

The Most Startling Claim Ever Made

Scripture: John 5:17-24

Code: 1509A

Turn in your Bibles to John chapter 5 as we examine our Scripture for this morning. Now this morning's message is directly a sequel, as would be indicated by its place in the text, is directly a sequel to last Sunday in the sense that everything that Christ says in the passage for this morning, in fact, everything clear through verse 47 of this chapter, the end of the chapter, came as a direct result of the confrontation that was posed in the first 16 verses. So, unless you were here last week, you will not perhaps gain the entire concept of what is going on. Let me see if I can review briefly enough to give you a little bit of perspective.

Now we are entering in verse 17 upon a discourse by Christ Himself. He has just performed a miracle. Not anything extraordinary for Him, but it so happened that He did it on the sabbath. Now He did not break the law of God because the law of God made no particular specific mention of not doing good, rather Jesus Himself said the sabbath was to be used for good, not evil. And not only that, the sabbath was for man...Mark 2:27, not particularly for God. But when He did this deed on the sabbath, He stepped on the toes of the ecclesiastical rulers of the Jews who had added their own laws, who had decided that you couldn't do things like this on the sabbath, it was wrong.

Now Jesus purposely did this on the sabbath, performing this miracle, knowing full well that it was exactly the opposite of Jewish law, that He was breaking the law of the religious leaders because He wanted to provoke a confrontation with them. Now the basic thing that was keeping Israel in unbelief was its hypocrisy religiously. They were disastrously enmeshed in a hypocritical religion that blinded them to true religion. And it is true that if Christ ever reaches anybody, He first of all meets them at the point of their sin, reveals their sin and then when a man sees his sin, he sees the need of a Savior. And so before Christ could ever communicate with Israel in terms of salvation, He had to hit Israel at the point of sin.

So then, knowing that their sin was based in their hypocritical religion, He confronts them at that point by purposely breaking one of the rules of their religion and performing a healing directly on the sabbath day. The Jew now wants to know why Jesus broke this law. And Jesus replies in the discourse from verses 17 to 47 in effect this simple reply, "I did what I did because I'm God and that gives Me the privilege of doing it and I'm certainly not subscribed to your hypocritical religion."

So, in effect what happened was Christ confronted them and forced a confrontation that gave Him the opportunity to declare who He was. This confrontation gave Him that privilege. And in His defense of

His action on the sabbath, woven into the defense is a clear-cut statement that Jesus Christ claims to be none other than God Himself in a body, veiled in humanity. So then verses 17 to 47, this entire section, is Christ's own personal statement of His deity. And as such, it becomes one of the greatest Christological discourses in the Scripture. And the message this morning is going to be very much a theological message. Perhaps not in the vein of some of the practical messages that we give, perhaps not so much in terms of inspiration, but it is going to be factual and deal primarily with the person of Christ, who He is. But lest you think that is insignificant, let me hurry to say that it has to be the most significant thing in all the Bible, for if Christ is not God, then everything in the Bible is a lie. So we have to begin there. Consequently, this discourse this morning ranks number one in the matter of importance so far in John's gospel. As clearly Christ declares Himself to be none other than God.

And after all, doesn't this fit John's purpose in his gospel? Haven't we said that every page is a page geared to present Christ as God? John has said it. He's had other people say it. He's had miracles presented here that show He's God. He's had the insights of Christ into people's hearts to show that He is indeed God. He has even shown by the believing faith of certain Samaritans in Sychar that this must be God. He is again and again stating that this is the Son of God, God in human flesh. And now it is the very words of Christ Himself that corroborate that statement that Christ is God. And this isn't the last time Christ makes His claim, He makes it again and again. We'll see it again as we look at chapter 10. And so this is a very, very important passage. It is a very, very amazing passage because woven into this passage are claims and expressions to deity as Christ announces to the world and particularly to these Jews in His defense of His action that He doesn't need to defend Himself in any other way than to say "I'm God, I don't do what's wrong, I do what's right. And if there's something wrong, maybe it's not wrong with Me, maybe it's wrong with you." And that's the underlying message clear through this...I'm right, have you ever thought that you might be wrong? I'm right because I'm God. That leaves you little choice as to whether you're wrong or not.

Now it's amazing also to me that the claims of Christ here are so clear. They're...in fact, they're so clear that the Jews saw them...the Jews said, "Hold it, He's claiming to be equal with God." They got the message. And Jesus didn't back up and say, "No, hold it, no, I didn't say that." On the contrary, He said you're right, in fact I'll add a few more things to that. It's a very clear-cut claim on the part of Jesus Christ. And, of course, the claim provokes even more reaction than did the miracle. In verse 17 it says they wanted to kill Him because of the miracle but when He claimed to be equal with God, the more they wanted to kill Him.

And so, really the death of Jesus Christ comes as a result of what started here in John 5. Now it had been brewing for a long time. They were a little upset at Jesus when He cleansed the temple. They really weren't too much in love with John the Baptist, to say the least. And when they saw the shift of interest going from John the Baptist over to Jesus, that perhaps was one of the things that provoked Jesus to leave and go into Galilee. So it had been brewing for a while. And their rather mocking

hallow religion added to the problem and consequently when you come to this chapter, it's not merely a totally new thing, it's just kind of the opening of some kind of hatred that's been building. And when the man who had been healed went to the Jews and said it was Jesus. Instead of running to embrace Jesus, they ran to take His life.

And so, as we come to this particular verse 17 and 18, we come to the climax of hypocritical religion as they endeavor to kill the very one who is their Messiah so steeped are they in a hollow meaningless legalism. Incidentally, it might be interesting for you to note that they attempt to kill Christ ten times without success. Finally on the eleventh time, conjunction with the Romans, Christ is crucified. But not until the eleventh attempt. And you can classify those first ten under this, "My time is not yet...what?...come." And Christ, when they finally did crucify Him, made the statement, "No man takes My life from Me, I lay it down of Myself." But nevertheless, they began to seek to murder Christ.

And somebody asks the question, "Well, if Christ knew that they were going to murder Him, why did He provoke this?" Well, the answer is He did know they were going to do that and He provoked it because He came into this world for really one reason, and that was to die. He knew what would happen. He knew they would take His life. He knew He would die. And step by step He moved toward His death. You see, He had to die because the wages of sin is death. And if He's going to bear the sins of man, it's going to cost Him His life. He came to die. And so He provokes this confrontation fully aware that ultimately it would result in His murder execution. He knew for the most part the Jews would reject Him. But He gave the message anyway. You say, "Why?" Well because, you see, first of all, He knew there were some that would come to Him, didn't He? He knew that. "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me," John 6:37 says. He knew that some would come, so He presented Himself. But secondly, and catch this, Christ presented Himself not only so that some would come...now watch this...but so that all would be responsible. You see, when He told them who He was, they all became responsible for that knowledge.

And so He has set up the confrontation. He has stepped on their ecclesiastical toes and broken one of their petty little rules, evidently. And now He's going to defend Himself. And, brother, what a defense He gives. And this defense is nothing more than a claim to be equal with God. And instead of letting them indict Him for breaking their law, He tells them, in effect, I'm God and if you accuse Me, you're impugning the morality of God, see. He just turns the tables.

Now in our section, verses 17 to 24, we're going to find five claims to equality with God. Christ makes five claims to being equal with God. He claims to be equal in person, equal in works, equal in power and sovereignty, equal in judgment and equal in honor. And this is nothing more than a declaration or a statement that He is God in every area, in every aspect, completely equal with God.

All right, let's notice first of all that He is equal with God in His person, verses 17 and 18. Verse 17 says, "But Jesus answered them," that is the Jews who were accusing Him of breaking the sabbath, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." Now what is He saying here? Well, again, underlying this simple statement is some profound truth. He is saying, in other words, I am God and so like God I work even on the sabbath.

Now what is He implying here? Well, He's making a tremendous statement. First of all, He's implying that the seventh day, the sabbath, wasn't for God's benefit, it was for man. And that's exactly what He said in Mark 2:27, as I told you, the sabbath was made for man. He is saying, in effect, God doesn't stop on the seventh day and neither do I. Why? Imagine for yourself why. Because I'm God. Now it's true, you say, that God rested on the seventh day from His creation, that's correct. The Bible says, I think it's Genesis 2:3 that God rested on the seventh day and sanctified it and blessed it and it was set apart. But it nowhere in the Bible says that God rests on every other seventh day. And, in fact, it says that He rested from His creation on the seventh day and doesn't say that He rested from everything. God didn't rest on the seventh day, now watch this, God didn't rest on the seventh day because He was so tired after those six days of creation that He just had to sit down for awhile. God doesn't get tired. There's no capacity in God for weariness. And the only reason that God rested, as the Bible indicates it from His creative work, was to set a divine example for man to rest one day a week.

God's work didn't stop on that day. He rested from His creation but He didn't rest from His upholding, did He? If He had stopped His upholding work, the world would have fallen apart one day after it was created. He didn't rest from His love. He didn't rest from His justice. He didn't rest from His governmental work. He didn't rest from His providential work, the sun rose, the tides ebbed, the wind blew, the grass grew, the animals walked and reproduced. He only rested from the creative work because God never rests, the sabbath wasn't intended for God. In fact, I think it's Isaiah 40:28 where Isaiah makes the statement that the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth faints not, neither grows weary. God doesn't get tired. He doesn't need a seventh day to rest. And so, Christ in effect is saying God works right straight through the calendar and so do I, and that's tantamount to claiming equality with God. He is in effect saying those laws are for men, not God, claiming deity. And thus does Jesus claim to be absolutely equal with God.

But I just think, and maybe because it's because of my from time to time sarcastic nature, but I just think there's a little bit of irony here in this statement, too. And this is pure MacArthur, for what it's worth. As Paul Harvey says, "This is for our 'what it's worth' department." Now I think that here He is implying again this underlying current of turning the tables on the Jew. The Jews are accusing Him, but I think here we have this underlying current again of Christ flipping the table back again to them. Now watch this and to me it appears to be almost a bull's eye shot right at the heart of these Jews because Christ is saying, in effect, "I did something good on the sabbath, something that God would do." Listen, if God would do this on the sabbath, and you say it's wrong to do it, that makes you

better than God. You have a higher morality than God.

And so, Jesus is really saying, "Why are you accusing Me of doing wrong by deeds of mercy on the sabbath, God keeps working." Oh, ouch! See. You turn off goodness and you turn off mercy, God doesn't. Have you got some new revelation that God doesn't know? I mean, maybe you'd like to ask God to stop on the sabbath. Come to think of it, maybe your laws are higher than God's. Well, maybe you're even higher than God yourself. And, I mean, that was right at the heart of the issue for these Pharisaical, you know, legalists who were standing around in line waiting for the first vacancy in the trinity anyway. And this must have hit them right where they lived because Jesus in a sense, in a rather under-current here that I read here, maybe I'm reading into it, but I think it's there, is saying to them, "Are you superior to God?" And Jesus had made the statement, "Is it right to do good on the sabbath or to do evil? Does God turn off mercy on the sabbath?" So He was right to do good because God did it.

Well, needless to say, that kind of a double-barreled reply which claims deity and turns the tables on them and puts them in a position of impugning the morality of God, that kind of a double-barreled reply caused a reaction that could well have been expected. And in verse 18 we see their reaction. "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him." Jump back to verse 16, it says the Jews there persecuted Him and sought to slay Him. Now back in verse 18 they sought the more to kill Him because He not only had broken the sabbath but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. And you know, I think they really loved this. I think they got so blessed when He said that. They were incensed and furious but I think there was a kind of a happiness there because it would have been a little hard to believe that they could kill somebody just for breaking a sabbath law. But when Christ claimed to be God, they said, "Oh, we've got Him now. That's blasphemy." And they weren't stuck with a rather thin reason for His execution.

And so, they sought the more to kill Him, not only because He had broken the sabbath, He did good on the sabbath, horrible thing, but said also that God was His Father. Now notice this, making Himself equal with God. They got the message, didn't they? They knew what He was claiming. It was obvious. And if Christ wasn't equal with God, He would have said, "Hold it, men, you've got it wrong. I didn't mean to claim that." But he doesn't do that because He is equal with God and that's what He claimed.

Now let me say this and this is the key to everything. This is probably the key to everything in terms of salvation, besides just this passage. Listen to this. It would have been...mark this...it would have been the greatest blasphemy that ever came out of the mouth of anybody for Jesus Christ to claim to be God and be a liar, would it not? There's no greater blasphemy than that. And you know what? That's exactly what the Jew said. You can't claim to be God, that's blasphemy. And for anybody who does claim to be God and isn't, it is blasphemy. That's why in John 10:33, don't look it up, just listen, it says this, "The Jews answered Him saying, For a good work we stone Thee not." But watch this,

"But for blasphemy and because that Thou being a man makest Thyself...what?...God."

When Jesus Christ stood up, mark it in your mind, and said, "I'm equal with God," He was either God or the greatest blasphemer that ever opened his mouth. And when some person comes along and says, "Well, Jesus was just a wonderful human teacher," phift...no way. And when somebody comes along and says, "He was an elevated human who fanned the flame." No way. And when somebody comes along and says, "Well, He was a great religious hero." Listen to me, Jesus was either Christ or He was Antichrist. That's it, take your choice. And don't come with any of the patronizing dribble that He's a good teacher. Good teachers don't claim to be God. Blasphemers do. And God does. And there's no middle ground.

And it's interesting today, the liberals come along and say, "Well, Jesus certainly wasn't God." And you say, "Well, right there it says that He claimed to be God, I and the Father are one." Well, that's no problem, give me my scissors, hmph, hmph. We just...that one's not there...that's...we don't believe that one. And then you talk to the cults, and every day when I go to the Post Office now they're out there passing out whatever...and every day I go there and they're always going through this same thing. And you say, "Well, Christ claimed to be God." And they say, "No He didn't, you just don't understand the Greek, see." They say, "Let me show you how the Greek..." and they go through all the little Greek, see. He was sort of a sub-god. I said, "Well, that's very interesting...very interesting. How much do you know about the Greek?" "Well, it's Greek to Greek, see, you know." And I always say, "Well, that's interesting, I've had seven years of Greek and that doesn't appear to be that way to me." See. I don't know Greek that well, I just had seven years of it, you know. But anyway, they always look sort of dumbfounded when you say that. And I say, "Well, how about this passage? What's the Greek in this one?" Ha-ha, had a little problem there.

But either they deny the reality of the Scriptures, they just throw inspiration out or they say, "Well, you don't understand the original." See, and they just chew it up. I'll tell you something. Bless their hearts, those poor blinded Jews had something the liberals and the Jehovah's Witnesses didn't...don't have today. They had the common sense to hear what Jesus said and hear it like He said it. They said He's making Himself equal with God. They were right. And so they had two options. Either He was a blasphemous liar or He was God and they chose the first option and decided that He was a blasphemous liar and sought to kill Him.

And may I say to you this morning that you have that same choice identically and no other middle ground, only that choice? Jesus Christ is either the blasphemous liar that they claimed He was or He's the Son of God, take your choice. They're the only options you have. And listen to me, if He's the Son of God, then you better listen to what He said and you better do what He asked because He becomes determinative for your soul for time and eternity. And if He's not the Son of God and He's a blasphemer, what are you doing here?

And so, Jesus claims to be equal with God in person. Secondly, He claims to be equal with God in His work, verses 19 and 20. And here He states that He and the Father work together. And what's the implication of this text? I think it's this. He's saying...He could back off and say, "Well, no, I'm not really equal with God," but instead He gets more forceful and says, "Verily, verily I say unto you, amen, amen, I most solemnly swear to you." See, I mean, He gets more emphatic. "You're right, I am and on top of that let me tell you this," see. Really strong, strong language, in "verily, verily I say unto you" in verse 19. Fearless, forceful, emphatic...listen, He says, I'm telling you the truth, I solemnly assure you of this.

And then He says this in verse 19. "The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father do, for whatever things He doeth, these also doeth the Son in the same manner." Now what's this? You know what He's saying? This is beautiful. He's saying, "Listen, you can't accuse Me of breaking the sabbath, you can't accuse Me of breaking God's sabbath. You know why? I don't do anything independently. Everything I do are things that God the Father showed Me to do." You see that, do you get the point? In effect He's saying if you're accusing Me of breaking the sabbath, then you've got to accuse God of breaking it too, because I only do the things that He shows Me. Do you see how He's turned the tables on him...on them? Rather than accept their accusation of His guilt, He turns it around and says, "You know what you're guilty of? You're guilty of blasphemy. I'm not the blasphemer, you are." See. He's saying you're the ones that are accusing God of sin. He says I don't act independently of My Father, I don't do anything on My own. In the matter of the observance of the sabbath, I do what I do because My Father does it. And He really hit them where they were.

So, He turned the tables and He makes them guilty of blasphemy rather than Himself. But here Christ testifies to the fact that He doesn't act independently, He acts as God acts cause God tells Him what to do and God shows Him in this beautiful union of Father and Son in one.

Now there's a thought here that's germane to the entire concept of Christ's person that we need to pick out of this verse. And that is this thought of God and Christ being one. The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He sees the Father do, whatever things He does, the Son does...and all this. And John 10 where He says, "I and the Father are one." And this constant union that He talked about in John 17. And there needs...we need to just mention this, that again and again and again Christ claims to be one with God...see. This is part of His person. And in the Bible, in the New Testament gospel account, when we see Christ in action we are seeing God in action. When we hear Christ talk, we are hearing the words of God. When we see Christ do something, it's the deed of God. When we read the mind of Jesus, it's the mind of God. Because Christ does not act independently of the Father. They act in conjunction together in everything and to accuse Christ of doing something wrong is blasphemy because it is accusing God. And so He declares their oneness. He and God are one indivisible, inseparable, eternal...and yet in the vast mystery of that oneness, they are distinct. Don't try to understand that, it wasn't meant for you to understand, praise the Lord we don't have to

understand it, we just need to believe it.

And so, Christ says, "Don't accuse Me because if you do, you're impugning the morality of God and that is blasphemy." And so He says we're one. Then He kind of gives us another thought into this oneness. In verse 20, He shows us that this oneness is indeed a unity of love. "For the Father loveth the Son and showeth Him all things that He Himself doeth. And He will show Him greater works than these that ye may marvel."

Now somebody might come along and say, "Okay, okay, I'll buy that, Christ is God. But maybe as the Father, the Father knows a little more than the Son, see. So maybe we're not really impugning God when we impugn You, maybe You're doing it in ignorance, Jesus. Maybe You broke this law and God didn't inform You about it." Look now with that in mind, look at verse 20, "For the Father loves His Son and shows Him...what?...all things." There is no such thing as ignorance in the trinity.

Now I want you to catch that word "love" because it's kind of a beautiful word. It's not the word agape, which is the word usually associated with divine love. It's the word phileo the word for affection. And here you see the beauty of this Father- Son relationship as almost an illustration. He is saying, "I have affection for My Son." Oh certainly we could think of...there's a divine agape all consuming, all pervading love there, but more than that He's implying an affection, a warmth, much like you would hold toward your own son. There's not only a love of a father for a son, but there's an affection there, a companionship. And here is implied that God says, "In My affection for the Son, I show Him all things and He does the things He sees." So Christ is not in ignorance. Christ's not acting ignorantly of God's will. The Son knows everything. There's nothing He doesn't know because God has revealed it all to Him. There are no secrets in divine companionship, see. The Father and the Son have affection, there's a companionship there. And in companionship they share all knowledge that exists.

Can you imagine that Christ knows everything? Have you ever thought about that?

Unbelievable...unbelievable. I just happen to have something in my pocket I want to show you. It was my birthday this last week and Paul Sailhamer, our youth director, said to me, he said, "You know, you have every Bible there is but," he says, "I found one Bible you don't have and I got it for you. It's the smallest Bible in the world." And here it is, it's the whole Bible on microfilm, right there, the entire Bible right there...on microfilm. They tell us today that we can't even store knowledge anymore on microfilm, it's too large. We've got to store it on molecules. We're learning so much. You know something? Can you imagine all that God knows? Can you imagine that? Christ knows everything, all things that God knows have been revealed to Him in that divine companionship of that oneness between Father and Son. Some kind of a celestial divine microfilm, where every possible piece of knowledge is embedded in deity. There's nothing He doesn't know.

And then He adds this little postscript at verse 20. Again He's painting the picture that He's equal in works, He does what the Father does, He's equal to the Father's works. And then in the end of verse 20, "And He'll show Him greater works than these that ye may marvel." God's going to even open up greater works for Me to do. I'm going to see Him do greater things and I'm going to do them. He's saying to those Jews, "You think you've seen something in raising that man who was sick for 38 years, you haven't seen anything yet." I mean, it wasn't too long after this until He began to raise the dead, was it? And then it wasn't too long after that until He rose from the dead Himself. And then it wasn't too long after that until He just took off from a mountain and went straight up...no elevator, no escalator, no skyhook, no nothing. And I don't believe it's going to be too long before He's coming back. And when He comes back He's going to come in glory and the world's going to marvel. And then He's going to set up His Kingdom and then He's going to...and then He's going to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. At the end of that time He's going to judge all the men of all the earth who haven't been godly.

Listen, the works of Jesus Christ at this point...He was just scratching the surface of the infinite marvels that Christ was going to do as the Father revealed them to Him. They hadn't seen anything yet. Nothing at all. And Jesus said without the Father, I don't do anything either. You see, so our relation to Christ, the oneness we have in Him, is a very beau...has given us a very beautiful example in the oneness of Christ with His Father. If you push that far enough, we're all tangled up with the trinity. It's kind of nice, isn't it? Indwelt by the Holy Spirit, one with Christ who is one with the Father, hidden with Christ in God...what a oneness. But oh how that puts a burden on our hearts to be what we are. We have a oneness positionally, how wonderful to be in practice what we are in position.

And so, Christ claims to be equal with God in person and works. Very quickly, because these remaining ones are simple, He thirdly claims to be equal with God in power and sovereignty, verse 21, "For as the Father raises up the dead and giveth them life, even so the Son giveth life...that's His power...to whom He will...that's His sovereignty." He is equal to the Father in power and sovereignty. Can you imagine what this must have done to those Jews to think...to hear Him say this? As God raises up the dead, so do I. See, what a statement. What a statement.

And then when He went ahead and proved it, they still didn't believe it. Jesus Christ has equal resurrection power with God. And commentators debate back and forth...does that mean physical resurrection? or spiritual resurrection? Is He talking about the physical resurrection? Or is He talking about spiritual life?

What's the difference? After I had been done reading everybody's opinion I decided...listen, my God has both powers, why quibble over which one He's talking about? God not only raises the physically dead, He raises the spiritually dead, does He not? And if you're talking about power, what matters which area the power's in? All you want to know about is the resource itself. God has the power to give physical life. Genesis says He breathed into the man and the man became a what? Living soul.

In Deuteronomy 32:39, God says, "I kill and I make alive." First Samuel 2:6, the thought is, "The Lord killeth and the Lord maketh alive." I think Paul says in 2 Corinthians 1 about verse 9, that it is God who raises the dead. God has power to raise the physically dead.

But don't be mistaken, God has power to give spiritual life too, doesn't He? Why of course, He did it in the Old Testament. He does it today. God has the power of spiritual life. And Jesus makes the same claim. He says I have that same resurrection power. And you remember I told you last week that He showed it with Lazarus...and if He hadn't said, "Lazarus" when He said come forth, every grave in the world would have released its victim...there's so much power there. He had resurrection power. He could raise the dead.

You say, "Well, just isolated experiences." Yeah, well that's because the Rapture's not here yet. You just wait till you see what goes on there. And then if you just take a peek down at verse 28, you might notice, "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice." Huh...isolated incidents? Everybody that ever died, mark my words, everybody that ever died in the history of the world is going to come out of the grave. I'd say off hand that's resurrection power. Some unto the resurrection of life, others unto the resurrection of damnation.

But Christ not only has that power physically, but He has it spiritually. Jesus said, "I am come that you might have...what?...life and have it more abundantly." Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." Jesus said, "You will not come unto me that you might have life." "In Him was life," said John. The Apostle Paul said it in Ephesians 2:1, he says, "And you hath He made alive who were...what?...dead." Christ has the power of spiritual life. You want to know? It's just this simple, folks, nobody is really alive unless Jesus Christ has made him alive. That's why the world is populated by spiritual corpses, insensitive to God. Only Christ can make them alive. And so, He claims to have equal resurrection power with God. If that's not a claim to deity, brother, I don't know what is.

Then at the end of verse 21 He claims to have equal sovereignty. It says, "The Son giveth life to whom He will." You say, "Does that mean that the sovereignty of Christ is at odds with the sovereignty of God? God's willing this and Christ is willing this?" No. It means fantastic truth that the will of God, the will of Christ, the sovereignty of God, the sovereignty of Christ are in total agreement, John 6:37. "All that the Father gives to Me shall come to Me." In other words, all that the Father wills to come to Me will come. My side of it, "Him that cometh to Me...what?...I'll in no wise cast out." Why? Because it's My will to keep him. The Father's will gives them, My will keeps them. Are they the same? Perfect oneness. There's no disagreement.

You say, "Ah, wait a minute. In the garden...Jesus prayed, 'Not My will but Thine be done.' What was He saying there?" Well, there's a lot of angles on what He was possibly saying. But I don't think that He was saying don't do what I want, do what You want. That's incongruous with His nature.

What was He saying? I think He was saying this: Father, there is no will in me but Thine...not My will, My will is not there, it's not My will, it's Your will...Father, let this cup pass from Me. That's a thought, but it can't be entertained because it's not My will, it's Your will. He's not setting Himself at odds with God, He's merely saying that there is no other way but God's will. And so Christ claims equal power and equal sovereignty.

Fourthly, He claims in verse 22 to be equal in judgment. "For the Father judgeth no man but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." Now the Old Testament tells us that the Lord God is the righteous judge of all the earth. And God now has committed all His judgment to Christ. So they're equal in judgment. If God didn't have confidence that Christ thought like He did, He wouldn't give Him judgment. You know, in America no two judges agree. You can't find any agreement at all on everything. But God turns over all judgment to Christ. Why? He's perfectly confident that Christ's judgment is exactly like His. And Christ willingly accepts all the privilege of judgment because He knows He'll never cross-grain God. Perfect agreement in judgment.

And then fifthly, and we're skipping some thoughts there, in verse 23, He claims to be equal in honor with God. "That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father who hath sent Him." Now that is really an important statement. All men should honor the Son as they honor the Father. You Jews think you're honoring God, are you so foolish to think that you can please God by killing His Son? Is that what you want to do? Kill the Son and then please the father? You better think again. The only way to please the Father is to honor the Son. That's what He said. The only way to please the Father is to honor the Son because He deserves it. And if you don't honor the Son, you're not honoring the Father.

A few weeks ago somebody came to me and said, "Can you believe in God without believing in Christ?" I said yes, but it's ridiculous because what you're doing is trying to honor the Father without honoring the Son and you've misread both the Father and the Son. "Well, could a person be saved if they didn't know about the Son and just believed in the Father?" No, because unless you honor the Son, you dishonor the Father. They go together. That's why John said Christ is the life that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. And knowledge of the Son is important.

Then you notice in verse 23 the little word "all." I think it's the word pantos, all men, all should honor the Son. You know, it's interesting that some day all men will. You either honor Jesus Christ now in love by receiving Him as Savior, or some day you're going to honor Him in judgment...some day. Because some day every knee is going to bow everywhere in the universe is going to bow before that Son. But that day it's going to be a bow that comes as a result of a blow of judgment. You have your choice. One way or another, you'll honor the Son, either in this life time in love, or in judgment in the future. You either honor the Son willingly or you will honor Him unwillingly...one way or another.

And so, Christ claims equality of person, works, power, sovereignty, judgment and honor. And may I say to you that this is a shocking startling blasphemous claim by an unrivaled mad man, or else it is true. The Jews decided to believe it was blasphemous. You have that same choice. And I want you to notice verse 24 and see what your choice determines. "Truly, truly I say unto you, he that heareth My word and believeth on Him that sent Me...notice My word and Him that sent Me, both the Father and the Son, believe on both...hath everlasting life." That's the gift for those who believe. "And shall not come into judgment but is passed from death unto life."

There's the two options. If you're going to take the side that Jesus Christ was the world's greatest liar and blasphemer, then your inheritance is death and judgment. If you receive Christ as Savior, it's life and eternal life. The choice is yours. The same choice that confronted those Jews. I pray to God you choose better than they.

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