

The Wednesday Word, July 29, 2009: So Jesus Never Claimed to be God? Part 6

In John 5: 26 Jesus said, "*For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;*"

These are the babblings of a raving 'loony bin' or else they are the very words of God incarnate. They are so extreme that they preclude and prohibit all possibility of neutrality on our part.

Read again what the Master taught, "*For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;*"

Imagine, for a moment, if your pastor got up in front of the church one Sunday and said, "In just the same way God has life in Himself so I have life in myself." Would you buy it? Would you believe him for even one second? Of course not! No one would believe him for we all know that life is not inherent to any of us. We know that our life is derived and dependent: it is derived from our parents and dependent upon God to sustain it.

But Jesus claims that His life is derived from no one; it is inherent and uncreated; He has it in Himself! It is the same self-existent life that is in the Father. What an outrageous claim for Him to make! There is only one individual in this universe Who is self-existent, whose life is from Himself eternally and that is the almighty God. He alone is self-existent. What stunned Christ's audience was that Jesus was saying, "For as the Father has self existence, so hath he given to the Son to have self-existence."

Do you see how radical this man Jesus is? Do you see how silly it is to say that He never claimed to be God? Christ Jesus refuses to allow us to play sentimental games with Him by saying He was great, but not God. To have life in oneself is to be the source and fountain of life. God alone is this source of life and Christ claims this same attribute for Himself. We must face it, either Jesus is God incarnate or a seriously deluded or evil man.

William Temple a former archbishop of Canterbury once made a very telling statement. Referring to the liberal theologians who dilute Christ's identity he said, "At their worst the liberals scale down the imperial mind of Christ to the level of a well meaning Sunday school teacher. The liberal Jesus is not nearly big enough to explain Christianity." He then said, "Why any man should have troubled to crucify the Christ of liberal Protestantism has always been a mystery. Who would bother to crucify someone who claimed only to be a teacher? But our Lord claimed a great deal more than that. He claimed to be the Jehovah of the Old Testament. He claimed to be God and when he called God his own Father, they knew that he was making the claim of equality with God, and therefore they crucified him."

The gospel believer, however, does not have to be persuaded that his Savior and Master is his God. For the gospel believer, Christ Jesus, the God /Man, is the altogether glorious one in human flesh appearing. In His majestic person, He surpasses everything that can be said to be glorious. He is far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. The Father "*hath highly exalted*

him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and of things on earth, and of things under the earth."

Christ claimed to be God. To reject Him as God is to call Him a liar or a lunatic. Conversely, to hold to His deity is a vital gospel practice. Spurgeon nailed it when he said "----look to Christ as God. If you would be saved, believe him to be God over all, blessed forever. Bow before him, and accept him as being "Very God of very God," for if you do not, you have no part in him.

And that's the Gospel Truth!