

The Son Also Gives Life – Part 1
John 5:18-23
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Turn with me in your Bibles to John 5. We'll continue to look at the fifth chapter of John's Gospel. We've been here for several weeks now. We saw that this chapter unfolds for us first with a healing of Jesus. We looked at what Jesus did a couple of weeks back. He healed a paralytic. He healed a man who had been diseased for 38 years, a man who could not help himself, a man who was weak and helpless. The word 'sick' means 'unable', completely unable to do anything for himself. We then looked last time, at not so much what He did, but when He did it, and the whole issue of the Sabbath. What Jesus did really was heal a paralytic on the Sabbath and it brought about persecution. The Jews became enraged with Him and began persecuting Him because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. They believed He was violating God's holy Sabbath, contradicting the will of the Lord. That was the charge that they made against Him. We looked at last time the first part of His answer or defense to that was to say the Sabbath regulations, a stunning answer, unique in the Gospels, this particular instant. He healed many people on the Sabbath, recorded in the Gospels, but this one event, He responded in a unique way. He said, "The claim that I've violated the Sabbath does not apply because God works on the Sabbath. The Father has been working, is working, and I also am working." What had been a groundswell of opposition becomes a flood of rage, murderous rage, on the parts of the people we'll see. We're going to start reading in Verse 16 to set the context, but today we focus on Verses 19-23.

What we see in these verses is that Jesus, rather than soften His message in the face of this opposition, doesn't moderate His message at all. He launches into a discourse 29 verses long, Verses 19-27, Jesus' discourse, in which He boldly declares the nature of His oneness with God. In this passage, we have not just a defense, but really an invitation into the inner sanctum as it were, into the heart, the very heart of God. This passage, Jesus takes this opportunity with so much interest. People are looking, "What is He going to say to open up and unveil?" as it were. Almost the holy of holies, the veil pulled back as it were, in this discourse, so that we can see something that man has not seen heretofore. And what that is is essentially the mindboggling mystery of the Trinity, the fact that God is three in Person and one in substance. Let's begin reading at Verse 15 and I want to read through Verse 23 of Chapter 5 of John's Gospel.

John 5:15-23:

15 The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. 16 For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. 17 But He answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working."

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.

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.

Let's pray together:

Father, as we come before Your Word, and this passage in particular, Lord we are made so aware of our inability to understand, even to contemplate the mysteries of Your essence and Your character. We pray that Your Spirit might help us. That You might take this Word and apply it to our minds and our hearts, and in this time unveil for us the glory of Who You are. That we might truly stand in awe of You and love You more, in a more consuming way. We pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

We find in this passage that we are plunged headlong into some of the deepest waters of the Christian faith. For this passage causes us to look at the Doctrine of the Trinity. This is deep water, but though this is deep water, we must not think that this passage calls us to some kind of abstract, theological musing, kind of an ivory tower of theoretical reflection. No, this Doctrine of the Trinity is of the utmost practical importance. This subject addresses the most important and most basic questions of life, the most fundamental realities of life. Who is God? What is

He like? What does He want from me? This passage that deals with these mysteries is answering those deep questions in a very basic, fundamental way.

The Son of God, as He's dealing with this opposition, first about the opposition to the charge of His opponents that, "You violated the Sabbath." And He says, "No, I haven't violated the Sabbath because I'm God." And they understand that He's claiming to be God when He says in Verse 17, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself and working." It says in Verse 18, for this reason they were seeking all the more to kill Him because He was not only breaking the Sabbath, but was also calling God His own Father, and making Himself equal with God. They understood clearly that Jesus was making an assertion of deity. Not mere man, He is fully man and fully God. He's stating that. He's making that clear. Here He seems to be continuing His defense. In fact, the verb in Verse 19, "Therefore, Jesus answered," is the same identical word of Verse 17, "He answered them." The word 'answer', I mentioned last time, *apokrinomai* (ἀποκρίνομαι), in Verse 17 and 19 is the only time it's found in the particular tense and voice in the entire Gospel of John. The idea carries great legal overtones, that He's offering a defense and something of a verdict at the same time. The charge has been leveled, He offers a defense which is itself a verdict because He is, as we find out as the passage unfolds, He is not only the One Who's charged, in reality, He is the judge of all the Earth. So He speaks with authority.

But He's responding to a charge, and in Verse 19, the charge is somewhat different. Now they understand that He's claimed to be God, and now they are, in their minds, and Jesus understanding what's in the hearts of these opponents, and the hearts of those who were even open to this self-revelation. Those whose eyes are wanting to understand, hearts are wanting to understand. He wants to clarify for them the nature of God. "When I say that I and the Father are working, I am not God in some way that people might understand to be a polytheistic way." He's going to explain His deity in relation to the rest of the Godhead, in particular to the Father. He is defending Himself against misunderstanding, and this is a valid concern because a faithful Jew would have understood from the Old Testament. The great emphasis throughout the Old Testament is the oneness of God. "**Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!**" That's the Shema, the most important verse in the Hebrew bible according to Hebrew tradition, Jewish tradition. "**Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!**" He's not two, He's one! So we see that that theme is hammered away again, and again, and again, and the exclusivity of worship just to the one God. Isaiah 42:8, "I am the Lord. There is no other. I will not share my glory with any other." So there's glory reserved for one God.

Now what we come into and we have to understand, as God is revealing Himself in the pages of Scripture, He does so progressively to teach us Who He is, to reveal Himself to us, He does so progressively. This makes perfect sense. If God had revealed Himself as Trinity early on to those Jews who were surrounded, immersed in a polytheistic culture, that is, the people around them worshiped many gods. The Egyptians, for instance, had all kinds of gods. Depending on your particular need, you went to that particular god, that particular temple. Hinduism has taken it to another level, but it's that kind of idea. You've got to deal with a particular deity, and that's what Paul encountered when he went to Athens, wasn't it? All the idols that were there, all of the gods, and they were so concerned not to offend any god that they had a particular idol to an unknown god. "There may be one we don't know about. We're going to put it there." Paul used that opportunity to tell them that the unknown God is really the only God. "You don't know Him at all but you need to know Him."

So the Lord, in His self-revelation reveals Himself in His unity. He emphasizes that with great stress throughout the Old Testament, but there are little intimations that His unity is perhaps more than meets the eye. You have in Genesis 1, the name for God, Elohim. It's actually, if you translated Elohim into English literally, it would say Gods. G O D S, because 'El' is the singular. 'El' means 'God' and 'Elohim' means 'Gods'. So all throughout Genesis 1 and all throughout the Old Testament, the name Elohim, whenever you read the word God in English, Elohim is behind it. Literally it says 'Gods'.

Now, how do we know that there's not only one God? Well, all throughout Genesis 1, and all throughout the Old Testament, you have Gods plural always taking singular verbs. All of the verbs in Hebrew and all the verbs in Greek have a number. In English, we're not quite that way. Some of our verbs do, mainly our being verbs have person and number. 'Hit', for instance. "I hit the ball." "You hit the ball." "They hit the ball." There is no difference in the verb hit depending on if it was me, you, or they. But in Hebrew and in Greek, and many of you who study other languages find that this is true in most languages, person and number are in every verb. The verb forms in Hebrew, throughout the Old Testament, beginning in Genesis 1, are all singular. 'Gods was' is what it was essentially. 'Gods was', 'Gods is', or 'Gods am'. It's singular, so the idea clearly is that there's this plurality in this singularity. You have in Genesis 1:26, the interesting deliberation of this one God. "*Let Us make man in Our image...*" You have that also in Genesis 11. You have just these little inklings that something more is there, but the dominant emphasis is the oneness. The oneness of God.

Then, in the coming of Jesus Christ, you have God begin to open up Who this one God is and what He's like in an incredible way. It's like the lights have come on full-blown. If you were in a time where it's dark outside and there is no moon, and you happen to be walking through your house. You're getting up in the morning and you don't want to wake anybody else up, so the lights are off and you're trying to make it to get to your shower without any lights on until you get to the bathroom and you close the door. There's an ottoman there. This is my personal experience. You're walking through an area that you think is clear because you can't see it, and BOOM, right? How nice to have a little dimmer. Just a little light. A tiny light. Just a little bit of moonlight from outside, or maybe the clock radio facing a little more the right way so I could have seen that thing. Well, the Old Testament is giving light so they're not groping in the dark. God is revealing Himself, He's giving light. If you think about it, the Bible is like man when he fell in sin was completely in the dark as it related to God. All of his thoughts are evil, all of his thoughts are wrong about God. He has no idea Who God is because he's died spiritually. When the Lord begins revealing Himself, and you can think of it as progressively turning the dimmer switch up brighter, and brighter, and brighter, all throughout the Old Testament.

But what happens is, when you come to the end of the Old Testament, the dimmer switch is still pretty far down because what happens in the coming of Jesus Christ is a radical turning of the dimmer switch to where the lights flood in. The floodlights come on and now we see God. That's what's happening throughout the New Testament and particularly, in a profound way, in John's Gospel. For John reveals to us, in the most profound way, the nature of the Trinity. Really the Gospel of John is almost a treatise on the Trinity, a treatise on the nature of God, three-in-one. We find the most clear understanding of the relationship of the Father and the Son in the Gospel of John here, beginning in John 1, and particularly in John 5. In fact, just to give you an example of how different it is from the other Gospels, Jesus' favorite designation of God in the Gospel of John is 'Father'. He speaks of God as His Father more than a 100 times in the Gospel of John. If you go to the other Gospels, the next closest is Matthew where He speaks of God as His Father 25 times. Now what's happening? Jesus is obviously is saying His Father all the time, but Matthew didn't record as much of that. Mark and Luke both have those references too, speaking of 'Father', 'My Father', but in John's Gospel, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, writing last, the Lord puts this particular issues as front and center. "I want to show them more clearly than ever, the nature of our relationship in the Godhead," what God is like. So more than 100 times, He speaks of God as His Father, and His favorite self-designation is 'Son'. He's the Son. He speaks 'Son of God', 'Son of Man', but 'Son' is the one He uses most.

Just 'Son'. That's a relational term. Just, "I am the Son. I am proceeding from the Father."

So this idea of the little by little progressive revelation now has come to full light in this Gospel. And as we come to it, we do come to deep water. We come to an opportunity to behold God in a way that is at one time enriching, and at the same time incredibly challenging. Because of the nature of the revelation, as I've studied this week and worked through this, I feel as if I'm sharing with Steven Gaines, our Assistant Pastor, before we pray on Sunday mornings, I feel like I'm standing on holy ground when I come to this particular passage. I know that's true of the whole Word of God, but there's something about when the Lord begins to open up His heart more directly that we need to take off our shoes, as it were, for we stand on holy ground. We find that our minds can't measure these things, and we have to approach them with the desire to understand, but with great humility.

Charles Spurgeon introduced a sermon on the Godhead with these words, he said:

The proper study of God's elect is God. The proper study of a Christian is the Godhead. The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy which can ever engage the attention of a child of God, is the name, the nature, the Person, the work, the doings, and the existence of the great God Whom he calls Father. There is something exceedingly improving to the mind in a contemplation of the Divinity. It is a subject so vast that all our thoughts are lost in its immensity, so deep that our pride is drowned in its infinity. Other subjects we can compass and grapple with. In them we feel a kind of self-content and go our way with the thought, "Behold, I am wise." But when we come to this master science, finding that our plumb line cannot sound its depth, and that our eagle eye cannot see its height, we turn away with a thought that vain man would be wise, but he is like a wild ass' colt, and with solemn exclamation we say, "I am but of yesterday and know nothing." No subject of contemplation will tend to more humble the mind than thoughts of God. But as it humbles the mind it also expands it. He who thinks of God will have a larger mind than the man who simply plods around this narrow globe. And whilst humbling and expanding, this subject is imminently consolatory. Oh, there is in contemplating Christ a balm for every wound. In musing on the Father, there is a quietist for every grief. And in the influence of the Holy Ghost, there is a balsam for every sore. Would you lose your sorrow, would you drown your cares? Then go plunge yourself into the Godhead's deepest sea. Be lost in His immensity and you shall come forth as from a couch of rest, refreshed and invigorated. I know

of nothing which can so comfort the soul, so calm the swelling billows of sorrow and grief. So speak peace to the winds of trial as a devout musing upon the subject of the Godhead.

It is to that subject that I invite you this morning. Those words written by Spurgeon he preached when he was 20 years old. We come to something that is beyond us, but something that is essential for us. There is nothing as important as understanding Who God is. There is nothing more relevant, and we come with the wondrous reality that the eternal God of the universe has made Himself known. He has opened up His heart to us. G.I. Packer, in his book Knowing God, talks about how if you were to meet somebody that you saw to be imminently, clearly above you in status, like the President of the United States or the queen of England, he says. He's an Englishman, so he mentions the Queen of England. If you were to meet that person, think about that for a moment. Now pretend to meet the Queen of England, and you would come to that person with a sense of difference and an awareness that, "Hey, I don't have any claim on this person. If they want to just keep the conversation to just strict formalities. Like, 'How are you doing?' or 'The weather is nice.'" Whatever, you know you've come with no agenda and you're like, "Okay, I'm happy for whatever I got." But he said, imagine that the President of the United States not only wants to restrict himself to just formalities, he actually begins to open up his mind, share his mind with you frankly—what his plans are, what his purpose is. He begins to share with you what his heart is. What an amazing, awesome privilege! How wonderful you would feel. Suddenly life takes on a whole new aura of importance. "I've been drawn in to this important person's life!" He said, how much more is it that God in the Scriptures is doing just that? The God of Heaven and Earth is drawing us in and saying, "I want you to be in on Who I am. I want you to know My mind. I want to share with you My heart. You, personally." That is the message of the Bible, and the very personal nature of it is here in the Trinity made clear. The fact that God is Himself, personal. That's what we see when we look behind the veil, when the Lord discloses Himself in the New Testament, when the dimmer switch is fully turned on. What we see is that the one God, Who has made everything out of nothing, the one God Who upholds Heaven and Earth, that one God has always existed in a relationship, eternally in a relationship of love, and joy, and preeminent happiness. That is the God of the Bible, and Jesus unveils that for us in this passage. He unveils for us really the heart of the family.

It's like when you and I, in the best family situations on Earth, every family is dysfunctional in some way, right? Because we're dysfunctional, we're a mess. But if you have grown up in a particularly dysfunctional family, you may have known

the blessing as a young person of going to a family that was a little more stable, like to visit. You noticed how wonderful it was to be in a situation where Mom and Dad aren't yelling all the time. They really seem to not just be putting on, they really seem to love each other. What a joy that is to enter in, maybe to be invited for Thanksgiving dinner by that family, or into an experience with them. What we have in this passage is infinitely more wondrous. We're invited by Christ to sit down at the table with Him and His Dad, His Father. The eternal God opens up for us His heart and His relationship. Not for us to theoretically consider, but for us to understand and to come to know and experience communion with this wonderful God.

What we see in the passage, we're going to look at this morning Verses 19-23, really two main points that we're going to try to organize our thoughts around. Jesus' statement, His disclosure here, first of all presents to us, and these are the two points, the Son's loving dependence on the Father, and the Father's loving disclosure to the Son. Those are the two points. One, the Son's love to the Father, and the other, really the Father's love to the Son.

1) The Son's Loving Dependence on the Father:

Jesus' defense begins, *Therefore Jesus answered...* apokrino, He offers an answer which is a declaration, a defense and a verdict. *"Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing;...* Essentially what He is saying here, He's continuing His defense by saying, "You think I have violated the command of God in doing a work on the Sabbath. That is the most preposterous and absurd thing that you could imagine because I and the Father are One. What I do is what the Father wants me to do. What I do is what the Father *is* doing, so the opposite is true. I have not done anything against the Father, I only do what the Father wills." That's the point of departure that starts this dialog, this monologue really. It starts this disclosure. He's still defending against that and clarifying. What He shows us here is that the nature of the Trinity is such that the Son is dependent upon the Father. He does nothing independently, that's the emphasis, Verse 19, *...the Son can do nothing of Himself,...* Nothing on His own initiative, one of the translations reads. He does not take anything upon Himself to initiate without first responding to the Father. You have that same concept repeated in the passage in Verse 30. We didn't read this far down.

John 5:30 ~ "I can do nothing on My own initiative..."

The same idea here. “I can do nothing. Literally, it is not possible for Me.” Now obviously, the Son has all power, but what He’s saying is, “My relationship with the Father is such that I will never do anything apart from His initiation.” The Son lives in absolute dependence upon the Father. And as you look at the rest of Scripture, what you see is that even the very nature of God, the fact that He reveals Himself as Father and Son, the Son eternally proceeding forth from the Father, eternally begotten as it were. That it’s the nature in the Trinity of this Father/Son relationship that precedes, predates the incarnation. This isn’t just the way it is because Jesus came to be a man. No, this is a continuation of the way it’s always been, the Father always directing, leading, guiding, initiating. The Son always responding, and the Father actually working through the Son. That’s why the triune God in creation, you can speak of the Father creating all, but how did He do it? John 1:3, through Him all things were created. Who? Christ, the Son. Apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. The Father created through the Word so that the Son is dependent upon the Father, He does the Father’s bidding. This idea is continued on, when you think about, for instance, in the passage:

John 5:19 ~ “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing;

What He’s saying is that the Son is watching the Father. That’s what He sees the Father doing, that’s what He does. He’s watching the Father, continually looking to the Father. That’s the nature of their relationship. Such is the connection of the Father and the Son, always looking at His Father.

There is an analogy that breaks down dramatically, but the reason the Lord made a family was because this was a way for us to begin to understand this. The Bible says that the glory of children is their fathers. Little boys and little girls, they long for the love of their mother, but there’s something about the love of Dad. God has made it that way. The little boy wants to hear his dad say, “I’m proud of you.” He wants Dad to notice what he’s doing so that Dad can be proud. The little girl wants to be Daddy’s princess. “Do you think I look pretty, Daddy?” I can remember as a kid having those same feelings, wanting my dad to understand. “Hey, Dad, let me tell you what happened. Let’s see what you think about this. Look at how well I did.” That’s the nature of the father/son relationship, and it’s patterned on this, but in us it’s selfish, that’s why we take everything. But in Christ and the Father, there is this mutual delight, the Son always looking to the Father, always desiring to please the Father.

Okay, let's look at some verses that expand upon this. We read earlier John 4:34. Look how Jesus feels about the Father.

John 4:34 ~ Jesus *said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.

Now that's amazing. Remember that's when He's at the well with the woman of Samaria? The disciples have gone to eat, they were famished. They came back from eating. Surely they didn't wait until they got back to have a blessing with Him. They ate when they got the food. They get back and they're urging Him to eat. He said, "I'm not hungry. I have food that you don't know about." "Did somebody feed Him? Did somebody else give Him food? Did you get back ahead of us and give Him something to eat?" He is thinking, "***My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me...***" "What satisfies My soul is to do the will of My Father." So much does He want to please the Lord. Turn over to John 8:28. Here again you see this dependence of the Son upon the Father.

John 8:28-29 ~ So Jesus said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. 29 And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him."

Jesus lives to please the Father. That is His first thought. He is completely selfless. You know the Scripture tells us to put others' needs above our own and we struggle with how in the world do we do that? Well, only by the power of Christ, isn't it? I mean, we naturally think of self first, it's just the way the wiring works, especially in sin. But Jesus seems to put the Father first always, and the amazing thing is the Father puts the Son first. What a joy it is in those moments where we do find ourselves, rather than reacting in sin, putting the other person, "Lord, thank You for reminding me to stop, and not react, but to serve now." What joy there is in those moments, isn't it? In that kind of giving that comes, rather than reacting.

We were talking yesterday in men's Bible study, we were sharing in our prayer time, four of us, about how as husbands, we deal with our marriages and our children and we have common struggles. One of the struggles is when your wife is not happy about something. I shared about when we had Christmas lights out in front and I've had trouble getting the timers to work. There are two sets of timers because you can't put all the lights in one outlet. So there are two timers and I've got to get them synced, and it's like the lights on the back of the bushes were

coming on before the lights on the front of the bushes. Well, that looks ridiculous. If you're going to have lights on one side or the other, shouldn't you put them on the front of the bushes, but we have them both. Patti is like, "Well, Ty can you fix that?" There are times where she struggles as I struggle with the same kinds of things that are focusing on the negative. Like, "Look at how many lights are working well." She points out the bush that's not working. "What about that bush on the end?" "What about those other 18 bushes that it's working well on?" We were talking about that's just the way marriage relationships are. She didn't mean anything, but she's just trying to help me finish the job. She knows that I tend to be happy with an incomplete job. She's spurring me on to love and good works. When you hear that, the tendency is to want to say, "Can't you ever be positive?" We think some stupid things like that, we think so selfishly. So we're talking about that among ourselves, realizing what you've got to do in that moment. Sometimes they're unhappy because they don't feel well, or things are bad in some other area. Something is going on in the family. We can tend as selfish husbands to get angry that our wives are not happy. We can make it our agenda to say, "I don't care how you really feel, act like you're happy around me because that's my functional God I'm worshiping. I want peace and harmony, and so if you've got a problem, don't bring it to Dad." That is not a godly way to live. What we have to learn to do is to say, "Wait a minute. The needs of this other person, the Lord has told me to live with my wife in an understanding way, according to knowledge. So I'm supposed to put down my initial response of 'Oh no, here's another thing that's negative in our world,' and say, 'Wait a minute, this is an opportunity for me to listen to my wife, to hear my wife, to love my wife.'"

We were sharing back and forth about that yesterday and encouraging one another. It's so good to know that we all struggle with the same things. It's so good to know that God is the answer because it is the Lord's nature to automatically think of the other. It's the essence of His character. Here the Son is living to do the will of the Father. "My meat and my drink is to do the will of Him Who sent me. That's what I love to do." It's not begrudging. It's not like us where we have to be reminded. No, the Son's natural, first impulse is to please the Father. "I'll do everything I can to glorify the Father." His whole purpose in His ministry, as you read through the Gospel, and all the Gospels, but particularly the Gospel of John, you'll see His whole purpose is to magnify the Father. I mean, John 1:1: *In the beginning was the word...* You read on down to John 1:18, and 'the word', what does that mean? This is the revelation of God.

John 1:18 ~ No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

The Son has come into the world to declare, to make known the Father. It says the whole ministry of the Son is, “I want you to understand how glorious is my Heavenly Father. I want you to see Him. I want you to magnify Him. I want you to love Him. He is the most wonderful, more wonderful than you can even imagine. You need to see Him.” His whole ministry is about revealing the Father. Now we’re seeing the Son, but what did Jesus say in John 14:9? “If you have seen Me, You have seen the Father.” So His whole ministry was to look at what the Father is doing. According to John 5:30, not just to look at what He’s doing, but to hear what the Father says. Look what He says, “I can do nothing on my own initiative, as I hear, I judge.” You see that? He’s not only looking at the Father, He’s listening to the Father. Everything, looking to the Father, listening to the Father so that He can make the Father known. “Father, what do You want Me to do now? Father, what would be pleasing to You right now?” That’s the heartbeat of the man of God, the Son of God. It’s all aimed at glorifying the Father, making the Father great in the eyes of the world.

Then look, what you have is this amazing reciprocity, this reciprocal relationship. Look at Verse 20, we’ve come to the second point. The Son’s loving dependence on the Father, the second point:

2) The Father’s Loving Disclosure to the Son:

How does the Father feel about the Son? Verse 20:

John 5:20 ~ 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.

What you have here is the Son Who wants to be with His Father, see everything He’s doing, do what the Father is doing, copy what the Father is doing to please the Father. And you have a Father Who is not irritated by that, but Who delights in it.

We struggle as dads, don’t we? Our kids come to us and they want to share stuff, tell us about things. “Dad, I want to tell you about what I was reading in this book.” They want to have our interest in things. They want to see how, as we’re watching a movie together, they look over and see how we’re responding. They share that with us. They ask a question, “Hey, why’d that happen?” I used to do that a lot as a kid, always asking, and back then you didn’t have pause. I really must have been an irritation to my dad and mom. “Hey, why is this happening?”

“We just missed it and we’ll never see it again.” Now you can just pause. I see that with my children, they want to know. They want to know how I’m feeling about something. What a wonderful treasure that is, but we can be so self-consumed that we’re irritated, but that’s not the way God is. No, God delights, the Father delights in the interest of the Son, in the same way that the Son delights in the interest of the Father. It is a perfect, glorious relationship of love. When the Son looks to the Father, He finds the Father is already looking at the Son.

I love the story of the missionary, John Patton. As a young man, he grew up in a wonderful, godly home and his father taught him the Scriptures from his infancy. The story is told of when John Patton, one of the first missionaries from America to go overseas, when he’s leaving for the mission field, he has to walk a number of miles to the nearest town so that he can get some transportation to the coast so he can take the ship. It’s going to take him months to get where he’s going. His dad wants to walk with him, and he’s got to walk like 25 miles or something. But his dad is going to walk the first half of it. His dad is an older man. Patton talks about walking with his father, and the communion knowing that he’s not going to see him. It’s not like today, there is no text message, there are no cell phones. He’s not going to hear his voice, possibly ever again. The relationship is so important to both of them, the father walking with his son. This marked John Patton’s life, the rest of his life, this conversation with his dad, as his dad pours forth his heart, the son pouring forth his heart. His dad giving him counsel, “Be faithful to Christ. Stay in the Word. Son, I’m going to be praying for you,” and knowing that his dad is going to be praying for him. They had that conversation. They walked to the halfway point. His dad has to turn back so he can get back before nightfall, so that he can get where he’s going before nightfall. They’ve got to part ways. So with an embrace, tears running down both of their faces, mingling together as they hold one another for a long embrace, they part ways and they begin to walk in opposite directions. And Patton, walking, still crying, thinking about all that God is doing, thankful to God for what He’s done, looks back one last time to get a glimpse of his father, hoping he hasn’t yet crossed that other hill and he sees his dad is standing looking at him. Unwilling to let that last glimpse fleet too quickly, both of them with that kind of love for one another. That is a tiny glimpse of the Father’s love for the Son, and the Son’s love for the Father. How much the Father loves the Son, and how much the Son loves the Father. God invites you and me into that communion. We can be loved like that, and we can experience that perfect love. That’s the wonder of it all. The Father disclosing everything He’s doing to the Son, not hiding anything. Jesus says:

John 5:20 ~ 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.

What He's saying is, "Everything I've done is what the Father has shown Me, and the Father is showing me things so that I can do them. And He says so that you may marvel." He's talking to His opponents and He's saying, "The Lord is going to help Me. The Father is going to give me things that are greater than what you see. You've seen this recent miracle, which was an amazing miracle. I healed a man who had been sick for 38 years. You've heard of other miracles that have happened but God is going to show Me greater works so that you can see me do those greater works and that you can marvel at Me. You've been wondering at what I've done so far." This is the Father's heart really, coming through the Son. The Father saying, "Look at My Son. Look how wonderful He is. Look how glorious He is." And He's saying right now, the Father speaking through the Son, "You have not seen anything yet. Wait until you see how glorious He is." He wants Him to marvel, that's the purpose statement here. Now we're going to see in Verse 23, we'll look more at this next time, that His purpose, He gives the Son the greater things He's going to do. He's going to raise the dead. The Son is going to raise the dead. The Son is going to give eternal life to whom He wishes. The Father is going to share electing grace with the Son. The Son is going to do those things, and the Father is going to give all judgment to the Son. Why is He going to do that? Look what it says in Verse 23:

John 5:23 ~ so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father...

Here's the Father saying, "I want you to love and worship Him every bit as you love and worship Me." No competition, what you have is two Persons in the Trinity, each lifting up the other. What an amazing picture. Such is the glory of God. No selfishness, no tainting, this is pure, undiluted love, communion, and joy. Their joy is in each other's glory. The Father delighting in the Son's glory. The Son delighting in the Father's glory. What an amazing reality. What this tells us is that the Lord invites you and me into that. In John 17:22, Jesus prays that we will be one even as He and the Father are one. We will enter into that communion. Some of the most decisive words in all of the Gospels, John 20:17, when Mary Magdalene comes to Jesus after the resurrection and she clings to His feet. Remember what Jesus said?

John 20:17 ~ Jesus *said to her, “Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.’”

“I’m going to see My Father without any of this veil anymore. I’ll see Him directly. Don’t cling to me.” But what does He say after that? “Go to My brethren and go tell them that I ascend to My Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”

You and I longed to be loved. We have longed to be loved from the moment we were created because we were wired for that. We don’t find that kind of love in a fallen world because none of us knows how to do it. The reality is that through Jesus Christ you can enter into that love. The Lord wants you to, and if you know Christ, if you have repented of your sins and placed your faith in Him, trusting in His death, in His payment for your sin, something that you could never do, He took your sin and nailed it to the cross. He rose from the dead to prove that His righteousness is now available to you and you can come to God clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. When you come clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ by faith, though you’re a sinner, yet in the eyes of God, because of Christ’s righteousness covering you, when He sees you, it’s the eyes of joy and delight. Just like John Patton’s father. He can’t take His eyes off of you because He sees His Son, the glory of His Son enveloped in you. That’s the wonder of the Gospel, and the wonder of the Trinity.

God is about relationship. What is God like? God is relationship. What does God want from you and me? What did He create us for? He created us for relationship. It’s all about relationship. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind—that’s the greatest commandment. The second is likened to it, love your neighbor as yourself. God wants us to come into the communion of the Trinity, to enjoy the fullness of His love. He doesn’t need us. He’s happy and He has been happy, there is no deficiency in God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This wondrous communion of eternal love, and bliss, and joy. For all eternity they’ve been happy, but They invite us into Their family room, and say, “Come, be a part of this.” Why would you not? Why would you stay away from this kind of love, this kind of joy? Don’t continue to harbor resistance to Christ. Let every resistance fall and obey the Son. Come to Him so that you can be a part of that. Or if you don’t, you will find as He says, that not only has the power to give life been granted to the Son, but the power to judge. If you don’t obey the Son, you will find that you will be judged and separated from God for eternity, in eternal misery. But today is the day of salvation, come to Him and receive the

glorious gift of salvation, the glorious gift of relationship. May God help us, all that do that. Let's pray.

Our Father, we praise You. The wonder of Who You are, the glimpses that we have into Your being, Your nature causes us just to marvel. We have no ability to fathom why You would want relationship with us. We know that we are unworthy and yet You, out of Your bounty and Your fullness, have chosen to set Your affection upon sinners. We stand in awe of You. We thank You for doing what was impossible, finding a way to be just and righteous always, and still justify ungodly people for the glory of the cross, by giving the One Who was so dear and so precious to You, and letting Him experience the agony of Calvary, Him and You somehow experiencing some separation as He bears sin. Our minds can't conceive or understand what that must have been like, but we know that's why He sweat drops of blood in Gethsemane. The agony of being and becoming sin, but He did this so that we could share in the fellowship of the triune God and know an eternal joy, and be able to sing forever the song of the redeemed. That we were lost, we were hopeless, but now we've been found. We were dead, we were objects of wrath and yet we've become loved and treasured children. Father, may You work in the hearts of those in this room who have not yet come to experience that. They see that the way is open, the path is clear. Jesus Christ has done everything necessary, theirs is but to stop trusting in themselves, stop living for themselves, and surrender. Grant them Your grace for the glory of Your Son. We pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.

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