

Wednesday's Gospel: Knowing God Through Christ

Gospel for Wednesday in the
4th Week of Lent, and
commentary.

Gospel (*Jn* 5:17-30)

But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working still, and I am working.” This was why the Jews sought all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the sabbath but also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

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 he 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, 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, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who 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.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as

the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself, and has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment. I can do nothing on my own authority; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.”

Commentary

After healing a man on the Sabbath, Jesus is attacked by the Pharisees for violating their traditions. But ultimately the reason is that He

claimed to be equal to God. In this passage Jesus uses their objections to explain his relationship with the Father, and to claim many divine attributes.

He begins by implying that his actions are the work of the Father (*Jn* 5:17). This claim to Divinity infuriates the Pharisees (*Jn* 5:18). But he says, continuing his argument, that he is capable of doing greater works than the miracle they complain about (*Jn* 5:20). He claims to have power over life and death (*Jn* 5:21), authority to judge (*Jn* 5:22), and divine honor (*Jn* 5:23). He says that those who reject his message show dishonor to God (*Jn* 5:24), and that only those who believe in Him will have eternal life (*Jn* 5:25). This passage culminates with the statement “as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself” (*Jn* 5:26)

– the clearest possible declaration of his Divinity.

Our Lord's miracles, including the healing that led to this confrontation, showed that his teachings were guaranteed by God to be true. But one of Christ's central teachings was that He was Divine, which the Pharisees found it very difficult to accept, even with the evidence of his miracles. We see in this passage that, when challenged, Jesus didn't retract his statement, but rather found different ways to reaffirm it even more emphatically.

We learn much more about God by getting to know Christ than any other way. When we meditate on his actions in the Gospels, we need to always remember that He was both divine and human. The main lesson of everything Jesus did is that it was God who was acting in that way. And thus we are able to come to know

God personally. One of the aims of our apostolate is to encourage people to read the Gospels, because in them they get to know Christ, and “he who has seen me has seen the Father” (*Jn* 14:8).

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