judgment. This is why Paul can say to the Corinthians, **“Today is the day of salvation”** (2 Cor. 6:2).

Brothers and sisters, the “work” of judgment belongs to HIM as it does to the Father. Jesus could have had the woman at the well stoned for her adultery under Mosaic Law. He did not. He could have judged the lame man for only wanting healing and no desire to follow him as Lord. On the cross Jesus could have called ten thousand angels to save him and kill all his enemies. But, he does not execute this judgment yet! Why? He must first TAKE the judgment of God upon himself. Brothers and sisters, this is the CROSS. And without it, no one from Adam all the way down to us, no man woman or child in the history of the world would be saved. So, when we think of the great majesty and authority and holiness of God as displayed in the Son, who has EVERY RIGHT to judge every one of us at any second, we must see the great humiliation of the Son of being obedient to the point of death . . . even death on a Roman cross. This is why we see both “judgment” and “life” displayed to the world on the cross. As our savior, Jesus takes God’s judgment that we deserved (as the ONE who has ALL AUTHORITY to judge even as he hangs there). And then, he conquers death and rises again. This is the gospel we believe and the gospel that all must believe.

Let me finish with some applications.

Application: Thinking about the work of Jesus as the SAME work as the Father helps us understand that Jesus is one person with two natures. When Jesus says, “If you’ve seen me you’ve seen the Father,” or “I and the Father are one,” or “I came to do his will,” etc. This also helps us as we speak with the world about the nature of the Son as deity.

Application: the long-suffering of God. What does this mean? This means that God gives sinners time for repentance. God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved. Jesus could have come in final judgment if the Father would have planned it that way. But, He did not! Jesus came to fulfill ALL God’s promises. And in the meantime, starting with the Jews of Jesus’ day, and even carrying down to us today, God gives time for repentance. So, do not put off repentance. Today is the day of salvation.

Application: In our story we see the seriousness of sin and its consequences. Sin is still man’s problem. Look at v.15: “Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, **“See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.”**

Application: Jesus comes to us as we are: great sinners. We have no indication from this text that this man was looking for the Messiah, nor was he thinking about his own sins and where they

may lead him. But Jesus came to him in not only in his calamity of being lame, but in his state before God as a sinner. We do not make our way to him. He comes ALL the WAY to us. (“Just as I am without one plea”).

Application: Sin is the still the problem of the human race. The consequences of sin (though mysterious) are greater than we know, even all the way to eternal judgment. But, in the meantime, our sins have consequences on our lives on our families on our neighbors, and our cities and our state and our country. Fathers, Mothers, (family members), etc. The only answer for our sins is repentance and faith as we look to the Son!

Application: All obedience, all honor, all praise, all glory must be given to the Son as it is to the Father (and the Spirit). Let me end with vv. 22-24: **“For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, 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. 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.”**