

Study Guide for the Central Church of Christ 7-22-18

July 22 we will study John 5:16-23. Discussion questions are:

1. In what ways have you experienced the following truths: “The way up is down. The way to reign is to submit. The way to power is to serve. The way to go to the head of the line is to get in the back of the line. The way to happiness is seek the happiness of others. The way to exaltation is by humbling yourself. The way to find your life is to lose your life.”
2. When Philippians 2 says our attitude should be the same as that of Jesus, what attitude is it talking about?
3. What do these 3 claims of Jesus tell you about his nature:
 - a. 21 – “*the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it*”
 - b. 22 – “*the Father...has entrusted all judgment to the Son*”
 - c. 23 – “*all may honor the Son*”
4. Why would someone with all the power and position mentioned in vs. 21, 22, 23 come down to the human level to live?
5. How have you experienced the truth of this statement: “*The way to contentment and joy is to do what Jesus did – submit to God’s will.*”
 - a. If you haven’t experienced this truth what does that say about your spiritual life?
6. Submission means wrestling. When have you wrestled with God’s will?
7. Submission means a decision to trust. When have you decided to trust God with something very important to you?
8. Submission means struggling to see your life from a high vantage point. What events in life have helped you see life from a higher vantage point?
9. How much “suffering” was mentioned in the answers to questions 6,7,8?
 - a. What does that tell you about the purpose of suffering?
 - b. What insight does that give you into the concept of “joy through suffering”?
10. Think of one area of your life where you are not letting God call the shots. What will it take to get you to turn that area of your life over to God?

Sermon: **Honor The Son**

John 5:16-23

I have reminded you of something many times and I want to do so again today. I’m not sure we get this but I’m going to lay it out for you one more time. The way up is down. The way to reign is to submit. The way to power is to serve. The way to go to the head of the line is to get in the back of the line. The way to happiness is seek the happiness of others. The way to exaltation is by humbling yourself. The way to find your life is to lose your life. If you summarize the career of Jesus it goes something like this. He was equal with God. He came down to earth and became subject to the Father. He has now been exalted to his former position. That summary was so much at the front of the thinking of first century Christians they composed a hymn about it and that hymn made its way into the Bible. It’s in Philippians 2:

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Here's why the principle of *the greatest is the servant and the first shall be last* works and how it works. Because of the career of Jesus. Jesus claimed to be equal with God. *John 5:16-18 – So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him. Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working." For this reason the Jews 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.* All through this passage Jesus claims things that only the Creator could claim. In vs. 21 he says that he alone gives life. In vs. 22 he says the he alone judges. In vs. 23 he demands worship. He says you must honor the Son just as you honor the Father.

Immediately after Jesus claims to be equal with the Father he turns right around and says He is limited to doing what the Father wants him to do. He is saying he became subject to the Father. *John 5:19-20 – I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these.* Why did Jesus come down to the human level? It all has to do with honor. Human beings decided to not honor God but to live for their own honor. The just penalty for that arrogant sin was paid when the great King Jesus left his honor behind and came down and died for us on the cross. When he did that all human notions of what is up and what is down, who is great and who is not, who is first and who is last were turned on their heads. The greatest disaster in the world became the greatest triumph in history. The scandal of the cross became the sacred event of all time.

As a result of Jesus' humiliation on the cross He is back up on top. He is the judge of all things. Jesus was brought back up to the level where He receives all the honor the Father receives. *John 5:21-23 - For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.* Philippians 2 says, "Therefore God has highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name." That's the career of Jesus and that's why the principle works. What's the principle? The way to blessing is to take the curse. The way to riches is to give everything away. The way to get honor is not to seek it but to honor God and others. The way to greatness is to give up your greatness.

Let me make just one application. The way to contentment and joy is to do what Jesus did – submit to God's will. Do you know what it means to submit to God's will? Look at what it meant for Jesus. First, for Jesus, submission meant wrestling. What did Jesus say in

Gethsemane? *“I am sorrowful even unto death.”* Second, submission, for Jesus, meant a decision to trust. In the Bible, submitting to God’s will does not mean knuckling under. Knuckling under means being whipped down until you can’t fight any longer. That is not submission in the Bible. Biblical submission is a rational decision followed by commitment. Third, submission, for Jesus, meant struggling to see your life from a high vantage point. Your small child breaks his favorite toy and cries inconsolably. You walk in the room with a letter in your hand saying you just inherited \$10 million. The child isn’t going to stop crying because of your letter. The child’s problem is his vantage point. Listen, your loneliness is not the problem. Your financial bind is not the problem. Your health is not the problem. Your grief is not the problem. The problem is your vantage point! Fourth, submission, for Jesus, meant joy. Remember that great comment about the value of Jesus’ submission in Hebrews, *“Who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame.”*? Have you discovered the joy of submitting?

Suppose God said to you, “I’m going to let you write the agenda for the rest of your life. You can be in complete charge of the circumstances for the rest of your life. You’d jump right on that. But, here’s the question, which self is going to do it – your two-faced self or your Sunday self? Your 15-year-old self or your 30-year-old self or your 40-year-old self? “Well”, you say, “the self I am right now.” Why not let your 15-year-old self write the agenda? “Because I was a fool when I was 15.” So, now, you have come into your own and are all knowing? You thought you had life all figured out when you were 15 too didn’t you? You haven’t changed much have you? Aren’t you tired of calling the shots in your life? In case you haven’t noticed, you have made some pretty bad calls and messed up huge portions of your life. Are you going to continue to reign or submit and let God reign?

Before we leave this text I want you to see something very important. It’s in verse 23 and it says the standard of judgment for you is whether or not you honor the son. *“...the Father...has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son....”* If you keep calling the shots in your life you are not honoring the Son. My prayer for you today is that you might open your eyes, see Jesus, and let him reign in your life. The way up is down. The way to find yourself is to lose yourself. When you come to believe that principal you will have discovered the joy of submission.