

It ought to amaze us how Jesus Christ continues to **polarize** societies, even today.

Whether it be through the bold testimonies of professional Christian athletes like Tim Tebow and Jeremy Lin, or through public school controversies about whether or not students should be able to sing about Jesus in choir....

Few people, are **indifferent** about the Name of Jesus Christ. In increasing measure.... you are either **FOR** Him or against Him.

On the night he was born.....Jesus caused quite a stir in Bethlehem Angels and wise men worshipped him and Herod tried to kill him a short time later.....

As an adult....when Jesus enters his public ministry and begins to reveal His **true identity** as God the Son.....to Israel....

What erupts is not a mere difference of opinion....about this miracle worker.....rather...

Factions of Jewish leadership all galvanized in one 18th month long plot to have him **murdered**....

This morning....In an effort to continue to polarize **our** society..... and draw His sheep to Himself....

Our Great Shepherd wants to bring us a message today (from John 5) firmly declaring Jesus' identity as nothing less than:

God the Son

John 5...(you might recall from 2 weeks ago) begins with the story of Jesus healing the paralyzed man at the pool of Bethesda.....

(You would assume that delivering a man from such affliction would be heralded by all as a **GOOD** thing)...

But when the Pharisees saw the man who had been healed carrying his mat (as Jesus had told him to)... they were **enraged** that he was breaking their interpretation of the Sabbath Law..... By doing something which THEY had decided, qualified as work.

So... in order to get his own neck out of the noose..... the healed man sicked these ravenous wolves on Jesus...

John 5:15-24

"The man went away and told the Jews that it was **Jesus** who had **healed** him. And **this** was why the Jews were **persecuting** Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, "**My Father is working** until now, and **I am working**." 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**.

So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing **of his own accord**, but **only** what he **sees** the Father doing. **For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise**. For the Father **loves** the Son and **shows him** all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that **you may marvel**.

For as the Father raises the dead and **gives them life**, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, 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. 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**."

The other day, I was at a gas station and the man at the pump next to me said hello. That's **odd**, I thought..... Later found out he was from Ga.

But what started out as a very amiable conversation, quickly changed tone when I brought up God and the gospel. He said he did not have any need for God or Christ, and began to stare off in the distance as he pumped his gas. While I tried to continue the conversation... a DIVIDER was now between us....

And that divider was the Person of **Christ** conveyed through the gospel.

Whether He realized it or not a 3rd Person.... God the Son... was there between us.....and what each of us thought of Christ's claims.... was either going to draw us closer or DIVIDE us....

Jesus is a Polarizing figure.....because He claims to be...

God the Son

1) His Gospel Divides Men

It is interesting that we don't have any record of Jesus being **DIVISIVE**... while he was growing up in Nazareth. He seemed precocious in His knowledge of God and seemed to know that God was His Father.... but we don't have record of him causing any **rifts** in his home town....or his family...

That did not happen until he began to preach the gospel and proclaim that He is **God** the Son...

As word got out about His **true identity**..... a dividing line began to creep through Israel..... with those who believed in Him on one side... and those who did not.... on the other.

Like Paul says that the gospel is an aroma for some from life to life... and others from death to death...

Those who have been given new life.... through believing in Jesus follow Him and marvel at His works..... while those who remain in death..... seek to do away with Him.

Watch this play out in...

John 5:15-16

"The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. And this was why the Jews were **persecuting** Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.

The Jewish leaders were enraged because JESUS was revealing himself as having more **authority** than THEM. He was invading **their TURF**.... challenging their lordship over the people.....

So they began to persecute Jesus...

The Gr. word for **persecuting** literally means to chase after... hunt down. Same word that Jesus used in addressing Saul as he was in the process of hunting down Christians in order to kill them.... He said... Saul, Saul why are you persecuting me?

We have lots of DOGS in our neighborhood. Most of their yards have those invisible fences.... As you walk by, some dogs are content to lie in their yard.... watching...

But many.... will **charge** at you barking angrily all the way up to the edge of the line they can not cross....

That is what persecution looks like.... Satan is territorial.... and when you walk into his turf (sometimes if you even get close to it)....speaking the gospel..... he will send his dogs to persecute you.... to hunt you down....

They aren't content to just let you do your thing.... they will come looking..

That is why we are sometimes fearful to speak about Jesus.... we know...

The gospel DIVIDES men... and it **irritates** God's enemies...

Jesus was being hunted down by these Jews because He was threatening their **domain**....with gospel power.....by intentionally violating their view of what it meant to REST on the Sabbath.

While no verbal **CHARGE** is recorded (here) against Jesus..... Jesus **ANSWERS** them (legal term to give a defense)....like this:

John 5:17

"But Jesus **answered** them, "**My Father is working until now, and I am working.**"

Genesis tells us, that God rested on the 7th day... after He had finished creating the world. But after mankind fell into sin..... God began the work of the New Creation.... which is the **REDEMPTION work** now being manifested in full measure in the sending of His Son..... Jesus Christ.

The physical rest and worship of the Sabbath Day.... was an OT... **TYPE**... a visible **MODEL** (or living drama)of the eternal REST that all who believe enter into through faith in Jesus Christ.

Jesus... through His perfectly obedient LIFE..... perfectly fulfilled the positive WORK of righteousness God requires in order to inherit eternal life....

So as you TRUST in Jesus' finished work..... (including His sacrificial death)... you enter into **God's REST**...by faith in Christ's finished work on the cross.

Jesus is saying here..... MY Father has been WORKING to redeem sinners.... by giving them faith in His promises... and NOW **I am** continuing that **good work**.....

I am healing people.... and giving them new life through the good news of the gospel....

(Historical Context) The Jews of this era readily believed that Only God was permitted to work on the Sabbath.... because He had to govern the world....

Here Jesus calls God His own Father.... and says **I** can work.... because I am GOD the Son.

It didn't go over well....

John 5:18

" 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."

Talk about a **GAUNTLET**..... being thrown down.....

Jesus never soft peddles the gospel..... He is GOD the Son... and you must bow to Him as Lord.

That doesn't go over well.....with people who are still adamant about maintaining **control** over their own lives...

- Have you noticed that?

You can talk about attending certain religious functions..... or giving to charity.... or even feeding the poor.....or finding a cure for diseases..

But when you talk about Jesus' command to put to death your own selfish pride and love for the world and follow Him as LORD..... a part from the grace of God.... people tend to run the other way....

Perhaps even some of you.... right now.... are resisting His authority over you in regard to a decision or direction in your life.....

Because.... you feel a **false sense** of security as long as you are in control....

God is calling you to yield up that area of your life to which you are clinging into His Sovereign hand....

HOW you respond..... to Jesus' claim to govern **your** life..... makes it evident which side of the fence you are on.....

either you are His friend... and follower..... or His **FOE**:

You are either FOR or AGAINST Him,..... there is no middle ground.

Good news....God is giving you grace even now.... to repent and believe that Jesus is LORD of all....

God the Son

2. Carries Out the Father's Redemptive Work

In the culture of ancient Israel...almost every son... (especially the eldest son) became an **apprentice** to his father.... During his formative years, the father would **SHOW** the son all that he knew about the various aspects of his profession.....

A faithful son..... was eager to CARRY OUT exactly what his father taught him..... so that the family business would be successful.

Many scholars agree... that this understanding of sonship..... would have been readily assumed by Jesus' hearers..... and perhaps was even in His own mind as He spoke these words....

In other words.... think of Joseph as the best cabinet maker in Nazereth.... He produced work that left people in awe.....

and as Jesus grew up in his shop... Joseph taught him all he knew..... so that as Jesus (the son) produced the same type of cabinets.... the people would immediately marvel that this can only come from the shop of Joseph.....

John 5:19-20a

" So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing.

God the Son... Carries out His Father's work.....

He is not in competition against His Father.....

Jesus is not a SEPARATE God..... He is never at odds with His Father's will.....

He is not an **Absalom** rising up against King David.....

He CHOOSES not to ever **initiate** a plan or action of His own..... He desires to be in perfect **UNION** with His Father's will (as He has for all eternity)..

He is **SUBJECT** to His Father at all times....because He loves Him.

The Father DELIGHTS in His Son being the INSTRUMENT of His redeeming work...

False teaching (through the centuries) has done its best to **separate** Jesus from His Father..... To paint God the Father as an angry ogre and Jesus as the merciful redeemer.....

But our Redemption..... **Originates with the Father**.....

- Jesus is the **INSTRUMENT** of His Father's Redemption Plan.....

The goal of that plan..... is to restore **you** to the Father..... To give you an inheritance in your Father's house....

For God so loved the world....HE gave... His only begotten Son....

God the Son.... obediently carries out the redemptive work of the Father.

Here is where we see the beauty of the UNION of Jesus' sinless human nature... and Jesus' Divine nature.....

His human nature was NOT sinful..... but it **was** subject to **weakness**..... He was tempted in every way..... yet without sin.

Jesus was subject to the temptation to become a Messiah on his own terms..... instead of carrying out the Father's will...

In the wilderness..... Satan could not change the fact that Jesus was the Son of the Father.... but he could tempt Him to **defect** from His Father's will.....

- Jesus said..... that (you slimy serpent) is **NOT** an option. I have come to do the will of Him Who sent me....

Likewise in the Garden of Gethsemane..... The weakness of His human nature wrestled against the intense suffering He was about to endure for us on the cross.....

So with intensity.... that bursts blood vessels in his forehead..... He asked the Father.... **if** it be Your will.... let this cup pass from Me....

Father... can we do this another way.....? - No answer.....

Nevertheless then..... not MY will but **YOURS** be done...

Jesus says.... I cry out to My Father... and He **directs** my steps....He **SHOWS** me what He wants me to do next....

That is one reason Jesus often retreated into solitude to PRAY....

John 5:20

"For the Father **loves** the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may **marvel**."

Jesus was all about GLORIFYING His Father in heaven. Everything He did was in obedience to **the Father's initiative**..... And all His works were designed to drop jaws....at the **goodness** and POWER of God.

And **identify** Jesus as His Only Begotten Son....

For instance.... when Jesus was on the Sea of Galilee and the storm arose.... and while His disciples were fearing for their lives.... Jesus stood up and rebuked the wind.... and the sea became calm....

Matthew 8:27

"And the men **marveled**, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?""

- Do you **MARVEL**... at God's work?

As you read your Bible....the **goal** is for you to BELIEVE that Jesus is God..... and to MARVEL at the power of God on display through Him.....

Don't just read this as history... (although it is)... MARVEL! Wow! God **you** did that?!

You parted the SEA so that your people could walk across on dry land??

You raised Lazarus from the dead after 4 days in the tomb?

You killed Annanias and Saphira in church for lying to the Holy Spirit....

Wow, God you are HOLY.... there in NONE like you!

As you look at people's lives around you self-destructing..... do you **MARVEL** that except for the grace of God..... you would be in the exact same condition....?

As you watch God impart new life through the gospel as you speak His Word into someone's life.... do you **MARVEL** that God is alive and active in our midst....that He is still accomplishing His redemptive work through His Son?

That is the goal... MARVEL and enjoy God's goodness as you see Him working.

And through that MARVELING to **HONOR Christ** as the One who holds your future:

God the Son

3) Holds Your Destiny in His Hands

I can remember going to the office of my **statistics** professor my sophomore year in college. I did not like the class, and was so rebellious that I rarely studied (even for tests). But I did not want to fail...and so there I was seated in his office (at the end of the term).... knowing that with the power of his pen.... he could determine whether I was going to have to sit through another semester of statistics or go free.... To a small degree.... He held my destiny in his hand.

- Ever been in a situation like that?

If you have ever been pulled over by a policeman.... (maybe you were speeding) and the blue lights are flashing....as the man in uniform approaches your car..... you know that he not only holds in his hands the potential for you to pay a traffic fine..... He holds an increase in your insurance..... for the next 3 years..... He holds a portion of your future....

Because he REPRESENTS the authority of the powers God has appointed to govern you in this country...

The REVERENCE and HONOR you should show him.... is a mere **inkling** of the REVERENCE you should have for God the Son.

He literally holds your **ETERNAL destiny** in His hands.

John 5:21-23

"For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, **so also** the Son **gives life** to whom he will. The Father judges no one, but has given **all** judgment to the Son, 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."

The Son is not in competition with the Father.... When you HONOR... CHRIST... it brings GLORY to the Father who sent Him for that very purpose...

Anyone who **fails** to HONOR Jesus as God the Son.... **FAILS** to honor the Father...

That is why **JW** can not be Christians.... no matter how sincere they are.... if they deny the DIETY of Jesus... and fail to honor Him... they actually **DISHONOR** the Father.

- The Father...has appointed the Son to impart life and to exercise JUDGMENT on the earth

The Jews to whom Jesus was speaking **knew** (from the OT) that ONLY God gives life to the dead and ONLY God is the **judge** of men.....

but Jesus says... **I am God the Son**.... if you have seen **ME**.... you have SEEN the Father...

The Father has appointed the Son to CHOOSE the people to whom He will **impart eternal life**

I take those who are right now dead in trespasses and sins.... and speak LIFE into their souls through my WORD.....

It is entirely MY prerogative.... (as Jesus would later tell His disciples....)

John 15:16a

"You did not choose me, but **I chose you** and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide,

He holds our destiny in His Hands.....so we MUST HONOR Him.

God has appointed Him to JUDGE the living and the dead on the last Day....

That **judgment**.... will **not** be a contest between you and your neighbors....or you and your co-workers.... or your classmates.... to see who is the best person....

The standard against which your life will be measured...is **JESUS** Himself.

You will be measured against the perfectly righteous life of Jesus Christ.....

so...**EITHER**.... you have received the free gift of His own righteousness.....through trusting in the gospel..... or you have **not**.....

No middle ground.

ALL Authority has been given to Jesus... in heaven and on earth...He is God the Son.

- Good News! Jesus says.... that through believing the Word of His gospel..... we can have **ASSURANCE**... that we have already passed the judgment!

John 5:24

"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."

The gospel has the POWER to impart new life to your soul..... to **cleanse** you from all your unrighteousness..... through Jesus' atoning death on the cross....

And to impute to you the PERFECT track record of His obedience....as a free gift.

In fact... **as** you believe.... God TRANSFERS you from the domain of death.....INTO the very Household of God....

Colossians 1:13-14

"He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and **transferred us** to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

You have passed the TEST in Christ Jesus..... the FAVORable verdict from your Judge has already been announced to you in the gospel....

You are **FORGIVEN!**

So that ALREADY.... right now..... you HAVE passed from the realm of death to eternal life....through believing His Word.

You have NOTHING to fear.....on judgment day! Because you belong to **God** the Son!

That is.... if in fact... you do belong to Him....?

If you reject God the Son..... you have no hope.....either in this life... or in the next....

Honor the Son..... worship at His footstool..... and take refuge in His free gift.... today.

Psalm 2:12

"Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him."