

Identity: Jesus' Complicated Relationship with God

Luke 3:21-22; Matthew 16:13-20

“Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship. And the compelling reason for maybe choosing some sort of god...is that pretty much anything else you worship will eat you alive...” – David Foster Wallace

For Beginners: What does “worship” mean?

- It’s both an act and an attitude. (Put differently, it’s both service and adoration.)
- “No one can serve two masters... You cannot serve both God and money.” (Jesus, Matthew 6:24)

So what/whom did Jesus worship? The Father. *His* Father. (Do we overlook Jesus *as worshiper*?)

- Worship as an act: He sang, read Scripture, and woke up early to pray. Also, Jesus obeyed the Father.
- Worship as an attitude: Jesus’ adoration of the Father is consistent. He trusts in His lavish grace, His judgment, His plan, His control.

In one sense, Jesus is the only person *not* to have a complicated relationship with God!

Let’s look at the Christology ladder to understand Jesus’ Identity:

- Rung (1): Jesus is obviously a great teacher
- Rung (2): We’ve also seen that Jesus is a miracle-working prophet
 - But is he just like Elijah and Elisha? Or is he unique? That would take us higher, to another rung.

Rung (3): He’s the *unique* Son of God—and not like us.

- If we say, “We’re all children of God, God is the Father of us all” – and throw in ourselves with Jesus, we would be wrong. Jesus didn’t talk this way!
- “No one knows the Father except the Son.” (Jesus, Matthew 11:27)
- Jesus’ Baptism: “This is my Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Luke 3:21-22)

Also Rung (3): Jesus is the *unique* and long-awaited **Christ**, sent by God

- Peter’s Great Confession in Matthew 16:13-20

For Skeptics: Isn’t a high Christology a later development – especially in the Gospel of John?

Rung (5), just a peek: Jesus is God

- The highest rung on the ladder. We’re not there yet.

Rung (4): Jesus is the only atoning sacrifice for sin (next week!)

For Strugglers:

- What’s your identity? A more penetrating question is this: *what do you worship?*

Questions for reflection and application:

1. Do you believe that everyone is a worshiper? If so, what does this mean? How can this be true of an atheist?
2. Read Luke 3:21-22 and Matthew 16:13-20. Why does Jesus’ identity matter *practically speaking* in your life? How did it matter today, for instance?
3. What is your identity? Is there anything that if taken away from you would *destroy* your identity?
4. What does it mean to have your identity in Christ? Write, speak, and live a prayer that expresses your identity in Him.