

Like Father, Like Son!

John 5.16-30

Jesus' healing on the Sabbath upset the Jewish leaders; what He said next drove them mad. He called God His Father, which they knew made Him equal with God! Jesus 'doubles down' on His claim, declaring that 'like Father, like Son' – He gives life, and He judges. Which will you choose?

Structure Clues: Jesus defends His work on the Sabbath

- A Like Father, like Son – 'I do what Dad does!' (19-20)
 - B Son gives life (21) and judges (22-23)
 - C Whoever believes not judged, has life (24)
 - B' Son will give life (25-26) and judge (27-29)
- A' Like Father, like Son – "I do what Dad desires!" (30)

What Jesus Does

- Jesus gives life, and will give life

The life He gives starts now (21)

The life He gives goes on forever (25-26)

- Jesus judges, and will judge

Jesus is the judge now – honor Him (22-23)

Jesus' judgment determines your forever (27-29)



1. John 5.16-18 provides the setting for the discourse that follows. The Jewish religious leaders were upset because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath. Jewish theologians knew that God worked on the Sabbath: Men are born and die on the Sabbath. Only God gives life, and only God determines the fate of the dead in judgment. Can you see why Jesus' response made them so angry (vv17-18)? Do you understand now why Jesus *chose* to heal the man on the Sabbath?
2. Jesus' discourse defending His work on the Sabbath is divided into two 'parallel' sections affirming what He does (vv19-23 and 25-30), and a central implicit invitation and promise (v24). Each is denoted by the introductory phrase "Truly, truly" in verses 19, 24, and 25 (this is variously translated – "most assuredly," "I tell you the truth," or "Truly I tell you," among others). Can you see the similarities in the two sections about what Jesus does? How do these relate to the invitation in verse 24?
3. In verses 19-20 and 30, Jesus declares the same idea in two ways. What is that idea? Bonus question: Jesus says that He does what the Father does, His Father's will. But at the end of v20, he points to the future works which will make them marvel (Greek *thaumazō* means to wonder, be amazed, be surprised). To what is He referring?
4. In verses 21 and 25-26, what work of the Father does Jesus also do? What is the tense in v21? In v25? Why the difference? In verses 22-23 and 27-29, what work has the Father entrusted to the Son? What is the tense in v22? In vv28-29? Why the difference?
5. John 5.24 is the 'pinnacle' of this whole section, and picks up on the themes of Jesus as the giver of life, and the One who judges. What is the promise about life and judgment to all who believe in Jesus?
6. Verse 29 is used to teach that only those who do more good works than bad get to heaven. Why is this wrong? 'Good works' here may refer to believing in Jesus, and 'evil' to rejecting Him (3.36; 6.29), but there are other views. How do you understand this?