

The Most Startling Claim Ever Made, Part 1

Scripture: John 5:17–20

Code: 43-26

This transcript is still being processed for Smart Transcript. To see an example of this new feature, [click here](#).

Open your Bible now to the fifth chapter of the gospel of John.

We are embarking now on a passage that may be the Holy of Holies of the gospel of John. This is the inner sanctuary in a very real sense.

In John chapter 5, verses 17 to 47, that entire section, long section is one discourse. All of this section comes from the very mouth of the Lord Jesus Christ. And He is speaking to the Jewish leaders of Israel who are designated by John as the Jews. They want Him dead. They consider Him a blasphemer of the worst kind. They are convinced that He is a threat to their religion, their self-styled secure religious position and power. They see Him as scorning the conventional wisdom as dishonoring God, as threatening the sanctity of their religious system. He has already attacked the Temple with such passion that He evacuated the Temple all by Himself at the very height of a Passover celebration. That's how He launched His ministry.

They have heard Him repeatedly attack the hypocrisy of their false religion. They have watched Him show nothing but disdain for their non-biblical traditions and additions by which they have attempted to embellish the Scripture. He is their arch enemy by their own choice.

As we come to verses 17 to 47, Jesus speaks directly to them, directly to the leaders. And the purpose of the entire section is to declare to them that He is in fact God, that He is the Messiah and more, He is God. He gives that testimony of His equality with God to begin this long section and then He calls on witnesses to the truth of that witness from John the Baptist, witness from His miracles, witness from God the Father, witness from the Scripture. And so here is His own testimony to His own identity.

And let me just say that you all understand this but be sure. The heart and soul of the Christian faith, the heart and soul of the gospel is a right view of Jesus Christ. There are some who see Jesus as a man only, a good man, a noble man, maybe an elevated man, maybe a highly spiritual sensitive man. That's not an option. Needlessly, pseudo-scholars and skeptics have argued the identity of Jesus throughout history. The attack on His deity, the fact that He is God, fully God, started with the Jewish leaders here in His own country of Israel during His ministry. They attacked Him for His claim to be deity. They saw it as outright blasphemy.

Subsequent generation to theirs picked up the assaults, though Jesus was now gone, the gospel was being proclaimed in Israel and around the world and they continued to attack Jesus as a transgressor, a sinner, a blasphemer, a man who disdain for the true wisdom, a man who was a powerful deceiver, led people astray when He was alive, and now His disciples were leading people astray continually.

Throughout all of human history, the pseudo-scholars and the skeptics have kept up this attack and it goes on even today. And even within what is called Christianity, some kind of Christianity that sees Jesus as human and not divine. The testimony of the gospel of John is to dispel all such queries. Remember chapter 20 verse 31, John gives His purpose, that you might believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that is to say that He has the same nature as God because when you believe that, you can have life in His name. If you do not believe that, you cannot have eternal life, you will perish in hell in your sins.

So the question of who is Jesus Christ is the most important question. The Holy Spirit has declared that He is God in chapter 1. The early disciples declared that He is God in chapter 1. John the Baptist declared that He is the Lamb of God, the Messiah, the Savior early in the gospel of John. His authority over the Temple was a declaration that He is divine. His miracles are proof that He is divine. His omniscience, the fact that He knows what people think and He knows their history, never having met them, indications of His omniscience show that He is God. And John has covered all of that.

And then as chapter 5 began, John recorded one of the most important miracles that Jesus ever did. Apparently it didn't lead to the salvation of the man He healed, even though the man had been ill for 38 years and Jesus healed him on the spot, instantaneously and completely, told the man to pick up his bed and go home—which he did. That miracle Jesus purposely did on the Sabbath. He had already declared that He was Lord over creation, John had in chapter 1, that He was Lord over disease and demons in His miracles, that He was Lord over the Temple which He attacked and assaulted. And now He declares that He is Lord of the Sabbath and He has no interest in the Jewish traditions that have encumbered the Sabbath with bondage. He does this miracle purposely on the Sabbath.

And then when they come at Him, look at verse 16, and they begin persecuting Him because He was doing these things on the Sabbath, we learned that He had a pattern of doing that, that He was doing on the Sabbath what they by their tradition had decided was not legal because it was a form of work. And they had the man carrying his rolled up pallet under his arm and they said that constitutes work. So Jesus was doing work and causing someone else to do work on the Sabbath. And so they began to persecute Him, that's why He did it.

At this point He could have had a discussion with them about the true use of the Sabbath. He could have said, "Let's talk about the Sabbath, don't you think good things should be done on the Sabbath, don't you think there's a difference between man rolling up his little pad and walking off with it, then a man selling pads, selling beds, or delivering beds to people who bought them on a different day? This is not work. He could have had a discussion about the man carrying the bed and He could have had a discussion about what ought to be done on the Sabbath. And He could have had a discussion about, "Don't you think it's good to do things on the Sabbath?" And He did have that discussion with them on other occasions. But on this occasion, they make the Sabbath the issue and He uses that as a launch point, to elevate the discussion beyond what happened on the Sabbath, it becomes a Christological discussion, it becomes a discussion about who He is. And here, triggered by this miracle on the Sabbath and the immediate hostility the Jews had toward Him, He gives the greatest, most extensive declaration of His deity that He gives anywhere.

Now I want us, this morning, to begin to look at this. And the first section is verses 17 to 24. This is

so profound and so rich and so deep, however, that it's going to take us a couple of weeks to get through just that. It answers the question, "Who is Jesus Christ?" Now remember, the Jewish leaders had made their decision by now. He had had a prior ministry in Judea for months and months and months...better part of a year. Then He had gone to Galilee where He would be for about 16 months or so. While at some point in His ministry, on one of those trips back to Jerusalem that all Jewish males had to make at special feasts, He comes back, it's a Sabbath and He does this healing. So many months, perhaps more than a year has passed, they had fixed in their minds what they think of Jesus. It comes out in the gospel of John in chapter 8. They call Him a Samaritan which was a label that belonged to unfaithful, apostate outcasts. In chapter 7 and in chapter 8 they say He's possessed by demons. In chapter 10, verse 20, they say He's insane. In chapter 8 verse 41 they say He is a bastard child, He's illegitimate. In Matthew 12:24 tells us that they finally declared that what He did, He did by the powers of hell...the power of Satan.

This established their view. And by the way, that view has been perpetuated down through the history of the Jewish religion through the centuries. And so they come after Jesus with those conclusions to persecute Him as a blasphemer. And that's the ultimate indictment, He is a blasphemer. And that's precisely what they say He was, by declaring Himself to be God.

There was never any question in the Jews minds that He said He was God. They got it. That's what they said was His ultimate blasphemy. They said He makes Himself equal with God. Look at the end of verse 18. He's calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. They knew that's His claim.

Now if it's true, it's true and He is God. If it's a lie, He's not God, He's the devil. He's the ultimate deceiver. What you can't say is something in the middle. You can't say He's a model of spiritual life, because models of spiritual life don't call themselves God. Crazy people do, lunatics do. You can't say that He is a noble teacher because everything starts with a massive preposterous lie if He's not God. This is the most staggering claim anybody has ever made and then supported it. So you don't come to Jesus with the option that He's a good teacher, that's what the skeptics have sort of landed on just to be kind, and that's what the pseudo-scholars of fake Christianity have perpetuated through the years so that they can still have Christianity and still have a comfortable Jesus.

But that's not an option. He said He was God. If it's true, He is God. If it's a lie, He's the ultimate deceiver and He's insanely deceived Himself. We have to make a choice. There's no middle ground. The choice needs to be informed by the truth, the truth is here, let Him give His own testimony. And then let Him substantiate it which He will do in this chapter by more than two or three witnesses.

If you're going to reject Christ, then reject the Bible. You have to reject it all. If you reject the deity of Jesus Christ, you have just detonated a bomb that has exploded your Bible, throw it away. You have demolished the Bible. There is no such thing as well-intentioned scholarship that denies the deity of Jesus Christ. That is devilish and it disintegrates the Scripture completely. If Jesus is not God, there is no Christianity, the Bible is all a fabrication from hell.

On the other hand, however, any study of the Word of God, any diligent faithful study of the account of His life and words leave no legitimate doubt that His claims were absolutely true. He was unhesitating in making those claims and supporting them. He did it frequently. He did it to the hostile Jews here in chapter 5, again in chapter 6, again in chapter 8 and on many other occasions.

He did it with His disciples over and over again, most notably you could see it in John 16:28. He made the same declaration of His deity and His heavenly origin even in His high priestly prayer to the Father. So if He's a blasphemer, He carried His blasphemy to His enemies, to His friends, and even to God.

You have to understand that when you study the life of Jesus, He is assumed the prerogatives that belong only to God. He said, for example, that He exercised sovereign control over people's eternal destiny. He said that He had absolute authority over the divine Law of God. He said that He had power supernaturally to answer prayer, that He had authority to forgive sin, that He had absolute control over angels, holy and fallen, that He had power over the Kingdom of God. And He declared that He had the right to be honored and glorified and praised and worshiped and obeyed. Those are prerogatives that belong only to God.

He accepted without correction the title of Son of God, Son of Man, the messianic title, Messiah, King. He took the sacred name of God and applied it to Himself, the I AM, the tetragrammaton I AM over and over again. He referred to Himself as the I AM, the very sacred name of God that a Jew wouldn't even let across his own lips because it was too sacred. Jesus took it and claimed it for Himself. All these lines of testimony, all these lines come together and converge in one escapable truth, Jesus claimed to be God, not to be another God equal to God, but to be God.

The Jews probably thought, at least some of them, that He was claiming to be another God which would have been, of course, preposterous because there was only one true God and the Ten Commandments pronounced judgment on anybody who has another God. Jesus didn't say He was another God, He said, "I and the Father are a unity, we are one." He said in John 14, "If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father." He didn't say I'm another God, He said I am God. I am one with the Father. This is Trinitarian. To say anything other than that about Jesus is to obliterate the teaching of Scripture.

Devoutly, monotheistic Jewish followers of Jesus, His disciples, His apostles, those who believed in Him had no problem acknowledging that His claim was true. They affirmed that He is God, not another God, but the One true God and it is that conviction in the hearts of His original followers that is still the conviction in the hearts of His true followers today. And those of you who are Christians, those of you who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, you believe that Jesus is God, Amen? You affirm that. Not to affirm that is to dismiss the Jesus of Scripture and make it impossible to be saved.

The testimony that Jesus gives here and that John records, starting in verse 17, is from His own mouth. I know John has given us the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the writing of chapter 1, the testimony of John the Baptist, the testimony of the disciples, the testimony of Jesus' actions and knowledge, all of that. But here is the claim to deity from the very mouth of Jesus. It is, in one sense, astounding; another, it is precious. In one sense understandable, in another, incomprehensible.

Now as I said, this discourse runs all the way to verse 47 and it stretches your capacity to reason and then leaves you and goes beyond it. I warn you about that. Whenever you get into Trinitarian truth, you're going beyond your human reason. You shouldn't be surprised by that, there are lots of things in the Scripture that exceed your ability to grasp them, certainly this is one of those great truths.

Jesus gives this discourse as a defense of what He did on the Sabbath. That gives Him the opportunity to raise the whole issue of His identity. What He did on that Sabbath provoked hatred, persecution, and it would continue to escalate until they would finally murder Him by the hands of the Romans on the cross. Jesus knew that. Somebody might say, "Did He want to die?" Not only did He want to die, He came to die...He came to die. He didn't try to bend, to cool them off. He didn't try to defend Himself in such a way that maybe they wouldn't see it quite as blasphemously as they saw it. He even made it worse. The pinnacle of the testimony of John in these chapters leading up comes right here in chapter 5, starting in verse 17. Now remember, He is talking to hypocrites, apostates, false religious leaders who belong to the kingdom of darkness, and the kingdom of Satan. And they remain there because they refuse to believe He is who He says He is. And by the way, that's what ultimately damns everyone, a failure to embrace Christ for who He is.

Now I want you to look at verses 17 to 24 as a unit, even though we won't cover it all. And in verses 17 to 24, our Lord claims to be God in five ways. He claims to be God in five ways. He is equal to God in nature, essence, person, meaning, the substance of who He is. He's equal to God in works. He is equal to God in power. He is equal to God in authority. And then most shockingly, He is equal to God in honor, or worship. This is by any measure bold, it is by the estimation of the people to whom He's speaking, blasphemous beyond blasphemous. They understood exactly what He was claiming, exactly. They interpret His statements as it goes. He says something, they interpret it accurately. Here the line is drawn regarding Jesus, folks. This is the line being drawn. Either He is a liar and a deceiver and a deadly deceiver at that, He is the devil, or He is who He said He was, He is God. Those are the choices, there are no others.

First of all, let's look at the initial claim. He claims to be equal with God in nature, or essence. Verse 17, "But He answered them, My Father is working until now and I Myself am working." Now that is a simple statement. You get it. But it is so profound. Let me tell you how the Jews thought. One of the queries that shows up in rabbinical discussions through the centuries is this one. Does God keep the Law? Does God keep the Law? Well immediately, the simple answer, of course He keeps the Law. God has to keep the Law. It's His Law. He made the Law. He has to keep the Law.

Well if you rush to say that yes God keeps the Law, you now have a problem because what about the Sabbath? Does God rest on the Sabbath? Well somebody might say, "Of course He rests on the Sabbath because in Genesis 2:2 it says that on the seventh day, God...what?...God rested. But I remind you that that, if taken too far, creates a very serious problem because if God isn't doing anything, every time Saturday comes around, the whole universe collapses. So they had a problem.

Now the Jews had developed 39 categories of behaviors on the Sabbath, 39 categories to kind of restrict behavior. And in order to accommodate God, cause they couldn't conclude that God didn't do anything, they knew the sun came up, they knew the wind blew, they knew the rain fell, they knew the grass grew, they knew God continued to do His work of judgment and His work of redemption. They knew God was working on the Sabbath so they had to accommodate God a little bit in their Sabbath Law and they came up with a couple of rules that would kind of work for God. One of them was this, you could carry something but not above your shoulders. On the Sabbath you could carry it here, but you couldn't put it above your shoulders. If it went over your shoulders, that's work. So they said, God works on the Sabbath but He does light work. He never really kind of pushes the universe above His shoulders, metaphorically speaking.

And the second rule that they developed to kind of accommodate God, was the idea that you could

move something from one place to another in the house but not from one house to another. So if you had a basket of food, you could take it from one room to another room, but you couldn't take it to the people next door. And they said, God only has one house, the whole universe is His house. There is no other house, so God never does anything from His house to any other house cause there is no other house. So yes, God keeps the Law because He just works in the house and He does light work. I mean, that's the stupidity to which it had arrived.

Jesus takes a shot at that entire ridiculous discourse when He says, "My Father is working until now. He never stops. He never slows down. He doesn't do light work. He doesn't diminish His efforts. He is working—present tense—all the time at the same pace, at the same volume, in the same way. My Father is working." By the way, it blew their minds that He said, "My Father," no Jew would ever say that. While they would acknowledge that He was the Father of the nation in terms of creation and covenant promise, no Jew personally would call God his personal Father because that would be way too familiar and because of the way they spoke a father and son having common nature, that might make it seem that they were claiming to have the nature of God and that would be blasphemy. Jesus had no problem saying what they would never say, He said My Father, the One who has the same nature as I have is working until now. He was saying to them the work of God goes on, it goes on all the time. He constantly works to this very second, God works. It's one of those amazing things that Einstein died and never discovering after all of his work in science, he knew there was a power component somewhere in the midst of the atom that kept the entire universe moving and he never could identify what it was. It is God...it is God. He never rests from His government. He never rests from sustaining the physical world, He never rests from keeping everything in orbit, everything in rotation. He never rests from His rule. He never rests from His justice judgment. He never rests from His blessing, mercy, grace, love, never rests.

Oh, by the way, Isaiah 40:28 says, "He also never faints and never gets weary." He doesn't need to rest. He doesn't need to rest. When God works, He dissipates no energy.

Oh, by the way, He doesn't draw His energy from any other source like you do. He is constant, undiminished, eternal, infinite energy. God is working all the time.

And then Jesus says the shocking corollary, "And I Myself am working." I work at the same level God does. God doesn't pay any attention to the Sabbath and neither do I. As a man coming into the world, of course. He was there at the feast at this time when He did the healing because He was obedient to the Law of God. And yes, on the Sabbath He did what others did in His humanity. But in His deity, He never stopped working. And according to Hebrews chapter 1, in one of the most remarkable statements ever said about Him, it says that speaking of Christ, He upholds all things by the word of His power. That is the ministry of sustaining the universe.

In John 1:1 it says He created the universe. In Hebrews 1 it says that He sustains the universe. So there is Jesus standing there, looking at those men, talking to them. And He at the same time is holding together the entire universe. He is claiming then to be the same nature as God, the same essence as God. God continues to do His work. I continue to do My work. God is never restrained. His work is never diminished because it is a Sabbath, and neither is My work. Sabbath has no application for God. It has no application for the divine work of Jesus. He is the Lord of the Sabbath and He made the Sabbath for man.

Now the Jews knew exactly what He was saying and this is so outrageous it's beyond

comprehension. He is saying that as the eternal God does His work all the time, so He is claiming to do the same thing, to work the same pattern that God works. Verse 18, “For this reason, therefore, the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He was not only breaking the Sabbath but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

Just “My Father,” was enough to bring the indictment of blasphemy because that said there’s a shared nature. Evil people were called sons of Belial because their nature was Satanic. Angry people were called “sons of thunder,” because their nature was volatile. They knew that Jesus by calling God His Father was claiming to be one in nature and essence with God. And so it wasn’t only that He had broken their Sabbath, but that He called God His own Father and even made Himself equal with God by saying that God and He function the same way and they were seeking all the more to kill Him.

If you want to follow the pattern of how this unfolds in the gospel of John, this attitude, just follow for a moment John 7:1. “After these things Jesus was walking in Galilee for He was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him.” Verse 19, He says, “Why do you seek to kill Me?” The crowd answered, “You have a demon.” Verse 25 chapter 7, “Some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, ‘Is this not the man whom they are seeking to kill’”

Go over to chapter 8 verse 37, “I know that you are Abraham’s descendants, Jesus says, yet you seek to kill Me because the Word has no place in you.” Verse 40, “But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God.” Verse 58, same chapter, “Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham was born, I AM.’” There He declares Himself to be the I AM, therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him.

Chapter 11 verse 53, just shows the progression. “From that day on they planned together to kill Him.” Together—all the forces of priests and chief priests and rabbis come together to kill Him, they want Him dead. And the accusation they render against Him is this extreme blasphemy of claiming equal nature with God.

Then He even raises their fury in verses 19 and 20 because He claims to be equal with God in works...equal with God in works. “Therefore, Jesus answered, verse 19, and was saying to them—same group, coming off of their accusation—Truly, truly, Amen, Amen. He’s going to deliver truth to them in the midst of their error. By the way, that’s what Jesus said when He talked to Nicodemus. Three times when He was talking to Nicodemus in chapter 3, He said, “Truly, truly,” three different times because He was speaking the truth into the error in which Nicodemus lived. Here it is again, truly, truly, again in verse 24, truly, truly. Again in verse 25, truly, truly. This is truth coming to these that are captive to error. Fearless, resolute truth, “Truly, truly I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself The Son can do nothing of Himself unless it is something He sees the Father doing.” Let’s just stop there.

It is something He sees the Father doing. I want you to capture this one idea, the Son can do nothing of Himself. The Son can do nothing of Himself. What does that say? Well it says that He does not act independently. It says He can’t act independently. He can do nothing of Himself. That’s the negative.

The positive is then what does He do? Whatever the Father does, He does. Whatever He sees the

Father doing, whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does...listen...in like manner. He does what the Father does the way the Father does it exactly. Really an amazing statement. It speaks to the impeccability of Christ. Theologians through the years have discussed whether or not Jesus could have sinned. That would be a long term theological discussion. I think the answer comes in a number of passages, but here's one of them. The Son can do nothing but what He sees the Father doing. That's all He can do. He can only do what the Father does. The Father cannot sin. The Father cannot do evil. To say that He can is a blasphemy and to say that the Son can is a blasphemy, in my mind, as well. He cannot. He never acts independently of the Father. He cannot. It is impossible. It is inconsistent with His nature unless He says...unless He sees the Father doing it, He can't do it. Whatever the Father is doing, He is doing the same in the same manner. The one who always does and only does what God the Father does is equal to God. That's the point. He forever does what God does...forever. And does it in the same way. John 8:29, "He who sent Me is with Me. He has not left Me alone for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him..." Always, everlastingly He does what pleases God, He does what He sees God doing.

John 14:31, "So that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me, exactly." He can only do and only does what the Father does. To see Jesus in action is to see God in action. What God does, Jesus does. What Jesus does, God does. To accuse Jesus of sin is to accuse God of sin. To accuse Jesus of violating the Sabbath is to accuse God of violating the Sabbath. To accuse Jesus of blasphemy is to call God a blasphemer. Jesus is not another God. He is one with His Father and He gives four reasons, all four of them introduced by a Greek preposition. The proof, and we'll look at this as we go later, for whatever the Father does, look at the word "for" in the middle of verse 19, "For whatever the Father does, the Son does." Verse 20, "For the Father loves the Son and chose Him all things." Verse 21, "For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom He wishes." Verse 22, "For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son." He does what the Father does. He loves the way the Father loves. He has the power of life the same way the Father does. And He judges the same way the Father judges. He does the works of the Father...a work of judgment, the work of resurrection, all based upon a common, divine, infinite, eternal love. He is one in every sense with the Father. That's functional language that basically demonstrates or assumes ontology, or being.

So in verse 19 He stuns them again by saying, "Not only am I one with the Father in essence and nature, but I do exactly what the Father does, I do what the Father shows Me, I do what the Father wills for Me to do and I cannot do anything other than that." He is saying I cannot sin. I cannot do anything wrong. What I do is what the Father does. What I do is what the Father wills. You are indicting Me for what God desires and what God is doing. How far from God you are.

And by the way, He gives them marvelous motivation behind this. Verse 20, "For the Father loves the Son and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing." Somebody might say, Well you do what the father does, you only do what you see the Father doing, maybe you don't see the full picture...right? Maybe you don't get the full picture. Maybe you've got limited knowledge.

No, the Father loves the Son and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing. God has not kept any secrets from the son. Incredible statement. There's nothing that the Father knows the Son doesn't know. Oh in His incarnation for a time on earth, He restricted the use of His divine attributes. He didn't abandon His divine attributes, He didn't give them up or He would cease to be God. But He restricted the use of those attributes in submission to the Father. So on one occasion

He said He didn't know the time of His own return because that was in the Father's power. But here He tells us that in His divine person, the Father has shown Him all things that He is doing. There are no secrets. The Father loves the Son with such a perfect consummate, eternal, infinite love that He holds nothing back. He gives Him all the treasures of divine truth because of love.

I think the Apostle Paul in Colossians helps us to understand this because in Colossians chapter 1 in talking about Christ, He says this, verse 19, "It was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him." It was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him. That is all the fullness of the Godhead, verse 9 of chapter 2. You go from one...chapter 1 verse 19, the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, to chapter 2 verse 9, "For in Him all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form." All that God is in Christ which means all His nature, all His attributes, all His knowledge, all His wisdom.

And another way to see it Paul says in Colossians 2:3, "In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." The Father has all wisdom, all knowledge. The Son has all wisdom, all knowledge. The Father hides nothing from the Son, but from our viewpoint there is much that is hidden in the Son that we can't understand because we're not divine. The Father loves the Son so much that eternally...eternally He is granted the fullness of everything that He is to the Son. He has no less knowledge, less wisdom, less power, less work than the Father. And it's all based on love. Perfect union of the two guaranteed by mutual love.

I want to wrap up this session by just looking at that one point for a moment. Do you see this statement in verse 20, "For the Father loves the Son and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing." The reason the Father has given everything He is to the Son eternally, going back and forward, is because He loves Him with a love that is incomprehensible. It might shake you up to hear this, but at the heart of God's redeeming work is not God's love for you, not God's love for Me. Not God's love for the world. Not God's love for sinners. At the heart of redemption is God's love...the Father's love for the Son and the Son's love for the Father.

You say, "Didn't Jesus die because He loved us?" In a secondary sense, but in a primary sense, Jesus died because He loved the Father. "Didn't the Father send Jesus to the cross because He loved us?" In a secondary sense. In primary sense He sent the Son to the cross because He loved the Son. You say, "How am I to understand that?"

You're to understand it this way, that the whole purpose of redemption, the whole purpose of creation, the whole purpose of the world, the universe, human history is so that God can collect a bride to give to His Son a bride that's an expression of His love. That's why in John 6 and John 17 Jesus refers to believer as those the Father gave Me, or has given Me, or is giving Me, or will give Me. Every individual believer is a love gift from the Father to the Son. It's not so much about the Father loving you, or the Son loving you, it's about the Father loving the Son and the Son loving the Father. The Father loves the Son so much, you can give without loving, but you can't love without giving and perfect love gives a perfect gift, an infinite love gives an infinite gift so that the infinite love of the Father for the Son deems that the Father will give to the Son a redeemed humanity, collected one day in heaven forever and ever and ever to praise and serve and glorify the Son and always be an everlasting expression of the Father's love. And we learned from 1 Corinthians that when they're all gathered, including us, in heaven and the Father gives the gift to the Son, the Son will turn right around and give us back to the Father so God may be all in all. You are caught up in a divine love relationship between the Father and the Son. The Father is willing to send the Son so that He can

give the Son the gift of His love. The Son is willing to go to the cross so that He can give back to the Father the gift of His love. That's the sweeping truth of redemption. This infinite transcendent love that exists between the Father and the Son, and we might add even the Holy Spirit, of course, who is equal, is the reason for redemption.

God could have gone on being God in a Trinitarian existence and never created anything. But He wanted to give to the Son a redeemed humanity that displayed His grace and mercy as an act of His love so you will forever in heaven be a gift from the Father to the Son that the Son turns and gives back to the Father. And because of this love that the Father has for the Son, He holds back nothing from the son eternally. All treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Him. All the fullness of deity dwells in Him.

And then Jesus closes out verse 20 by saying, "And the Father will show Him greater works than these so that you will marvel." You've seen some of the evidences of the Father's love, the works that I've done, the miracles that I've done, the things that I've done, evidences of omniscience, omnipotence, you've seen that. You've seen these miracles. But that's not all. The Father has more that He will share with Me, greater works and you will marvel.

What are those greater works? They're listed in verses 21 and 22. The first one is the power of life and resurrection. The second is the authority of judgment, verse 22. The Father grants the Son to give life and the Father grants the Son to render final judgment. Those are the marvelous works. They come together in verses 24 to 29 in the resurrection that Christ produces and the subsequent judgment.

So the Lord Jesus is one in nature with the Father and one in work with the Father. He does exactly what the Father does. This is the vision of Christ that you need to have. And I think sometimes we have pulled Him down to nothing more than a kind and generous man. Far from it. Next time we're going to see that He's equal in power, equal in authority, and then the most consequent and yet shocking, that He's equal in honor to God the Father. Let's pray together.

We acknowledge, show God that these are transcendent realities and they must be, they have to be because we're talking about You, the eternal, transcendent, all-glorious, Trinitarian God. We have done our best to grasp these truths. We know that even unbelieving hostile, hating religious hypocrites understood what Jesus was claiming. How much more do we understand? They resented it. We embrace it. They rejected it. We believe it. They were condemned by their unbelief and we have been saved by our faith. And we thank You that You have brought us to the understanding of these truths, not only to understand them, even His enemies did, but to believe and embrace them and rejoice in them. Thank You for all that Christ is. And may we as we were reading earlier from Peter, live to bring honor to His glorious name through our behavior. Show forth the excellencies of His glory.

Father, it's been such a blessing to be together today to hear Your Word read and to hear Your Word opened up even to my own heart. We feel like we're barely on the edge of a vast ocean of spiritual reality that we couldn't comprehend. We kind of walk away with a little bucket full but it's the best that we can do. While we can't comprehend all of it, we believe and by believing we have life. Thank You for that gift. Bless this truth to our hearts, may it give us comfort and encouragement and may it increase our worship and our love for the Savior and may it empower us to have an effective witness for Him to those who need to know Him. And we pray that You'll work Your work of salvation in

hearts even today in the name of Christ.

Available online at: <http://www.gty.org>

COPYRIGHT (C) 2018 Grace to You

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (<https://www.gty.org/about#copyright>).