



Believe

JOHN

MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Community Group Material:

Bible Reading: John. 5:17-24

Jesus responded to them, “My Father is still working, & I am working also.” ¹⁸ This is why the Jews began trying all the more to kill [Jesus]. 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 & *shows him everything he is doing*, & he will show him greater works than these so that you will be amazed. ²¹ And just as the Father raises the dead & 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 & believes *him who sent me* has eternal life & will not come under judgment but has passed from death to life... (5:17-24)

SUMMARY: John’s Gospel was written in...the ancient Middle East. Consequently, we often miss what’s obvious to the original audience. Jesus’ ‘apprenticeship analogy’ is a case in point. Apprenticeship enabled sons to learn their father’s trade; Jesus and Joseph, his (putative) father, were carpenters. Now Jesus applies this metaphor to his ongoing relationship to God, his Father. It’s a unique window into the intimate Father-Son relationship of showing/seeing, loving/submitting, hearing/ speaking, doing/imitating. Jesus calls his disciples into apprenticeship to him. This isn’t the ‘Great Commission’ of discipleship; it’s the “Great Invitation’ into an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. Let’s all become apprentices to the risen Jesus!

QUESTIONS:

1. Many NT scholars agree that Jn. 5:19-20 allude in some way (parable, metaphor, allegory) to a 'family apprenticeship' relationship, like that between Jesus & Joseph in carpentry (Matt. 13:55; Mk. 6:3) or the disciples—James & John with their father, Zebedee in the fishing business (Mark 1:19-20)
 - a. What are the various aspects of that apprenticeship relationship covered in the phrases of Jn. 5:19-20?
 - b. How does Jesus (as God's Son) apply these various aspects to his relationship with God his Father?
 - c. How do these aspects justify Jesus' healing of the disabled man at Bethsaida's pool on the Sabbath?
2. John's Gospel tells us repeatedly that God the Father sent Jesus (God the Son) e.g. Jn. 5:23b, 24. What additional insights do Jn. 5:19-20 add to that? What more are we told about the Father-Son relationship? Discuss.
3. 'The Jews' accused Jesus of "making himself equal with God" (5:18) John 5:19-24 are part of Jesus' response to that charge. How would you summarize Jesus' overall response?
 - a. "YES. I *am* making myself equal with God the Father."
 - b. "NO, I'm not making myself equal with God; I'm less than Him."
 - c. "NO, I am (already) equal with God; I don't have to "*make myself*" equal with Him." Something else; try to express it...
4. If we accept that John 5:19-20 describe a kind of "apprentice" relationship between Jesus (as God's Son) and God his Father, how does this answer (in part) 'the Jews' charge that Jesus is "making himself equal with God" (5:18)?
5. Later in his Gospel John suggests that Jesus called his disciples (& us) into an "apprenticeship" to him e.g. Jn. 15:14-15
 - o Father -> Son -> Disciples: "You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ I don't call you servants anymore...I've called you friends, because *I have made known to you everything I've heard from my Father.*" (Jn. 15:14-15)
 - o "In John's Gospel, *Jesus is shown things by the Father, & he also shows these things of the Father to his disciples & others.*" –Benjamin Reynolds
 - a. If this is so, what are the implications for each of us of being "apprentices of Jesus"? Discuss
 - b. What's the difference between [a.] being a "disciple of Jesus, answering the 'Great Commission'" (Mt. 28:19-20) and [b.] being an "apprentice of Jesus" having a relationship with Jesus similar to Jesus' relationship with his Father (5:19-20)?