

Second Sunday of End Time

November 6, 2016

John 5:19-30

The Father has Entrusted All Judgment to the Son

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Dearly loved by God in Christ,

It is common for sons and daughters to follow their fathers into the business. Most if not all of us are familiar with the Hare sisters of savings. The family name followed by “and sons” often adorns the sides of trucks.

We might correctly assume that in such cases the children evidence the same personal qualities and ways of doing business as their fathers. It doesn’t matter if you work with one or the other.

Jesus just had healed a crippled man on the Sabbath. When the Jews heard about this, they confronted our Lord and accused him of breaking the Sabbath law. Jesus’ response was “My Father is always at work to this very day, and I, too, am working.” When one is working, so is the other. Jesus was saying that God the Father works every day including the Sabbath, so he, the Son, works on the Sabbath because the Father and he are one in essence and purpose.

The Jews understood exactly what Jesus meant. They considered it blasphemy. They hated Jesus for his claim. “For this reason they tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.”

Jesus rightful claim of equality with the Father sets the table for our theme on this second Sunday of end time, Last Judgment. **The Father has Entrusted All Judgment to the Son.** First, so that all will honor the Son as they honor the Father. Second, the Son’s judgment agrees with the Father’s and seeks only to please the Father.

Jesus had a second father while on earth. Joseph was Jesus’ legal father and a carpenter. How much carpentry Joseph taught his son growing up we don’t know. We can suppose that Jesus did hear and see a lot about that trade. Whatever Jesus did know and do as a carpenter, he learned from his earthly father.

Jesus made the point to his enemies that everything he knew and did as the one equal with God the Father, including this Sabbath work of love healing the crippled man, he saw and heard from his heavenly Father. His heavenly Father “loves the Son and shows him all he does.” They had seen Jesus do a great thing. The Son had not done it independently from the Father but as one God.

The Jews soon would see the Father do even greater things than this through his Son. The Father raises the spiritually dead and gives them new spiritual life. Now the Son would do the same. Jesus would raise those spiritually dead in unbelief to spiritual life in him. In Revelation 20, the apostle John calls this “the first resurrection.” Jesus would proclaim God’s Word to lost and condemned sinners that he is their Savior. The Holy Spirit would bring sinners to the new life of faith through that gospel.

In this sense, judgment already has taken place. He who hears Jesus’ word and believes that the Father has sent the Son “has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.” God the Father has entrusted this judgment to the Son of Man, the world’s Savior. Jesus through the gospel gives life to “to whom he is pleased to give it.”

What a blessing of God's grace that the Father has chosen us in Christ for that spiritual life. God gave it to us through holy baptism. God keeps it alive through the gospel in Word and in the Lord's Supper. This is the common work of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They are equal to one another in the one divine essence. They agree on the judgment the gospel pronounces on us at Jesus' empty tomb and that is ours through faith. That judgment is "not guilty."

This is the reason why "Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him." The Father has entrusted all judgment to the Son so that all will honor the Son. By honoring the Son as God, you honor the Father as God. To deny one is to deny the other. That is why we call Unitarian religions idolatry. By denying that Jesus is equal to the Father, they do not worship the true God.

Since the Father has entrusted all judgment to the Son, Jesus judges to please the Father.

Jesus' judgment through the gospel takes place not only in the first resurrection to faith. It takes places also in the second resurrection "when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out- those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned." When all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, all others will see the evidence of their faith or unbelief. Faith had manifested itself in good works. Unbelief had manifested itself in evil works.

The Father bases judgment solely on Christ's righteousness and not our own. This is his requirement. Jesus indicates his agreement to this by using his favorite moniker, the Son of Man. Jesus kept the law perfectly for us, then offered his innocent life in our place on the cross. He who believes in Christ will be saved. He who does not believe is condemned.

Jesus does not do this judging by himself. He does it by his Father. That is why the judgment will be just, unarguable, and irrevocable. This is why Jesus' judgment will please the Father. There is complete agreement, a working together between Father and Son for they are one God with the Spirit.

Last judgment is nothing to fear for the believer. Through faith we will stand before Christ covered in his blood and with his holy works under the law credited to us. For the believer, Jesus says, there is no condemnation, literally, no judgment. Only unbelievers will be judged as their evil works testify to their rejection of Christ's work on their behalf.

Judgment Day is not when God finally or arbitrarily decides what to do with us. It is not when we suddenly and finally find out what will happen to us. The Father and the Son desire our salvation so in full agreement they have called us into the family through faith. We live in the new life the Son gives through the first resurrection by the Holy Spirit. We will hear Christ's voice at the second resurrection, and God will reunite our glorified bodies with our souls. We will stand before our Judge, saints triumphant in heaven. More about that next week, one way or another. Amen. <SDG>