

**Session 5B - John 5:18-47 (The Discourse)** I am leaning heavily on the work of Gail R. O'Day for the thoughts in these notes this week

This is the first fully developed discourse by Jesus in John's Gospel

Most scholars break this discourse up into two parts

**\*\*First is vv. 19-30 – Focuses on Jesus relationship with the Father John uses a limited vocabulary repeating many words**

*Father* -vv. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26

*Son* – vv. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27

*Judge and Judgment* – vv. 22, 24, 27, 29, 30

Nouns and verbs from the root word for "life" – vv. 21, 24, 25, 26, 29

This kind of circular writing, which is an earmark of the Gospel of John, makes this section difficult to cleanly outline

Remember that Jesus is answering the crowd who is mad at him in Verse 18 just before this section because not only was he breaking Sabbath rules he was also equating himself with God and so Jesus basically says that he can do nothing that the Father does not will

This also a very Near Eastern cultural understanding where there is this Father Son apprenticeship relationship

vv. 21-22 Answer the question of what the works of God are – Giving life v. 21 and Judgment v. 22

We must also understand that "give life to the dead" in John can mean the physically dead or the spiritually dead there is a double meaning and word play attached to it

v. 23 A radical claim that Jesus is to be honored as God is honored – This claim that Jesus is Lord is what got the community that John is writing to kicked out of the synagogue – This is presupposition #3 from the first session notes being pushed forward here by the writer of John's gospel

vv. 24-25 We get our second and third "Very truly I tell you" which, lets us know that these verses are the start of a new section of thought – we are moving from Father/Son identification to the significance of the saving work of the Father/Son dynamic – The big theological word is soteriology (the word of being saved or study of salvation)

The juxtaposition of saving is judgment and these two verses bring u this juxtaposition– or are the two different sides of the same coin? Confession and forgiveness, comes to mind as we participate in a liturgical way during worship

There is also another big theological idea and that is (realized eschatology) In other words, Jesus in his person has fulfilled the future of God – so the kingdom is here **now** BUT **not yet** because the second coming has not happened yet!

The present life of the believer is fulfilled by the experience of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus

vv. 26-27 Return to the Father/Son dynamic again (remember the circular structure of this writing) Except here the focus is not so much on the activity of the Son but on the Identity of the Son.

We get the theme of life v. 26 and judgment v. 27 brought back into view

vv. 28-29 Reiterate the eschatology themes by describing the resurrection and the future and final judgment which is different from the present realized eschatology of verses 24-25

Because of this difference many scholars think that the verses 28-29 are from a different tradition and a set of redactors (editors) added them to be more in line with standard theological understanding

If they are added verses from another tradition and redactor I think it is a great addition and if they are not and the verses are original to the text I think that it gives a fuller picture of the Now but not Yet juxtaposed understanding of the work of Christ on the cross

Verse 30 returns to verse 19 and reiterates the Son's dependence on God for his work

**\*\*Second Verses 31-47 – focuses on witnesses to Jesus both supportive and the situations into which unbelief arises** – Remember Supposition from session one again – The faithful remnant that is claiming Jesus is Lord has been kicked out of the community

This section is very Johannine with its use of the courtroom language of testimony and witness and accusation etc. John keeps foreshadowing the passion story that is to come later on in the Gospel and John is rather fond of using the language of the trial courtroom of the time.

Jesus attaches himself to Moses in this narrative thereby leaving no room for the Jewish leaders to use that as an accusation against Jesus because to be a disciple of Moses means that you must be a disciple of Jesus –

**THIS IS A DIRECT DIS AT THE JEWISH LEADERS THAT HAD KICKED THE COMMUNITY OUT OF THE SYNAGOGUE FOR THEIR CLAIM OF JESUS IS LORD!**

### **Questions for us to ponder this week**

With this realized eschatology theme in this discourse we are getting a portrait of the identity of Jesus. There were many heretics in the early church that were pondering the identity of Jesus and some came down on the side of he was a mere human who God adopted because of his way or he was God and not a human at all but just appeared to be human because a God really cannot

die – **So, who is Jesus for you?** We all tend to gravitate towards one or the other because it is hard for our Greek logical minds to hold fully human/fully divine together so we tend to live out one understanding or the other in how we live out our lives

Verse 28 in this discourse lifts up the fact that we should not be astonished at the work of Christ through the Father's authority. How can we not be astonished at this claim all the time? **What astonished you about Jesus as you understand presently in your life and witness?**