Three Explanations of the Nature and Implications of Jesus’ Sonship (John 5:17-29)

1. Jesus Explains His Role as the Son (vv.19-23)
   1. The Son imitates the Father out of perfect submission (v.19)
      1. He does what His Father does exclusively.
         1. There is nothing the Son does which the Father is not doing. He is never independent from His Father.
         2. The Son and all of His actions are always responses to the Father! The Son doesn’t initiate; the Father is always the initiator.
         3. The Son sees all that the Father is doing, and so responds with full submission by working out the same works.

*“The Father initiates, sends, commands, commissions, grants; the Son responds, obeys, performs his Father’s will, receives authority.” (D.A. Carson)*

An illustration: “The two shall become one flesh” (Gen. 2:24)

*“There is something about the relationship and difference between the man and the woman, Adam and Eve, that images the being of God…Eve is a person quite distinct from Adam, and yet she has all her life and being from Adam. She comes from his side, is bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh, and is one with him in the flesh (Gen. 2:21-24). Far better than leaves, eggs, and liquids, that reflects a personal God, a Son who is distinct from his Father, and yet who is of the very being of the Father, and who is eternally one with him in the Spirit.” (Michael Reeves)*

* + 1. He does what His Father does exhaustively.
       1. There is nothing the Father does which the Son is not doing. The Father is never working independent from the Son.
       2. The Father never works a work which He does not work through His Son!

*“The only one who could conceivably do whatever the Father does must be as great as the Father, as divine as the Father.” (D.A. Carson)*

* 1. The Father installs the Son as His representative out of complete love (v.20)
     1. The Father’s love for the Son is the reason for the Son’s position as His agent of every work (v.20a)
     2. The Father’s love for the Son results in the Father disclosing all His works to the Son (v.20b)

*Every act of God is Trinitarian!*

*Every work of God is the overflow of the love between the Father and the Son!*

Excursus: The Gospel as the Overflow of Trinitarian Love

1. The first result of this overflowing Trinitarian love in the Gospel is the particular love of the Father toward believers (Jn. 16:27; 17:23)

*“Christians walk oftentimes with exceedingly troubled hearts, concerning the thoughts of the Father toward them. They are well persuaded of the Lord Christ and his good-will; the difficulty lies in what is their acceptance with the Father,—what is his heart toward them?...Now, this ought to be so far away, that his love ought to be looked on as the fountain from whence all other sweetness flow.” (John Owen)*

*“Though there be no light for us but in the beams, yet we may by beams see the sun, which is the fountain of it. Though all our refreshment actually lie in the streams, yet by them we are led up to the fountain. Jesus Christ, in respect of the love of the Father, is but the beam, the stream; wherein though actually all our light, our refreshment lies, yet by him we are led to the fountain, the sun of eternal love itself. Would believers exercise themselves herein, they would find it a matter of no small spiritual improvement in their walking with God.” (John Owen)*

1. The second result of this overflowing Trinitarian love in the Gospel is that believers are made to love the Son just as the Father loves the Son.

*“Ultimately, the Father sent the Son because the Father so loved the Son—and wanted to share that love and fellowship. His love for the world is the overflow of his almighty love for his Son.” (Michael Reeves)*

* 1. The Father invests the Son with His authority out of an unyielding pursuit for the Son’s honor (vv.21-23)
     1. The Son replicates the Father’s life-giving power (v.21)
        1. In its effect (“raises the dead and give them life”)
        2. In its freedom (“to whomever He desires”) (cf. 3:8; 17:2)
     2. The Father has ordained the Son as the agent to carry out His judgment (vv.22-23; cf. Matt. 16:27; Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:16; 14:10; 1 Cor. 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Tim. 4:1)
        1. The purpose—the Son’s honor alongside the Father
        2. The implication—the inseparability of the Father from the Son