

Teaching Points

This next section in John 5 consists of statements from Jesus regarding His equality with God. It's important for us to appreciate the clarity and force of these claims. **Jesus openly proclaimed His divine nature.** There are some people who say that Jesus never claimed to be God. This section in John is one of many portions of Scripture that easily dismantle such an objection.

#1. Jesus claimed equality with God in nature. (verses 17-18)

Remember from last week, when Jesus healed the man by the pool of Bethesda there were some Jews who were outraged. They persecuted Jesus because He healed the man on the Sabbath day.

In verse 17, Jesus justified His decision to heal on the Sabbath by stating that His work had been performed in tandem with His Father. ***“My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.”*** It was right for Christ to heal the man on the Sabbath day because God the Father had ordained it. This means there was nothing wrong with Christ's healing ministry on Sabbath days. This leads us to the conclusion that Jesus DID NOT break the Sabbath. The Jews accused him of breaking it because they had added man-made traditions and interpretations to the God-given Sabbath command.

Not only did Jesus go against the Jews' convictions about the Sabbath, but He also offended them even further by calling God His “Father.” Every Jew who heard Christ say this understood that He was claiming equality with God - verse 18 explicitly states this.

Jesus knew what He was doing when He worded things this way. He called God His Father because He wanted everyone to know that He was and is the true Son of God. This means that Jesus is fully divine. He has the same nature as God. Here is the mystery and wonder of the person of Jesus: John 5 presents Him as a real human who is also God. Wow!

#2. Jesus claimed equality with God in power. (verses 19-21)

Next, Jesus tells the Jews that He has the same power as God. He says in verse 19 that He does the same things that the Father does. In other words, when Jesus works God is at work. In this sense, there is no separation between what the Father does and what Christ does. They are perfectly united in their purpose and action.

This equality is perfect. Jesus operates with all the power of God. In verse 21 He makes this very clear. The Father raises the dead and gives life - and so does Jesus, the Son.

There is nothing ambiguous about these claims. Jesus is openly telling the Jews that He is the almighty God. He doesn't merely work wonders as a prophet. Rather, He performs miracles by personally exercising the very power of God.

Discussion Question: How are Christ's miracles different than those of the prophets who went before Him (Moses, Elijah, Elisha, etc.)?

Thoughts: *The prophets who went before Christ worked with the power that God gave them. They were human vessels who were endowed with supernatural abilities to prophesy and (at times) work miracles. But when Jesus worked, He was simply demonstrating the power that He possessed as God. God worked through the prophets of old - but in Christ, God was working directly with His own hands (so to speak). The prophets possessed supernatural abilities from God - but they never possessed the divine nature of God. Jesus did.*

#3. Jesus claimed equality with God in authority. (verses 22-30)

In this last section, Jesus continues with the theme of resurrection. Here, He emphasizes the authority that He has in raising the dead and giving life.

He says in verse 22 that all judgment has been committed to Him. This means that Christ has the authority to pardon or condemn humans. This also puts Him in an exalted position that demands the very same honor that is owed to God the Father. When Jesus judges, He exercises the absolute authority of God.

This authority is also seen in Christ's freedom to give life to whomever He will (see verse 21). There are two distinct yet closely related resurrections described in this passage.

First: Jesus has the power and authority to give life to those who are spiritually dead. This is clear in verse 24. The "passing from death into life" mentioned in this verse is defined as "not coming into judgment." This is a spiritual resurrection. Christ gives life to those who are spiritually dead and facing the wrath of God that burns toward sin.

Second: Jesus has the power and authority to give life to our mortal bodies after death. Verses 28-29 describe a resurrection in which all who are in the graves will come forth. Some will participate in the resurrection of life while others will participate in the resurrection of condemnation. All humans will be raised from the dead. This will occur by the power of Christ. All humans will be judged. This will occur by the authority of Christ. All humans will exist forever - either worshipping and enjoying God forever in paradise or suffering eternal conscious torment in God's holy wrath. The determining factor is the righteous judgment of Christ. **See how necessary it is for us to believe in Him whom the Father has sent!**

Discussion Question: How do these verses inform our understanding of the Trinity?

Thoughts: *These verses present Christ to us as one who is EQUAL with God. We believe that He possesses the very nature, power, and authority of God because we believe that Jesus IS God. Scripture teaches us that Jesus and the Father are ONE in essence/substance and yet distinct in their personhood. We believe that there is one God who exists eternally in three persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. While we cannot fully comprehend the Trinity - we can confidently worship God according to how He has revealed Himself to us.*

Prayer Focus

Make verse 24 a matter of prayer. Praise God that there is an escape from eternal condemnation. We can rejoice in knowing that we have ALREADY passed from death into life because we believe in Christ.

Spend time humbling yourself under the mighty hand of Jesus. Acknowledge His power and authority. Acknowledge His divine nature. Agree with what these verses have taught us about His awesomeness and greatness.