

Introduction: There are about 4 times in my life when I've had to hear some news that I just wasn't ready to hear. In that moment, it feels like nothing could have really prepared you to have someone sit you down and tell you something unthinkable. And I've also had the burden of having to deliver that news to others a few times.

Normally, I can't wait to see how Jesus tears into the religious leaders of his day—confronting their false Oral system of extra oppressive laws. Confronting their hypocrisy and their corruption. But in our text today I had an oddly empathetic experience with these religious leaders in this one respect: I know what it's like to hear news that you almost can't hear. Jesus will begin to tell them something about himself—his one-ness with the Father that nothing in their previously religious experience could possibly have prepared them for.

Segue: Last week we established that when Jesus comes through and graciously meets our needs—it will reveal the nature and character of God, and also reveal the state of our hearts as well. God will call us to a decision—to a response.

Jesus broke their man-made laws designed to protect and safeguard the Written Sabbath Law in Moses. In doing so he shows a preference and priority to God's written word—not man-made traditions.

When accosted about the issue, Jesus now goes one further. He challenges their understanding of the nature of God himself.

Main Idea: God is actively, continually working to redeem lost people; and as God's unique Son, Jesus alone is authorized to carry out God's plan of redemption.

The passage we're reading has a summary statement—which summarizes the previous story of the paralytic and the following declaration of Jesus.

John 5:18

¹⁸ This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

Definition of "Equal": means equivalency of quality or essence.

The rest of this passage, Jesus responds to an implicit charge of law breaking and blasphemy.

What does Jesus say to indicate that he and the Father are equal?

1. The Father and Jesus share the same mission—the work of redemption.

God's work of creation has ceased, and on day 7 in Gen. he entered an ongoing day of "rest" from the initial work of creation.

God's Ongoing Work: The active, ceaseless outreach to a hurting, dying world.

But God the Father, in a very real sense, has been working ever since to enact a plan of redemption. If you want to know what the entire Bible is about—the whole thing—one unifying theme running through the whole book—God's plan of redemption of lost human beings. People made to be image-bearers who have fallen into sin and condemnation. God set into motion a plan to liberate man from the prison of sin and the sentence of hell.

God chose one man to bring forth a nation, and from that one nation he brought forth one man, who would bring forth a new nation and people made up from all tribes, ethnicities and languages. One family, in Christ, united forever in the Spirit.

God's work of redemption

5:17: "In his defense Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working." ...¹⁹ Jesus gave them this answer: "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.²⁰ For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed.²¹ For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will.

Jesus uses the metaphor of apprenticeship with a curious twist. Normally, a son apprenticing in a Father's trade would walk, watch, and then work alongside the Father. The Father would give the boy increasing degrees of responsibility, commensurate with the son's development and progress in learning and applying the trade. But in this case Jesus makes it clear that he *cannot do anything* that the Father doesn't "do" (the Greek word here means "make")—and the Father has shown the Son "All that he makes/does"—stressing the completeness of their unity in knowledge. And the miracles of healed paralytics, blind, deaf and dumb will be eclipsed by God's greater work of redemption and resurrection...

But unlike the ancient prophets, Jesus is no mere intermediary, like a priest; He is no mere spokesman for God—he is representational of God because he is incarnational of the life, authority, and very nature of the almighty God. *Think of the difference between how Jesus performed miracles and how the OT prophets performed them.* Their power to perform the miraculous was entirely derivative—they were commissioned, called, and enabled to do the Father's work. But Jesus doesn't ask God the Father for miracles—he simply speaks and it is so. He simply waves his hand or touches a

contaminated infectious leper—and they are healed. At his word mighty miracles are performed because his will and his mind is in perfect synchronization with the Father. While they are distinct in person, they are one in nature and when the Father wills it, Jesus wills it. When the Father reveals it, Jesus reveals it. When the Father works, Jesus works.

But Jesus didn't just come to perform some magic tricks in order to wow them. HE came to arrest their attention, to confront their false beliefs and religion, and to show them the way of life.

2. The Father and Jesus share the same message—the Word of eternal life.

The work of redemption is captured in the message of the Gospel. The “word” of salvation/life.

John 5:22-26, 28-29

²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever **hears my word and believes** him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. **(He doesn't come with “Thus saith the LORD, he comes as the LORD thus saying!** Eternal life has two meanings, dependent on the object: In God's case it is life without beginning or end—in the believer's case it is simply life without end. But also the life of the Kingdom age, which is resurrection life with no end.

²⁵ “Truly, truly, I say to you, an **hour** (time texts can be metaphorical) **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 as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted **(official word of authorization: “In him was the life”)** the Son also to have life in himself. **(It has to do with the authority and right to offer people sonship).**

²⁸ Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. (Jesus is going to raise everyone, and all will stand before him in judgment “Doing good” is hearing and believing/ **John 3:15 “everyone who believes has eternal life...For God loved the world in this way, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in Him has eternal life. John 3:36 “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them.”**

Let's look at the Word/Message the Father entrusted to the Son. Jesus quotes Is. 58/61

Luke 4:18-19 ““The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim **good news to the poor.**

He has sent me to proclaim **liberty to the captives**
and recovering of **sight to the blind,**
to set at **liberty those who are oppressed,**

¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

Folks, there is a “word” a “message” that many people are just not willing to “hear and believe.”

- **We must acknowledge our spiritual poverty. The poor in spirit**—if you say you are spiritually rich in good works, righteous living—if you attempt to appeal to a “balanced ledger” or a weighted scale—just hoping that the good outweighs the bad—you can never know salvation. If we cannot admit our poverty of spirit, admit that we bring nothing to the transaction; no righteousness, no goodness of our own—we will never, ever experience his grace and salvation.
- **We must acknowledge our spiritual blindness. (Jn. 9)**—if you say “we can see” then you remain in your spiritual darkness.
The Spirit enlightens the mind to the truth and we must admit that we are fumbling around in the darkness trying to find our way without the light of the Good news of Jesus.
- **We must acknowledge our captivity to sin.** you cannot heal a person who thinks they are well. You can't offer an unwell man a remedy so long as he thinks he is **in no need**.

Summary: All of those who are willing to confess they are blind, poor, powerless and held captive to sin—all of those who reach out for life in the Son...

The Life of the Father is in the Son—they share the same mission, the same inherent life and ²⁵ **“an hour is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.**

3. The Father and the Son share the same merit—the worthiness of glory.

They both share the same work (mission), the same word (the message), and the same worth (the merit and worthiness of worship and honor).

Let me show you that in the Scriptures systematically.

5:22-23 “For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, ²³ that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.

Definition of Honor: “To show great esteem, high regard; to merit as worthy.” I want to show you what the NT says about the honor of God and by comparison the honor of Christ:

Romans 1:21 “For although they” (then human race) “knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.” **Failing to show God the unique and singular honor, ascribing his unique worth...**

1 Tim. 1:17 “To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only **God**, be **honor** and glory forever and ever. Amen.” **The only one who is worthy of our honor, glory, and worship is the King of the ages, immortal, invisible—eternal and infinite God of the universe.**

Hebrews 2:9 “But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with **glory and honor** because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of **God** he might taste death for everyone.” **Jesus is crowned with the same glory and honor that God has had from eternity—it is a glory and honor displayed in his substitutionary death on a cross.**

Rev. 4:9-11 ⁹ And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

¹¹ “Worthy are you, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they existed and were created.”

In a continuation of this picture of the One true God being honored and worshiped”

Rev. 5:12-14 “In a loud voice they were saying:

**“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and praise!”**

¹³ Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying:

**“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be praise and honor and glory and power,
for ever and ever!”**

¹⁴ The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

Jesus shares the same mission-work of the Father who has been working all along—to redeem and save lost, hurting, dying people.

Jesus shares the same message-Word of the Father-- There is no salvation unless we trust in the message of the Gospel—God saves sinners by grace who “hear the word and believe it”

Jesus shares the same merit-worthiness of the Father. There is no salvation unless we embrace Jesus as the Son of God and God the Son from eternity—embodied and incarnate in a human life.

Jesus said, that true faith produces a heart that “marvels in wonder” at the works of God.

Awe and Fear—did you know that you can fear something that you don't have an ounce of awe and reverence for—and you can be in awe of something that you don't fear.

A gun vs. the Arora Borealis.

The Waterfall in Belize. Standing in front of it we experienced the fear of its power, and the wonder and awe of its beauty and grandeur.

Summary Questions

1. Do you struggle to accept the fact that God calls us “sinners” and “rebels” who stand condemned in judgment apart from Christ?

2. Are you willing to acknowledge your bankruptcy of personal righteousness? The fact of your blindness to the truth apart from the Spirit? Captivity to sin with no recourse—no hope for release apart from grace?

3. Are you willing to embrace Christ as the Lord of the Sabbath, giver of the Law and Covenants, equal in nature and mission with God the Father?

4. Can you accept the assurance of salvation that comes from Christ alone?