
JOHN: THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

MARVELING AT THE SON

A message presented by Pastor Marc Minter
to First Baptist Church of Diana, TX on June 11, 2017

INTRODUCTION

Jesus Christ said and did some stunning things, but not the kinds of things one might expect from a historical figure who turned the world upside-down. Jesus never wrote a book, never ruled as an earthly king, and never amassed public prestige or worldly wealth. He lived as an odd Jewish teacher and prophet, and He died as a lonely martyr. And yet, Jesus made claims of incomparable height... He claimed to be equal with God, the judge of the world, and the giver of life. The biblical Jesus deserves our astonishment, but life comes to those who hear and believe Him.

This week, we got to see a living parable of our current cultural climate.

Russell Vought, a graduate of Wheaton College (an Evangelical Christian school), was accused of being “*Islamophobic*” and “*hateful*” during a senate confirmation hearing last week. Vought has been nominated to serve on the staff of the present white house administration, and his theological statements were the subject of scrutiny and ridicule at the hearing.

Vought’s article included the statement, “*Muslims do not simply have a deficient theology... They do not know God because they have rejected Jesus Christ his Son, and they stand condemned.*”

This is an explicit theological claim, and it is deductively condemning more than a single religious community. All who have “*rejected Jesus*” “*stand condemned.*” Not only is this true to biblical teaching, it was the understood message of Vought’s statement.

Senator Bernie Sanders brought up Vought’s statement during the confirmation hearing to emphasize the exclusivity of the claim. Sanders said, “*In my view, the statement made by Mr. Vought is indefensible, it is hateful, it is Islamophobic, and it is an insult to over a billion Muslims throughout the world.*”

Sanders also asked whether Jews who rejected Jesus were condemned and whether “*people who are not Christians are going to be condemned.*” When Vought began to

answer, Senator Sanders repeatedly cut him off and even shouted at the nominee during one exchange.

Senator Sanders went on to say, *“This country, since its inception, has struggled, sometimes with great pain, to overcome discrimination of all forms ... we must not go backwards.”*

This is an example of “marveling,” but it is not positive nor is it belief...

However, it is the kind of response we commonly see from those who really hear Jesus’ words.

JOHN 5:16-24 (ESV)

16 And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.

17 But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.”

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.

19 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.

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.

21 For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will.

22 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.

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 POINT I’M AIMING AT TODAY:

Life is in the Son... Don’t just ‘marvel.’ Hear His word, and believe.

MESSAGE OUTLINE:

(1) WORKING ON THE SABBATH

(2) JESUS' ARGUMENT THAT HE IS GOD THE SON

(3) PASSING FROM DEATH TO LIFE THROUGH HEARING AND BELIEVING

(4) APPLICATION: ALL WILL MARVEL; SOME WILL LIVE

MESSAGE

(1) WORKING ON THE SABBATH

“16 And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because *he was doing these things on the Sabbath.*”

17 But Jesus answered them, ‘*My Father is working until now, and I am working.*’”

- Jesus intentionally chose to work on the Sabbath
 - Jesus went to Jerusalem (5:1), Jesus picked one crippled man out of a multitude of people with physical ailments (5:3-6), Jesus specifically told the man to “walk” with his bed in hand (5:8), and Jesus knew it was the Sabbath day (5:9).
 - This has implications on the discourse to follow, but the point is to show that Jesus intentionally chose to do work on the Sabbath.
 - “*he was doing these things on the Sabbath*” (v16)
 - In the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus is recorded as the “*lord of the Sabbath*” (Matt. 12:8, Mark 2:28, Luke 6:5)
- God provided Sabbath for humans
 - **Biblical warrant for the Sabbath**
 - In Genesis 2, we read, “*the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation*” (Gen. 2:1-3)

- Then, when God handed down the 10 Commandments, He said, ***“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God... 11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy”*** (Ex. 20:8–11)

○ **Sabbath is for:**

- **Humans** – Jesus said, ***“the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath”*** (Mk. 2:27).
- **Rest** – God said, ***“On it [the Sabbath] you shall not do any work...”*** (Ex. 20:10).
- **Attention to godliness** – ***“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy [set apart from common use, devoted to God]”*** (Ex. 20:8).
- **A reminder of present and future rest in Christ** – The author of Hebrews compared Israel’s entrance into the Promised Land with the Christian’s entrance into God’s kingdom/blessing/grace.
 - ***“there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God’s rest [past tense] has also rested from his works as God did from his. Let us therefore strive to enter that rest [future tense], so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience”*** (Heb. 4:9–11).

○ **Quick note on the NT Sabbath**

- Is the fourth command still in effect?
- Is the Sabbath still a rule today?
- Is the Sabbath day now Sunday, rather than Saturday?
- Is it a sin to work on the Sabbath?

4 Things:

1. First, there is much disagreement among Christians on this matter... So, let’s not be too quick to sanction a law where there may or may not be one.
2. Second, the fourth command (Sabbath) is the only one of the ten that is not reiterated and affirmed in the NT.

3. Third, however, Jesus clearly does not intend for NT believers to throw out any of God's commandments.

- Jesus said, *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, **not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law** until all is accomplished. Therefore **whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven**”* (Matthew 5:17–19).

4. Fourth, because the Sabbath is for (1) humans, (2) rest, (3) attention to godliness, and (4) a reminder of present and future rest in Christ; it would be foolish to neglect such a grace.

- In other words, even if we all decide that the Sabbath is not a NT law, one can hardly argue that it is not a benefit.
 - Furthermore, one should be quick to admit that he/she is in desperate need of rest in Christ (the kind that only a communal feast upon His word can bring), and the avalanche of unrest outside of a Sunday morning worship service will be there when we are done.

*For these reasons, I believe it is wise to set aside a concentrated portion of each week for biblically structured attention to godly things.

- God works and rests simultaneously

“My Father is working until now, and I am working...” (v17)

- Does God break His own rule by working on the Sabbath?
 - No, God's rest on the seventh day of creation was not equal to ceasing all work...

- God “*upholds the universe by the word of His power*” (Heb. 1:3).
 - God sustains and preserves; He sends, rescues, and confronts (Ps. 18:16-18); He helps, shields, and blesses (Ps. 115:9-13)... “*Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them. Full of splendor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures forever*” (Ps. 111:2-3).
 - Augustine wrote: “Who is God save our God? Most high, most good, most potent, most omnipotent; most merciful, yet most just; most hidden, yet most present...
unchangeable, yet all-changing; never new, never old; all-renewing, and bringing age upon the proud...
ever working, ever at rest; still gathering, yet nothing lacking;
supporting, filling, and overspreading; creating, nourishing, and maturing; seeking, yet having all things.
You love, without craving; are jealous, without anxiety...
You are angry, yet serene;
You change Your works, but Your purposes remain unchanged...
You are never in need, yet rejoicing in gains... You pay debts, though owing nothing; forgive debts, losing nothing.
And what have I here said, my God, my life, my holy joy?
How can any man, when he speaks of You, begin to give You the glory you deserve?”¹
- “*My Father*” and Jesus’ “*working*” in unison with the Father is a direct claim to equality with God.
 - That is why verse 18 says, “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.*”
 - And this leads us to the next, and more pressing point:

¹ Excerpt From: Saint Augustine. “The Confessions of St. Augustine.” iBooks.
<https://itun.es/us/CS3Kx.l>

(2) JESUS' ARGUMENT THAT HE IS GOD THE SON

Walking through verses 19-23 – “*truly, truly*” and the 4 “*for*”s

- Prelude: the Son submits to the Father
 - “Truly, truly, I say to you, ***the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing***” (v19).
 - This profound relationship, which Jesus teaches us about here, is the interrelationship of the Triune God – Father, Son, and Spirit.
 - Though the Spirit is not mentioned here, the Father and the Son are, and we are wise to let the breadth of Scripture assist us in our understanding.
 - The first thing Jesus teaches about the relationship of God the Son to God the Father is that the Son is in perfect submission to the Father.
 - There is no power struggle, and there is no depreciation of value... only perfect unity, submission, and love.
- First, (‘for’) the Son does as the Father does
 - “***For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise***” (v19).
 - The Son does as the Father does...
 - A fisherman’s son = fisherman; a farmer’s son = farmer; a carpenter’s son = carpenter; God the Father’s Son = God
 - This is what John meant when he said, “***No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known***” (Jn. 1:18).
 - The Son has ‘exegeted’ the Father.
 - Likewise, the author of Hebrews tells us, “***Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world***” (Heb. 1:1-2).
 - God’s self-disclosure, His self-revelation comes to its peak in the person of the Son incarnate – Jesus Christ.

- Second, ('for') the Father loves the Son and shows Him everything
 - “**For** the Father **loves the Son** and **shows him all** that he himself is doing” (v20).
 - Here, Jesus tells us of the way in which the Father’s love for the Son is observed – namely that the Father “shows” the Son “all that he himself is doing.”
 - The Father and the Son are in perfect relational harmony and love. The Son fully knows the Father, specifically the works or doing of the Father.

This throws my mind into Jesus’ prayer in John 17.

- Jesus prays, “**3 this is eternal life, that they [the ones for whom He is praying] know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent... 25 O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them**” (Jn. 17:3, 25-26).
 - The Son knows the Father, and makes the Father known to all who love and know the Son.
- Third, ('for') the Son gives life as the Father does
 - “**For** as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also **the Son gives life to whom he will**” (v21).
 - This claim could be no higher!_A strict prerogative of God is claimed by the Son.
 - God is the one who breathed the breath of life into humanity (Gen. 2:7); and God alone raises the dead back to life (2 Kings 5:7; Ezekiel 37:13).
 - Furthermore, the ‘life’ the Son gives most certainly points towards ‘eternal life’ in the context (v24).
 - This is equally a claim of supreme authority

- Fourth, ('for') the Son shares in the Father's judgment and honor
 - ***"For 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"*** (v22-23).
 - The Son has ***"all judgment"***
 - Paul said, ***"The Lord Jesus [will be] revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might..."*** (2 Thess. 1:7-9).
 - Jesus told us, ***"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats"*** (Matt. 25:31-32).
 - The Son will be ***"honored"*** as the Father is ***"honored"***
 - In an incredible scene of heavenly worship, the Son and the Father are simultaneously given honor and glory.
 - ***"8 four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb... 9 And they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation...' 11 Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!' And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, 'To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!' And the four living creatures said, 'Amen!' and the elders fell down and worshiped"*** (Rev. 5:8-14).

- One last point on this logical argument from Jesus about His divinity
 - The Father is honored through the Son (exclusivity)
 - “Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him” (v23)
 - This reminds us that we are not merely hearing an isolated claim – “Jesus is God.”
 - We are hearing a revelation about who God is – “God is Father, Son, and Spirit.”
 - To neglect or refuse to honor God as He has revealed Himself, is to set one’s self in opposition to God.

(3) PASSING FROM DEATH TO LIFE THROUGH HEARING AND BELIEVING

“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.*”

- Hearing and Believing
 - This is John’s drumbeat...
 - “Hear Christ’s words!” (Jn. 10:3, 27); “See His glory!” (Jn. 1:14); “Believe!” (Jn. 1:12, 20:31)
- Has Eternal Life
 - Matthew’s phrase = “*kingdom of God;*” John’s phrase = “*eternal life*”
 - Both are present and future
 - Both are directly related to ‘union with Christ’
- Passed from Death to Life
 - The promise is two-fold
 - Death, judgment, and condemnation is no more – absent forever.
 - Life, reward, blessing is certain – present possession.

(4) APPLICATION: ALL WILL MARVEL; SOME WILL LIVE

- All will Marvel
 - “*greater works* than these will he show him, *so that you may marvel*” (v20).
 - The Son “gives life” (v21), “judges” the world (v22), and receives “honor” (v23).
 - All will see Christ for who He is one day.
 - But, the claims are present now, and this provokes shock among those who do not hear and believe.
 - “*marvel*” is a word that can be positive or negative, depending on context
 - “*the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God*” (1 Cor. 1:18)
- Some will Live
 - “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*” (v24).
 - As we have observed:
 - Death, judgment, and condemnation is no more
 - Life, reward, blessing is certain for the future and the believer’s present possession

Major Point: Life is in the Son... Don’t just ‘marvel.’ Hear His word, and believe.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

Concise Commentary by Matthew Henry

<http://www.christianity.com/bible/commentary.php?com=mhc&b=43&c=5>

The Claims of Christ by John Frame

http://thirdmill.org/newfiles/joh_frame/TH.Frame.John.5.16-29.html

Jesus: Equal with God by John Piper

<http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/jesus-equal-with-god>

The Two Resurrections by Aaron Orendorff (*technical exegesis – amillennial view*)

<https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/TheTwoResurrections.pdf>