

In chapter 5:1-18, we saw a miraculous healing ignite murderous hostility.

In response to Jesus healing a man on the Sabbath, the murderous intentions of the Jewish leaders are first exposed.

Look with me beginning in verse 1 as we review the *occasion*: **“After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda (house of mercy), having five porticoes. 3 In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered,”**

Skip over the textual variant, that as we discussed, I don’t believe is part of the original. Moving on to verse 5, **“A man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years.”**

Then in verses 6-9 we saw the miraculous compassion of Christ

6 When Jesus saw him lying *there*, and knew that he had already been a long time *in that condition*, He *said to him, “Do you wish to get well?”

Verse 7, **“The sick man answered Him, “Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me.”**

Verse 8, **“Jesus *said to him, “Get up, pick up your pallet and walk.” 9 Immediately the man became well, and picked up his pallet and *began* to walk.**

He picked up his pallet, which was basically a bed of straw, carried on the shoulder. Kind of like our version of a beach mat with a little more padding.

He wasn’t carried away or stumbling away in a state of ambiguity, like many so-called miraculous healings today. No, rather he walked away in a completely restored state, with the strength necessary to carry his mat.

What’s interesting about this account is that there is nothing here about this man’s faith. In fact, later on when the Jewish leaders ask him who did this, *this man doesn’t even know Jesus’ name*.

As we’ve talked about recently, faith may have been *present* in several cases where a healing occurred, but in no way was it an absolute *prerequisite*.

Now, when we consider how many afflicted people were present on this occasion, and how Jesus narrows in and heals one of them, we might be left thinking, “What a random, arbitrary healing?”

But, as we saw, that was not the case at all. The end of verse 9 gives us the transition into what this narrative is really about. **“Now it was the Sabbath on that day.”**

With these words, John is showing us that the focus and point of this particular story is *above, it is greater* than the sick man and his healing.

It is ultimately about the hostility that is developing between Jesus and the Jewish leaders.

Then secondly, we looked at the misguided concern of the Jews.

Verse 10, **“So the Jews were saying to the man who was cured, “It is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet.”**

Not only is this demonstrating a misguided concern in response to what had just happened, but also a misunderstanding about the Sabbath.

As we talked about, if we were to examine the Sabbath passages in the OT, we would find that the type of rest, the type of burden-bearing that was forbidden, was connected to one’s area of labor, their trade. How one provided for themselves and their family.

In other words, the rest was that of resting from one was doing the other days of the week. The Sabbath was never about idleness. Inactivity. Not doing *any* kind of labor or work.

And so when the Jews say to this man, it is not permissible, it is not lawful for you to carry your pallet, they are right that he is violating someone’s authority, and in that sense doing something unlawful.

But it is not *God’s* authority he is violating. It was *theirs*.

How does the man respond? Verse 11, **“But he answered them, “He who made me well was the one who said to me, ‘Pick up your pallet and walk.’”**

Again, notice he has no clue who Jesus was. Doesn’t even know his name. But is very willing to deflect the attention off of himself and onto whoever it was that healed him.

Verse 12, **“They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Pick up your pallet and walk’?”**

Here is where their misguided concern becomes evident. They are not asking the right questions. What would certainly be better questions to be concerned about?

Who healed you?

How did he heal you?

How have you made well after suffering for so long?

You would think that religious officials, self-proclaimed worshippers of God would be rejoicing that this man was made well. Rejoicing in the mercy of God in the restoration of one afflicted. Praising God for this healing.

Instead, what are the Jewish leaders preoccupied with? What is their ultimate concern? “Who is the man going around telling people to violate our authority?”

All they can see, all they're concerned about is that there's been a breach of our authority. That's all they are interested in.

Verse 13, **“But the man who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had slipped away while there was a crowd in *that* place.”**

Again, the man had no idea who Jesus was. He experienced healing *despite* his ignorance and lack of faith.

Why did Jesus slip away into the crowd after he healed the man?

Well, it could be that he wanted the Jews and everyone to come to a conclusion about the man's restored state, *before they knew who did it*.

Because once they knew who did it they might try to reason it away or claim he wasn't healed. So he wanted it to be established first and foremost that this man was healed before he involved himself again.

Then thirdly we saw the merciful caution of Christ.

Verse 14, **“Afterward Jesus *found him in the temple and said to him, “Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you.”**

Now, this isn't saying repent because if you don't repent you will have a new physical afflictions and they will be worse than being paralyzed.

No rather than that idea, I think Jesus is shifting the focus for this man from the *physical* to the *spiritual*.

In other words, your ultimate problem was not your physical affliction, and therefore your restored physical state is not the solution to your ultimate problem.

Don't allow your healing to lead you to be complacent in your sin. Because something far worse than being paralyzed is in your future if you don't deal with your sin – namely God's eternal judgment.

Don't be content with your physical cure, you are in need of a spiritual cure as well. Deal with your sin so that you don't suffer eternally.

How does the man respond to this merciful caution? Verse 15, **“The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.”**

Granted, this may not be a sinful act in and of itself, but it does show us that the warning was not taken to heart. And furthermore, it reveals that he is on the side of the Jews.

He goes straight to the Jews and gives them the identity of the man who had healed him. Disregarding the merciful caution of Christ about the condition of his soul.

Then fourthly we saw the murderous contempt of the Jews

¹⁶ For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath.

The idea is, from this time forth, the Jews were continually pursuing Him. That's what persecuting means: to pursue with harassing or oppressive treatment.

And this persecuting was unwarranted because Jesus never violated the actual law about the Sabbath, but He did violate their laws. The laws and traditions of the Pharisees.

And one of the ways he demonstrates that he has not violated any part of God's law is what He says in verse 17, **“But He answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.”**

With one profound statement, He addresses the Sabbath accusation and at the same time identifies Himself with the Father.

The Jews would speak on occasion about *our* Father. But for an individual to use this language in a public context like this, “my Father” that implies a claim that the Jews would not miss: He is claiming equality with God.

And what He's saying is this: if I am violating the Sabbath by doing what I just did, then God violates the Sabbath by continuing to work until now.

How can He say that? What's He saying here? Well, consider the initial Sabbath passage in Exodus 20:11: **“... in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day.”**

In what way did God rest on the 7th day? He rested from his *creative* works, He rested from what He was doing on the other six days.

But that doesn't mean that God is idle, inactive, not doing any work on the Sabbath.

He didn't create anything new on the 7th day, but what has He always done on the Sabbath day?

He has sustained and directed His creation providentially. He has been working redemptively in saving sinners and sanctifying the saints.

The Sabbath is not a cessation of any and all kinds of labor or activity or work.

But that's what the Pharisees had turned it into. The Pharisees took the Sabbath to mean, idleness, inactivity. No labor, no work of any kind.

And Jesus is pointing out the inconsistency right here: You have no issue with the Father working on the Sabbath, why are you challenging me?

Whatever factors justify the Father's work on the Sabbath, justify my work on the Sabbath. I do not break the Sabbath any more than My Father does.

This amplifies their persecution of Him as we see next in verse 18, **“For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.**

Note what the unbelieving human heart does. When you can't deal with the soundness of one's argumentation, when you're not willing to interact sincerely with one's arguments, you just dig in, scream louder, get angrier.

You work all the more to get rid of the person who is arguing soundly. That's what we see with the Jewish leaders.

No willingness to interact with His statements, instead, they were seeking all the more to kill him.

And right here is where we left off last time. Drawing your attention back to that last part of verse 18 – that is such a clear and undebatable reference to the deity of Christ.

But despite its clarity, there are attempts by some to try to get around this language by claiming that “yes, the Jews drew this very conclusion from the words of Jesus, that is indeed why they were seeking to kill him, but they were *misinterpreting* what He meant.

He wasn't really claiming equality with God, that He and the Father are one in essence.

How do we respond to that? How do we *really* know whether Jesus was indeed claiming equality with God, or that the Jews misunderstood what He was saying?

Well, there are several indicators here in the text itself that demonstrate He was indeed claiming equality with God.

First, it is undeniable that He was indeed, repeatedly, calling God His own Father. Which *was* the equivalent of claiming equality with God. That's why the Jews drew that conclusion.

Secondly, He never corrects them or says they have misunderstood His claims about this.

In fact, in any passage that references His deity and his audience responds with shock or hostility to His claim, He never corrects them and says “I actually wasn't claiming that, you misunderstood.”

But thirdly, and I think most convincingly, is what happens next in verses 19-23. Our passage for this morning.

Look at the beginning of verse 19 as it begins with an inference: **“therefore...” “Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them,”**

So, in *response* to the Jewish leaders and the escalating persecution on account of Jesus breaking their Sabbath and claiming He was equal with God, here is how Jesus responded to them.

And what we don't see in verses 19 and following is this: “You guys got it all wrong. You misinterpreted what I meant. You're putting words in my mouth, you're taking my statements out of context and drawing unwarranted conclusions. I'm not claiming to be equal with God.”

No, rather than correcting their conclusion, instead He gives a little sermon *defending* his statement, defending his equality with the Father.

Let's read the passage we'll be in this morning: **¹⁹ Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless *it is* something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.**

²⁰ For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and *the Father* will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel.

²¹ For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.

²² For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, ²³ so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

In this passage we are going to see 4 characteristics of the Son of God which demonstrate his deity:

The first characteristic of the Son of God which demonstrates his deity: His Divine Actions, verse 19.

¹⁹ Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, “Truly, truly...” That's a common formula Jesus uses to emphasize that this is as absolute and certain as it gets.

“Truly, truly I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself,”

These words are the opening and primary response to the Jews seeking to kill him because he was violating the Sabbath and making himself equal with God.

And as we just noted, he lets the conclusion stand. He doesn't correct their assumption and say they got it wrong.

But He does begin in an interesting way as He highlights something He *can't* do. Why would He began the defense of his own deity in this way?

Well notice two terms in particular in verse 18: **making Himself**. As in *making Himself* equal with God.

In verse 19, those two same words are repeated here in his opening response. Notice the word "do" as in **The Son can do nothing**. That's the same word for "make" in verse 18.

And then the repetition of the word **Himself**. **The Son can do nothing of Himself**.

So with the repetition of these two words, we can see that He's responding first and foremost to the charge that He is independently claiming an authority or identity for Himself.

That He himself is manufacturing this, that He on His own accord is setting Himself up as a rival God.

And so He begins by indicating I'm not a competitor with God, I'm not a replacement or a rival.

It impossible for the Son to take independent, self-determined action that would set him over against the Father as another God.

And so, while rejecting equality with God, He does reject any notion that he made himself equal with God. That this originated with Him. That He is setting Himself up as an alternative to the one true God.

The Son can do nothing of Himself. But He doesn't leave it at that. Now He states positively what He does do.

Middle of verse 19, "**unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.**"

There is an unequivocal claim to deity. No one but God Himself can claim to do *everything* that the Father does.

It's very important to notice the language here: it is not that of *imitation*. As in, the Son imitates the Father.

Imitating God is something that even we can do in some respects.

We are His image bearers, there are some attributes of God that we are called to be as well: To be like Him in His mercy and love and forgiveness and holiness, just to name a few examples.

But that is not at all what Jesus is saying here. Rather than the language of *imitation*, this is the language of *duplication*.

That is to say, equivalency. The works of the Son correspond in all respects to the works of the Father.

Notice that language again: *Whatever* the Father does, the Son does. There is an equality and unity with the Father.

There is no mere creature saying these words. There is no being other than God who could say these words truthfully. This is a statement that only God Himself could make.

Notice however, that at the same time in this passage, the Son presents Himself as one subordinate to the Father.

the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.”

That obviously contains the idea of subordination. The Son is pictured as completely obedient to the Father. Taking His cues, so to speak, from the Father.

This is entirely consistent with what we see in the gospel accounts, especially in the gospel of John.

The Son submits to the Father in matters of creation and redemption. And does so in a way that does not imply inferiority, or alter their equality of being.

Now, let's consider a few implications of this statement here in verse 19. First of all, remember, in context, this is his opening response to the charge of breaking the Sabbath and blasphemy. Making oneself equal with God.

And by saying that He can't act independently but does *only* and *all* that He sees the Father doing, what is the implication of this statement?

I could only be guilty of sin if the *Father* is guilty of sin. To indict the Son of God with wrongdoing is to indict the Father with wrongdoing.

Additionally, this is a great passage to defend the *impeccability* of Christ. The doctrine that Christ Jesus *could not* have sinned.

Because notice again what Jesus says here: The Son is unable to do anything of himself, but does only and all that He sees the Father doing.

And so, the only way the Son could be guilty of sin is if He the Father is guilty of sin.

A second implication to consider would be the *comprehensive awareness* of the Father that can only be true of someone who is God Himself.

Only one who could conceivably do whatever the Father does must be as great as the Father, as divine as the Father.

Notice that language there in verse 19, **“He sees the Father doing... whatever the Father does.”** There’s no limitation to it.

There’s an implied proximity and fellowship and comprehensive awareness that could only be true of a divine being.

This is hearkening back to the opening of John’s gospel: 1:1, “The Word was *with* God.” Seeing all there is to see. Knowing all there is to know.

And so the point here is that when the Son is acting, He is acting out of an absolute unity and absolute consistency and equality with the Father.

That brings us to the second characteristic of the Son of God which demonstrates His deity: His Divine Awareness.

What was the implication, as we just noted in verse 19, now becomes explicit in verse 20.

Verse 20, “For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing;”

What we just saw in verse 19 is that the Son does whatever he sees the Father doing. This is the explanation for how verse 19 can be true.

But just how is it that the Son has that type of knowledge and access to all that the Father is doing?

The explanation is in verse 20. Beginning with the Father’s love for the Son.

If you’re looking at a Greek text, you’ll notice that the word for “love,” as in, “the Father loves the Son, is not *agape*, but *phileo*.

And the distinction between those two terms would be the ultimate, self-sacrificing love for the highest good of its object, that’s *agape*.

And the affectionate, familial love of *phileo*.

There is a biblical distinction between these two terms, however, there is also a considerable degree of overlap between them.

So much so that they do appear to be used interchangeably at times. *Especially* when it comes to the love within the trinity.

In fact, take a look back at John 3:35 and we find a very similar statement. **“The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand.”**

Notice the similarities: Just like our passage, it is the Father loving the Son and as an expression of that love there is an entrustment of all things into His hands.

But here in chapter 3, it is the *agape* word for love that is used. And so John appears to use the two terms, at least in this case, interchangeably.

Back to 5:20, the point being here is that the Father and the Son are bound together in an unbreakable bond of love.

The Father never ceases to love the Son. It’s a present tense verb. There always has been and continues to be an eternal, holy, perfect love.

By the way, just a quick side note - if you’re in Christ, the Father loves you with this very same love. Turn over to John 16.

This is a passage that shatters the notion that the Son of God is the loving member of the trinity and the Father is merely the angry, wrathful member of the trinity.

Notice what Jesus says to His disciples in verse 26: **26 In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will request of the Father on your behalf; 27 for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came forth from the Father.”**

You don’t come to me so that I can go to the Father on your behalf and twist His arm to be favorable to you because He’s indifferent to you or just perpetually angry with you on account of your sin.

No, the Father *himself* loves you. When we are united with Christ, we experience this very love. [[see also Romans 8:39, 1 Cor. 3:21-22]]

Back to our passage in chapter 5:20, notice the consequence of the Father’s love for the Son.

Middle of verse 20, **“and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing.”**

This point is critical to note because it demonstrates for us that what the Son is seeing in verse 19, is not the seeing of eavesdropping.

When we eavesdrop, we’re secretly leaning in and gathering information that is supposed to be private. We really don’t belong in the context.

But if all we had was verse 19, that would be one possibility we're left with. The Son is just really curious and has developed the skill of acquiring information that He's not necessarily supposed to have.

He's peeking over the Father's shoulder, so to speak, and the Father is reluctantly allowing it.

But verse 20 informs us that this is not the case at all. **"The Father loves the Son and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing;"**

The Father shows, present tense. Continuous action. A free and full showing of all that He himself is doing. Carrying the implication that the Son does the things He is shown.

And so no one could claim that the Son doesn't see the full picture. No one could make the accusation, "Yes, you may do what you see the Father doing, but your knowledge is limited, you don't have access to everything, and therefore you're not equal with Him."

But that is not the case. Notice again the relationship between verse 19 and verse 20. The Son does whatever He sees the Father doing. The Father shows the Son everything, all things that He himself is doing.

This means there is nothing in God, the mind of God the Father that is not in the Son.

All illustrations regarding the trinity and the relationships within the trinity do fall short at one point or another, because God is in a class by Himself. There are no comparisons or illustrations of something or someone who is incomparable.

But with that disclaimer in mind, let me attempt to illustrate this as we think about this principle at work in human relationships.

Whoever you love the most, you show the most to. In other words, the more intimate and trusting and affectionate the relationship, the more you reveal. The more you give access to.

Think about the different levels of access you give people in your life depending on your love and familiarity with them.

Complete strangers don't get the same access to your personal life and home that close friends and family have.

But close friends and family don't get the same access to your personal life and home that your spouse has.

Because the greater the love, trust, and familiarity, the less secrets there are, and the more you show.

And with God and the love within the trinity, it is a perfect, holy, infinite love. The Father keeps no secrets from the Son. There is no restraint, no limitations existing between them.

AW Pink refers to this trait as the *equality of intelligence* that there between the Father and the Son.

I think this is another helpful implication for us to consider. Pink writes this: “What would be the use of discussing with an illiterate person the mathematics of the fourth dimension?”

“What’s the value of taking a child in the first grade and “showing” him the solution of a problem in algebra?”

“Who, then, is capable of understanding all the ways and workings of God? No mere creature.”

“Fallen man is incapable of knowing God. The believer learns but gradually and slowly, and only then as he is taught by the Holy Spirit. Even the unfallen angels know God’s mind but in part—there are things they desire “to look into” (1 Pet. 1:12).”

“To whom then could God show the full counsel of His mind? To no mere creature, for the creature however high in rank *has no capacity to grasp it.*”

He continues, “The finite cannot comprehend the infinite. Is it not self-evident, then, that if the Father shows the Son “all things that himself does” He must be of the same mind as the Father?”

Notice in the rest of verse 20 that this ongoing showing of the Father to the Son will continue.

“and *the Father* will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel.”

We’ll talk about the *greater works* in a moment, but notice that last clause there, “so that you will marvel.”

This is not the marveling of being impressed and excited and amazed. Jesus is not referring to Himself here as some sort of magician who goes around performing his works so that everyone can stand in awe and impressed of who He is.

Rather, John’s use of this word indicates that this the marveling that is probably a combination of two ideas: astonished and disturbed.

Let me show you why I conclude that: I want you to notice the two times so far John has used this word.

Look back at John 3:7. As Jesus is interacting with a self-righteous, confused Pharisee named Nicodemus, He says these familiar words:

7 Do not be amazed (that’s the same word – do not marvel) that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’

How is the word being used there to describe Nicodemus? Astonishment, confusion, being disturbed.

Look at John 4:27. This is when the disciples came back and found Jesus, a Jewish Rabbi speaking privately with a Samaritan women at the well:

“At this point His disciples came, and they were amazed (they were marveling - same word) that He had been speaking with a woman, yet no one said, “What do You seek?” or, “Why do You speak with her?”

Again, notice, this is not the marveling of being impressed, this is the marveling or being astonished and disturbed.

Back to our passage, this marveling therefore is used of those who are not discerning what is really going on. They are shocked and disturbed.

And so Christ says to his enemies here in our passage, You’re going to marvel. You’re going to be dumbfounded, astonished, disturbed, as my ministry continues. As I continue to reveal things about the Father and the Son.

What is going to cause them an even greater degree of being astonished and disturbed?

Again verse 20, **“the Father will show him greater works than these.”**

What will be a greater work than what Christ just did on the Sabbath, miraculously healing a man?

Well, many things, but in the following verses indicate a few specifics. The Son will carry out the prerogatives of God Himself.

Examples of what these greater works are now detailed for us in verses 21-22.

That bring us to the third characteristic of the Son of God which demonstrates His deity: His Divine Authority.

First represented in His sovereignty over life.

Notice verses 21: **“For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.”**

The Jews Jesus was speaking to would wholeheartedly affirm and amen the first part of this statement.

The Father raises the dead and gives them life. That is the prerogative of God alone.

Thinking of passages like Deuteronomy 32:39, **“See now that I, I am He, and there is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded and it is I who heal, and there is no one who can deliver from My hand.”**

Furthermore, look with me at Ezekiel 37:11, **“11 Then He said to me, ‘Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off.’ 12 Therefore prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God, ‘Behold, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel. 13 Then you will know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, My people.’”**

Israel had the hope of the resurrection. Believers who didn't see the kingdom promises fulfilled in their lifetime, will be raised to new life and reign with Christ in the land of Israel. [[see also Daniel 12:2]]

But the main point for us to consider in this passage here in Ezekiel is reiterated for us in verse 13: you will know that I am Yahweh. How will you know? When I have opened your graves and caused you to come out.

God raises the dead and gives them new life.

Back to John 5:21, **“the Father raises the dead and gives them life,”**

Again, there's no problem with that statement. But that's not the full statement. Because the language at the beginning at verse 21 is the key. Jesus is making a *comparison of equivalency* here.

Notice the language: **“For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, thus, even so, in the same way, the Son gives life to whom He wishes.”**

This is an implicit claim to deity. It would have far more palatable for the Jews if Jesus had ended this sentence with, **“to whom the Father wishes.”**

Then one could argue that Jesus is no different than a prophet like Elijah or an apostle who had miraculous gifts.

Elijah raised a child to life from the dead in 1 Kings 17.

The Apostle Peter raised a woman named Dorcas back to life after she had died from an illness, Acts 9.

So maybe Jesus is no different than a prophet or an apostle.

Well, in both of those cases, if you read the details of the account, Elijah and Peter had to appeal to the Lord in prayer. Indicating they had no power in themselves to raise the dead. It was not ultimately up to them.

They were merely the human instrument through which God determined to raise someone from the dead.

But the language here in our passage indicates that the Son of God is not a mere instrument, in which another ultimately determines how it is used.

That last clause there in verse 21 is crucial: “**The Son gives life to whom He wishes.**” [[same word in 1 Cor. 15:22]]

No mere instrument can say that. No mere instrument has the authority to determine who to give life to.

This statement could even be an allusion to the miraculous work that had just occurred earlier in this chapter. The work that produced the need for Jesus to give this sermon defending his deity.

If you think back to the earlier verses of chapter 5, this sovereign prerogative of Jesus was on full display in healing the paralytic. It illustrated his absolute sovereignty. Why?

Well, remember verse 3 – there were a multitude who were ill. Many there suffering physical affliction. And the Son narrowed in on just one, and restored Him to newness of life.

And the same way He works in the physical realm, He works in the spiritual realm.

All of humanity is dead in sin and in need of transformation. In need of new life. But the Son of God gives life to whom He will.

Now, remember, this statement at the end of verse 21 cannot be divorced from what’s already been said in this passage.

“to whom he wishes” does not mean that He acts in self-willed, independence from the Father. But in total unity with the Father. Because the Son only does what He sees the Father doing.

Next in verse 22, His divine authority is highlighted in his right to judge. Verse 22, “**For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son,**”

Again, judgement belongs to God alone. No need to turn there, but Genesis 18, Abraham is appealing to the Lord to not annihilate Sodom and Gomorrah. Asking the Lord to not wipe away the righteous with the wicked.

And Abraham appeals to the justness of God, with the familiar words in verse 25, “**Shall not the judge of all the earth deal justly?**”

The creator of the earth, the creator of mankind, is the judge of all the earth, the judge of mankind.

Here in our passage, the Son of God reveals that the work of judgment has been entrusted to Him.

Now, as we are working through this passage, and we are seeing language being used with regard to what the Father does, what the Son does, working in unity with one another, differing roles and responsibilities being highlighted...

I think a brief word here on the trinity and the differing roles that exist within the trinity is in order.

First, these things are going to be hard for us to grasp, hard to comprehend. And we should expect it to be that way.

God is eternal, in a class by Himself. A singular God who exists eternally in three distinct persons.

Therefore, we should not expect to come up with analogies and explanations giving us clarity with every mystery and tension that exists within the trinity.

But again, with that said, I think one of the ways we can be helped with is by considering God as creator.

The OT begins with the words, "God created the heavens and the earth. In the NT, the Son of God is revealed to be the one through whom all things were created. John 1:3, Colossians 1:16.

How would we answer this question: Is the Father the creator or is the Son the creator? And the answer is of course both.

Both can appropriately be referred to as the creator. God created the world through His Son. [[Hebrews 1:2]]

Well, in the same way, God the Father can rightly be referred to as the judge, while the Son has been entrusted with carrying out that judgment.

God the Father judges through the Son. In fact, this is the exact language we see later on in Acts 17:30:

"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, 31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

So in that sense, all judgment is given to the Son. The Father is not uninvolved, in the same way He was not uninvolved in creation.

Let's look at one more passage to see this relationship. Philippians 2:8, **"Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 For this reason also, God (that's the Father) highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,**

Notice, God the Father highly exalted Him. And freely gave, freely bestowed on Him a name.

In this context, it is a name, a title, that makes Jesus exalted to the highest degree. What is this name?

Well, it is a name or title that was given to Him to acknowledge what he has achieved in His work on earth.

A name that indicates sovereign authority over the earth. It's the name Lord.

This becomes clear as we keep going in verse 10, **“so that at the name of Jesus (the name belonging to Jesus, it's a possessive – Lord) every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord...**

The point is, after his death and resurrection, God the Father put Him forth in a position of recognizable superiority and authority over all creation.

Back to our text in John 5, there is a specific purpose for which God the Father has entrusted all judgment to God the Son.

That brings us to a fourth characteristic of the Son of God which demonstrates His deity: His Divine Adoration

Verse 23, “so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.”

The word “Honor” appears here most likely because that of judgment, being a judge was just referenced. You give honor to a judge.

Four times that word for “honor” is stated here. And you can't get around this language if you are trying to deny the deity of Christ.

The same esteem, reverence, worship, the adoration given to the Father, is the same esteem, reverence, worship, adoration that should be given to the Son.

This applies to no creature. This applies to no highly exalted being who is higher than everyone else in creation, but still less than God.

No, whatever the Father is worthy of to receive, the Son is likewise worthy of.

The Son is equal in activity with God. Equal in awareness of the things of God. Equal in the authority of God, in giving life and judging.

Verse 23 is simply the logical consequence. The Son is equal *in honor* as well.

Notice, it is the Father's purpose for the Son to receive this honor. Which means, you can't honor the Son too much.

It is impossible to make too much of Christ Jesus. To worship Him too much, to esteem Him too much.

Why? Because it is impossible to make too much of God, to worship Him too much, to esteem too much.

Furthermore, there consequences for anyone who tries to make a distinction between the Father and the Son with regard to honor.

Notice the second part of verse 23 again: **"He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him."**

I was having a conversation recently with an unbeliever. And I eventually had the opportunity to ask him this question:

Where do you believe you stand with God? What do you believe God's verdict is of you? Are you right before Him or are you condemned before Him?

And the response, I've always believed in God. I know I deserve only judgment. I know the importance of faith and trusting God.

And in his answer, I noticed that something incredibly important was missing. And that was any mention of the Son of God, Christ Jesus.

And so, I was able to ask him, "Who is Christ Jesus?" Because where you stand on Christ Jesus determines where you stand before God.

His response, "I respect Jesus. I hold him in high regard. I don't doubt that He lived a good moral life. I don't doubt He died on the cross for our sins. But I'm not convinced He was God in human flesh."

And so, we opened up to this passage and we read verse 23.

And I was able to tell him, "Your honor the Son as equal to God, you get both the Son and the Father."

"You reject the Son as equal to God, you also reject the Father."

Listen to John 15:23, **"He who hates Me, hates My Father also."**

The more you love Christ, the more you love the Father. The more you honor Christ the more you honor the Father. And the reverse is true as well.

I like what one author said here: “If our Savior here did not intend to teach that He ought to be worshipped and esteemed equal with God, it would be difficult to teach it by any language.”

We’ve seen 4 characteristics of the Son of God which irrefutably demonstrate His deity:

His divine actions

His divine awareness

His divine authority

His divine adoration

He possesses what can only be true of one who is God