

Jesus: the Glorious and Love Filled Reality which Demands a Reckoning

John 5:16-30

Introduction: (Read John 5:16-29) All that Jesus teaches in this text comes out of the interactions with “the Jews” surrounding a single miracle. Of course, in the narrative of John, there was another healing miracle which is recorded just paragraphs before this event in John 4:43-54 with only the phrase “after these things” serving as the transition to the events of chapter 5.

What is by this time clear with respect to Jesus’ miracles is that they are not simply for the sake of feeding the hungry, healing the sick or even raising dead bodies to life again. We know that to be true because, though Jesus fed, healed and raised the dead out of compassion, there were untold multitudes more whom He did not heal etc. Jesus did these miraculous things for the same reason John recorded them (cf. John 20:30-31). *These miracles served as signs which declare to us/the reader who Jesus is and the reason for His coming.*

According to John each of these sign miracles is a declaration that Jesus is **1.** The Son of God, which (from today’s passage and others) we know means that He is Himself God. **2.** While remaining fully God, He became fully human and He alone is the promised Christ, the Savior of the world.

This leads to what these miracles declare about the reason for Jesus’ coming. He came as the God-man in order to enter into absolute solidarity with fallen humanity. He did this so that **1.** As the perfect and sinless One, He might take upon Himself our sin and die for that sin as an atoning sacrifice for it. He became the Lamb of God for us. It is by His death that you and I might be given His righteousness by faith and enter into eternal life. **2.** Not only did He come to make atonement for sin but He came to do away with the curse and to destroy death and bring in its place life and immortality – life with no decay. Each of these miracles is a temporary foretaste of the “healing” of this badly broken creation that Jesus would ultimately accomplish.

Note: I’ve chosen not to digress from John for Father’s Day because of the bedrock this passage presents for life. One thing has become very clear to me over my years of being a Christian – and especially in the ministry I’ve had as a pastor speaking into the lives of others - At its core – in its essence – reality is fixed. In its many expressions (let that read symptoms) it is incredibly diverse and confounding. Nonetheless it is an unrelenting, unyielding, inexorable force and demands a reckoning. There is nothing that makes sense of reality in all of its confounding details except the gospel – the heart of which is the ultimate reality over all reality - God Himself!!

This passage tends toward weaving it all together with the declaration that Jesus is the Gospel – *He is the glorious and ultimate reality who demands a reckoning.* To understand Jesus is to understand what is actually happening in any given moment in your world and to know what it actually means. To embrace Him by faith is to live in unshakeable hope in the most uncertain times. *There is nothing more important - no body of knowledge and no critical skill set - for you to teach or pass on to your children than the gospel. There is no person more critical for*

*them to know than Jesus!! This passage presents Jesus as the absolute and glorious reality who demands a reckoning from us all! **THEREFORE, to set your children right with Jesus is to set them absolutely right in the reality of life and eternity (cf. 1 John 1:1-4; 3 John 3-4)!***

There are three points of focus I would like to highlight from this text about the person and work of Jesus – albeit key points of focus. 1. Jesus’ work is the “ongoing” work of the Father. 2. The Father has given all judgement into Jesus’ hands. 3. The Father has made Jesus to be the giver of life and resurrection.

Jesus’ Work Is The Ongoing Work Of The Father – 5:16-20

- When the Jews sought to “persecute” Jesus because He healed on the Sabbath thereby violating Sabbath law Jesus said that He was sharing in the ongoing work of God who is His Father. This led to the persecution of the Jews becoming a plot to murder Him (cf. 5:16-18).

- Jesus asserts both His equality with God/His Father and His utter dependence upon and submission to Him. Jesus, by allowing to stand the Jews’ inference that He was claiming equality with God, was in fact affirming that He is “equal” to His Father, while declaring that He never acted independently to the Father. George Beasley-Murray summarizes well;

“But in vv 19-30 we see a twofold emphasis that exists in tension: on the one hand there is the acknowledgement by Jesus of the total dependence of the Son on the Father, and on the other a consciousness of the Father’s appointment of the Son to perform on his behalf works that God alone has the right and power to execute (cf. 5:19-20, 21-22, 26-27, 30).¹

- As in the work of creation, this is the consequence of and ongoing, perfect and shared love between the Father and the Son (cf. 5:19-20)

- The work Jesus was doing was the Father’s ongoing work of redemption – including both sustaining this badly broken world and doing the work of redemption to restore it (cf. Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:1-3; John 1:1-4, 10-13).

Note: In Genesis 1 we have the record of God “working” to create all things. Throughout this record we are told that God looked upon His work at various stages and “saw” that it was “good” (cf. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25). In Genesis 1:31 God finished all of creation and it says, “God saw all that he had made, and it was *very good*.” It is then, in Genesis 2:2-3 that God rests and sanctifies the Sabbath. It is fair to assume that God rested on the 7th day to enjoy and rejoiced in the beauty and perfection of His creation. We know from the texts we have cited above that the Son was sharing in that work with His Father. In Genesis 3 man falls in sin and takes creation with him into the curse of God. Now the God’s work of love in creating becomes His work of love in redeeming and restoring.

¹ Beasley-Murray, “Word Biblical Commentary: John,” pg. 75

In order to accomplish this great and ongoing work the Father has given the Son power and the authority of judgement and giving life and resurrection. He does all of this in order that the Son might be honored as the Father is honored. (cf. 5:21-23).

The Father Has Given To Jesus The Sole Authority To Judge – cf. 5:22-23, 27-30

- The authority to judge so that all will honor the Son – Only those who honor the Son actually honor the Father (cf. 5:23; cf. also John 3:16-18; 14:6; 1 John 5:11-12; Acts 4:12)

1. These are strong claims to exclusivity. This is that relentless, unyielding and inexorable reality that is Jesus. He is the One whom we know or embrace by faith! There is no being rejection of Jesus and being “Okay” with God!

2. This means that there are many who hear the Word we proclaim – who are offered the love of God in Jesus – and they will reject Jesus. In addition they will reject us because we belong to Him and declare that He alone is Savior - sometimes in the most violent of terms.

- The Father has given Jesus the authority to judge because Jesus is the Son of Man (cf. 5:27). Jesus has been given this honor because He is the Son of Man – in addition to the end times connotations of this title (cf. Daniel 7) – this may speak to His uniqueness as the God who became man in order to rescue humanity and creation. He now is both the object of saving faith and the judge of those who stand before Him (cf. Romans 8:31-34).

- Jesus’ powerful voice will call out all who are in the tomb unto the resurrection of judgment and of life (cf. 5:28-29; cf. also Philippians 2:5-11; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10). **Everyone** will be raised by Jesus!! **Everyone** who dies will hear His powerful voice in the tomb and be raised and stand before Him.

Everyone will bend the knee before Him. When that day comes He will be the daunting and unmovable, unchangeable reality before whom we must all kneel. Some will kneel in love, gratitude and worship for He is for us the “Lamb of God” (cf. Revelation 4-5). Others will kneel and will honor Him as their rightful judge without a word to utter in defense of rejecting Him. ***The Son will be honored by all!***

Note: Jesus did not come to judge mankind but to save!! It is by that same powerful voice that Jesus speaks life into death!

The Father Has Given Jesus The Authority To Raise The Dead And To Make Alive – (cf. 5:21, 24-26)

- The Father has given the Son *to have life in Himself* – (cf. 5:26) - This is not only a reference to the power to create life as the “ever-living” source of all life (cf. 1:1-4). This should be understood in the light of Jesus’ statements in places like John 11:25-26; 14:6.

- This is created by Jesus’ powerful and effectual voice which sovereignly “speaks” life into death – (cf. 5:24-25, also v. 21 – “the Son gives life to whom He pleases”). It is our calling to bear witness and to “speak” so that by His grace those we love may hear (cf. Romans 10:13-15; 1 John 1:1-4; 3 John 3-4)

Note: It is horribly wrong-headed for one to *not* speak out of a sense of tolerance or open mindedness or live and let live thinking that often governs our interactions with our family and friends – *Love speaks!!* It is also terribly unloving to function as though all roads lead to the same place!

- In the teaching of these verses it is clear that this “life” precedes and guarantees resurrection (cf. 5:24-25)

1. In 5:24 the language is clearly speaking of those who walk this earth and “hear” His voice and respond by faith. They are the ones who have been given life. In addition the language of the text says (perfect tense in Greek) that they have passed from death into life. We *are now* seated with Him in God (cf. Ephesians 2:6-7; Colossians 3:1-4). **Wow – what grace!!**

2. In 5:25 – the time is coming and has come when His voice is heard. This is the “now and not yet” nature of the life Jesus gives. Life precedes and guarantees resurrection (cf. Romans 8:10-11). This is the point of these miracles – Jesus fed the hungry, healed the sick, cast out demons and even raised the dead in anticipation of and with the promise of the ultimate resurrection to life or in some cases judgement.

Jesus came and He is the promise of life beyond this life. Jesus speaks the gospel of love and life and resurrection to those we love – those with whom we interact – our neighbors and our politicians – our sports personalities – LBGTO; BLM; Democrats and Republicans – Anarchists and legalists – AND they will all be raised either to enter into the life of God – His kingdom or to be sent away!! Call them by love to worship Him – Honor Him – Know Him!!