



Believe

JOHN

MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Examining the text & our hearts:

17 Jesus responded to them, "My Father is still working, and I am working also." 18 This is why the Jews began trying all the more to kill him: Not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal to God. 19 Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, the Son is not able to do anything on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, the Son likewise does these things. 20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing, and he will show him greater works than these so that you will be amazed. 21 And just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so the Son also gives life to whom he wants. 22 The Father, in fact, judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son, 23 so that all people may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.

24 "Truly I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not come under judgment but has passed from death to life. 25 "Truly I tell you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. 26 For just as the Father has life in himself, so also he has granted to the Son to have life in himself. 27 And he has granted him the right to pass judgment, because he is the Son of Man. 28 Do not be amazed at this, because a time is coming when all who are in the graves will hear his voice 29 and come out—those who have done good things, to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked things, to the resurrection of condemnation. 30 "I can do nothing on my own. I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will, but the will of him who sent me. (Jn. 5:17-30)

I. Jesus Heals an Invalid (Jn. 5:1-9a)

II. Conflict: The Miracle's Aftermath (Jn. 5:9b-10, 15-18)

A. The Cause: Jesus healed on the Sabbath (5:9b-10)

B. The first mild reaction

1. The Jewish leaders investigated & found out who healed on the Sabbath – Jesus (vv. 12, 15)
2. The Jewish leaders persecuted Jesus (v. 16)

C. Jesus' response: "My Father is still working, and I am working also." (v. 17)

1. God rested but didn't stop working (Gen. 2:3; Exo. 20:8-11)

- "God's work did not stop with the work of creation. **All through the Bible, God is seen as a worker.** He is described as a **gardener** (Jn. 15:1), an **artist** (Gen. 1:1), a **potter** (Isa. 64:8), a **shepherd** (Jn. 10:1), a **king** (Psa. 145:1), a **home-maker & a builder** (Heb. 3:4). Jesus said 'My Father is always at his work...& I too am working' (Jn. 5:17)." (Ken Costa, *God at Work*, p. 4)
- "Jesus argues that the Son can work on the Sabbath because the father does so (5:17). Initially this approach seems counterintuitive. After all, **the law says that God created heaven and earth in six days and then 'rested' on the seventh day.** Therefore, people are to 'rest' on the Sabbath because God rested on the Sabbath (Exo. 20:8-11). **Nevertheless, it was understood that God does not halt all activity one day a week.** The Father continues to give life on the Sabbath, just as he does every other day of the week...Jesus' opponents would agree." (Craig Koester, *The Word of Life: A Theology of John's Gospel*, p. 100)
- "[In John 5:17], Jesus points to **the unceasing activity of the Father. Unless he works continually no one could survive.** And because of his close relationship with the Father Jesus works in the same way. **The Sabbath cannot interfere with the work of such a one.**" (Leon Morris, *NICNT: John*, p. 280)

2. The Jewish leaders allowed circumcision on the Sabbath (Jn. 7:21-23)

3. Jesus continues God's work

- "The Sabbath healing is the third sign in the Book of Signs [Jn. 2-11]. Its significance as a 'sign' lies...[in] the fact that it **is a Sabbath healing empowers the event as a 'sign.'** As Jesus' discourse makes clear, Jesus' healing work on the Sabbath reveals **that he carries on the same life-giving/life-judging activity as his Father.** As God's Son, Jesus must work on the Sabbath." (Gale A. Yee, *Jewish Feasts & the Gospel of John*, pp. 41-42)

4. Jesus called God "My Father"

- "[Jesus] called God 'his own Father,' and this meant that he was "making himself equal with God" (cf. 10:33) ...Jesus was not teaching that God is the Father of all. The Jews would have accepted that. His claim meant that **God was his Father in a special sense.** He was claiming that **he partook of the same nature as his Father.** This involved equality. So the Jews held that he was guilty of blasphemy..." (Leon Morris, *NICNT: John*, p. 280)

D. The second much more intense reaction (v. 18)

- "...The expression "My Father" [Jn. 5:17]...was not the way Jews usually referred to God. Mostly they spoke of "our Father," and while they might use "My Father" in prayer, they would qualify it with "in heaven" or some other expression to remove the suggestion of familiarity. Jesus did no such thing, here or elsewhere. He habitually thought of God as in the closest relationship to himself. **The expression implies a claim that the Jews did not miss.**" (Leon Morris, NICNT: John, p. 280)
1. Because he broke the Sabbath law
 2. Because he made himself equal with God
 - "Jesus' habit of calling God his father sounds like a blasphemous attempt to claim divine status (5:18; 10:33)...The human attempt to take God's place is the height of sin. Therefore, the Gospel must show that the opposite is true. **According to John, Jesus is not a man elevating himself to divine status but the one who has come down from heaven to make God known in a human life.**" (Craig Koester, *The Word of Life: A Theology of John's Gospel*, p. 86)
 - "Jesus justified his work of healing on the Sabbath by reminding the Jewish authorities that they admitted God worked on the Sabbath (Divine providence remained active on the sabbath, otherwise, all nature and life would cease to exist)...In claiming the right to work even as his Father worked, Jesus was claiming a divine prerogative. **He was literally making himself equal to God.**" (NET Bible)
 - "The Father continues to give life on the Sabbath, just as he does every other day of the week...For [Jesus' opponents] **the issue is not the premise that God works on the Sabbath. It is the inference that Jesus can do what God does.**" (Craig Koester, *The Word of Life: A Theology of John's Gospel*, p. 100)

III. Jesus' Defense (Jn. 5:19-30)

- "This discourse [Jn. 5:19-30] turns attention explicitly to **the person of Christ. This is a passage of critical importance**, the significance of which is not always realized. It perhaps lacks striking expressions like "the bread of life" or the "I am" sayings. But its central theme is crucial. **"Nowhere else in the Gospels do we find our Lord making such a formal, systematic, orderly, regular statement of His own unity with the Father, His divine commission and authority, and the proofs of his Messiahship, as we find in this discourse."** (Leon Morris, NICNT: John, p. 281)
- "The Jewish authorities accuse Jesus of claiming to be God. He answers them by showing that just as the Father does certain things as God, he does them too." (Craig Koester, *Word of Life: A Theology of John's Gospel*, p. 37)
- "**In the Synoptic tradition** in such a situation Jesus defended his action by saying, 'The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath' (Mk. 2:28)...Jesus is...[saying that] he is Lord over even the divinely instituted Sabbath. **Here his defense rests on his intimate relationship with the Father**" (Leon Morris, NICNT: John, p. 280)

A. The unique relationship between the Father & the Son (vv. 17, 19-20)

- "He begins with a **very strong affirmation of community of action with the Father. It is not simply that he does not act in independence of the Father; he cannot act in independence of the Father. He can do only the things he sees the Father doing. There is a continual contemplation of the Father by the Son, an uninterrupted communion. The**

result of this is that it is the things the Father does that the Son does too, 'not in imitation, but in virtue of His sameness of nature.' (Westcott)." (Leon Morris, NICNT: John, p. 282)

- *"The implication is that what Jesus does would be impossible apart from the workings of God."* (Gail O'Day, *New Interpreter's Bible Commentary: John*, p. 496)

1. The Son cannot act in independence of the Father (v. 19)

- *"What work does the Son do likewise? The same that the father does – and the same that the Rabbis recognized as legitimate works of God on the Sabbath. (1) Jesus grants life (just as the Father grants life) on the Sabbath. But as the Father gives physical life (i.e. birth) on the Sabbath, so the Son grants spiritual life (5:21). (2) Jesus judges (i.e. determines the destiny of people on the Sabbath), just as the Father judges those who die on the Sabbath, because the Father has granted authority to the Son to judge (5:22-23)." (NET Bible)*

2. God the Father loves God the Son (v. 20)

- *"The disclosure of the relationship between the Father and the Son is taken a step farther. **The Father loves the Son** (the tense denotes a **continuing, habitual love; the Father never ceases to love the Son**)..Jesus' actions do not proceed from merely human motivation. He acts only in accordance with the divine revelation."* (Leon Morris, NICNT: John, p. 285)

B. The Son's work is the Father's work (vv. 19, 21-22, 26-27)

1. The work of giving & sustaining life (Deut. 32:39; 1 Sam. 2:6; 2 Kgs. 5:7)

- *"If God continues to work on the Sabbath, giving & sustaining life, so does Jesus."* (Gail O'Day, *New Interpreter's Bible Commentary: John*, p. 494)

2. The work of judgment (Gen. 16:5; 18:25; Jud. 11:27; Psa. 43:1)

- *"In the Old Testament judgment is so typical of God that he can be spoken of as '**the Judge of all the earth**' (Gen. 18:25), and '**the LORD the Judge**' (Judg. 11:27)." (Leon Morris, NICNT: John, p. 286)*
- *"The main point to notice in [Jn. 5:22-30] is that **all future judgment is highlighted basically as good news, not bad. Why so? It is good news...because the one through whom God's justice will finally sweep the world is not a hard-hearted, arrogant, or vengeful tyrant but rather the Man of Sorrows, who was acquainted with grief; the Jesus who loved sinners and died for them; the Messiah who took the world's judgment upon himself on the cross.**" (N. T. Wright, *Surprised By Hope*, p. 141)*

C. The Son is honored (worshiped) as the Father is (Jn. 5:23; Isa. 48:11)

D. The expected human response (vv. 24-25, 28-29)

- *"It is **only because his relationship to the Father is what he said it was, only because he is what he claimed to be, that he is able to bring the new birth...**" (Leon Morris, NICNT: John, p. 281)*
- *"Our eternal destiny is determined by our attitude to him. Those who are spiritually dead hear his voice, and those who have heard it live. 'Hear,' of course, means 'hear with appreciation,' 'take heed.'" (Leon Morris, NICNT: John, p. 285)*

1. *“Truly, truly”* is a rhetorical device to signal the introduction of an important new saying
2. In the present: hear the voice, believe, & eternal life (vv. 24-25; Jn. 3:16-17; 6:33, 40, 44, 47, 50-58; 10:10; 17:2-3)
 - *“The Gospel also recognizes that **true life begins while the heart beats and the lungs breathe, yet it has a future that extends beyond physical death.** Therefore, true life is often identified as ‘eternal life’ (Jn. 3:15; 4:14; 5:24). **Eternal life begins now, in faith, and it continues beyond death...**Life in the present can be called ‘eternal,’ as faith brings people into relationship with the eternal God. People are not inherently immortal, and even those who believe will die. Yet the relationship with God is not terminated by death. God does not abandon believers but gives them a future through resurrection.”* (Craig Koester, *The Word of Life: A Theology of John’s Gospel*, p. 32)
 - *“**Human beings are created with a need for life...**This inherent need for life makes the matter of God inescapable. **The issue is not whether people will seek life [but] where their pursuit of life will take them and how this relates to what God is doing.**”* (Craig Koester, *The Word of Life: A Theology of John’s Gospel*, p. 32)

3. In the future: hear the voice & live (vv. 28-29)

E. Jesus seeks the will of the Father (v. 30)

IV. What Should You Do When You Hear Jesus' Voice?

- A. Where can you hear Jesus' voice?
- B. Believe & receive eternal life
- C. Work together with God