

Sermon Outline

**“LIFE IN HIS NAME”:
THE PURSUIT OF WHOLENESS AND THE GOSPEL OF JOHN**

ABBA’S BOY (JOHN 5:19-20)

I. Why Jesus Is Persecuted (Jn 5:16-18)

- A. The Lord Jesus has come under fire from the religious authorities of Israel. The scholars of the Law were offended by several things Jesus did and said.
 - 1. They were offended by the fact that he made it a practice of healing on the Sabbath.
 - 2. They were offended by the fact that he asked a man to carry his bed on the Sabbath (v 16).
 - 3. They were offended by his explanation: “My Father is working until now, and I am working.”
- B. What was it about this last statement that got the Jews so upset? “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” (v 18).

II. Negation (Jn 5:19)

- A. How does the Lord defend himself against the accusation that he was blasphemously making himself equal to God?
- B. Jesus never retracts what he said. If he wanted to save his skin, now’s the time. But he doesn’t. He holds the line.
- C. Verse 19 has one negation and two important affirmations.
- D. Negation/denial: “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord...”
 - 1. This is a partial answer to the accusation that the Jews were making (i.e., that Jesus was “making himself equal with God”).
 - 2. By “Son,” Jesus is referring to himself.
 - 3. By saying that the Son can do nothing of his own initiative, Jesus is refuting the idea that he is engaging in arrogant self-exaltation or self-deification.
 - 4. How can a Son promote himself to the level of his Father?
—Just as a son is subordinate to his father, Jesus is subordinate to his heavenly Father (at least for this duration in the world).
- E. It is incorrect on the part of the rabbis, the Pharisees, and their students to charge Jesus with somehow arrogantly promoting himself to the level of God.
- F. Jesus simply *cannot* and *will not* act without his Father’s instruction.

- G. Jesus is a Torah-abiding Jew—even if that abiding isn’t exactly what the Jewish leaders envision it to be. Jesus simply follows what the Father does.

III. Affirmations (Jn 5:19)

- A. After denying that he is simply out to push his own agenda, the Lord Jesus adds: “...*but only what he sees the Father doing...*”
- B. The Son will not act of his own will. But when he does act (e.g. healing on the Sabbath, asking a man to take up his bed on the Sabbath, other signs, etc.) the Son is but shadowing the Father.
- C. Two affirmations.
1. Affirmation: Jesus is able to “see” the Father at work.
—What human being is able to “see” God?
 2. Affirmation: Jesus is able to do what the Father is doing.
—Which of these rabbis interrogating him can say that?
- D. “For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.”

IV. The Father Loves the Son (Jn 5:20)

- A. Jesus has had plenty of opportunity to retract his controversial words, sparing himself the hassle of trial and even death penalty. *But he doesn't.*
- B. If anything, he only makes things harder for himself.
—While Jesus denies that he’s trying to promote himself in some blasphemous way, he also says things that make him almost a kind of equal-partner with God.
- C. He pushes on: “For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing” (v 20).
- D. These are not the words of a merely religious man. These are the words of a child who is absolutely enthralled and in awe of his Papa.
- E. Notice the boast—if we could call it that—of Jesus: “For the Father loves the Son...”
1. Jesus is fully secure in his Father’s love. He has no doubt that he is the Apple of his Papa’s eye.
 2. He has no doubt that his Papa likes him a lot!
 3. While the Jewish scholars speak from their books and academic debates, Jesus speaks from the only environment/culture, the only source of knowledge he has always known—*Abba Father*.
- F. Out of that confidence in Abba comes pure steel. Jesus is not afraid of these men.
- G. If these people would believe in him, they will know God as Abba as well.
○ John 1:12: “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God [.]”
- H. But these men have been addicted to the praises of their students, fans, colleagues, and laypeople for too long (Jn 5:44).

- I. As we behold our Lord here, we see what it means to be a child before God. To be a child of God is
 - 1. to be confident in the Father's love.
 - 2. to be satisfied in the Father's love alone (no matter what others may think of you).
 - 3. to follow the example of the Father.
- J. We must learn from Jesus. We must learn from his childlikeness before the Father.

V. The Father Shows Wonders to His Son (Jn 5:20)

- A. We are let in on the most intimate relationship in all the universe—the love of the heavenly Father for his eternal Son, the love within the Trinity.
- B. Just how much does the heavenly Abba love his Boy? The Father “shows him all that he himself is doing.”
- C. Thinking out loud here. Because Jesus is taught directly by the Father, he is able to read the Torah in a way that the rabbis are not.
 - 1. The Father instructs Jesus to see that the entire Torah has to do with *him*. He is the favored Son, the final goal of the Law.
 - 2. In this debate with the Jewish establishment, Jesus comes with the perspective that the heart of the Law and the Prophets lies within himself (Jn 5:46).
 - 3. But preaching this will get him into trouble.
 - 4. But Jesus has learned this secret from the Father: “For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing.”
—Or “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (Mt 3:17).

VI. More to Come (Jn 5:20)

- A. Jesus adds: “And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel.”
- B. If the rabbis thought that healing on the Sabbath was hard enough to swallow, they haven't seen anything yet!
- C. The Father is going to show greater works for his Son to do. When the Son acts on his Father's will, the world will be astonished.

VII. Abba's Boy

For Jesus, all that really matters is being with his Abba, following his Abba. He is Abba's Boy and will always be Abba's Boy. One day, Abba will show his Boy to the world and they will call him the name that he had from the very beginning—the LORD (Phil 2:11). Those who believe in the Lord Jesus will also become Abba's children (Jn 1:12). They too will share in the love of God for his Son.

Questions for Reflection

1. Was there anything in particular about today's sermon that blessed and encouraged you?
2. Was there anything that you disagree with or found difficult to accept?
3. How does Jesus respond to the Jews' accusations? What does he deny? What does he affirm?
4. According to v 20, how does the Father feel toward his Son, Jesus?
5. How does the Father demonstrate his love toward his Son?
6. Based on Jn 1:12, how do we come to share in the Father's love? How do we become children of God?