

He Loved Me . . .

He Loves Me Lots

The Gospel of John

Text

John 5:15-29

Topic

Jesus stuns the Jewish religious authorities when He says that He and His Father have been working together on the Sabbath

Title

***“Sabbath Day’s Alright For Working,
Get A Little Healing In”***

“I am Iron Man.”

Tony Stark introduced himself with those iconic words.

- “I am Groot” can mean anything, but when you first meet Groot, he is introducing himself.
- “We are Venom” is a creative twist on introductions.

The top two film self-introductions on my list:

1. “The name is Bond. James Bond.”
2. Veteran actor Michael Keaton ad-libbed the classic line, “I’m Batman.”

Jesus introduced Himself to the Jewish religious authorities as God.

He did it indirectly but matter-of-factly. He said, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working" (v17), and the Jewish religious authorities understood that He was **"making Himself equal with God"** (v18).

Jesus invites us to look *back*, then *ahead*, to see the work He and God the Father are accomplishing. I'll organize my comments around two points: #1 Jesus Takes You Back To He & His Father At Creation, and #2 Jesus Takes You Ahead To He & His Father At The Consummation.

#1 - Jesus Takes You Back To He & His Father At Creation (v15-18)

Ken Ham, founder of Answers in Genesis (AIG), likes to ask, "*Were you there?*" about God's Creation.

Then he says something like, "No, we weren't there, but we know Someone who was there, Someone who cannot lie, who knows everything, and has always existed. And this One has revealed to us what happened in the past in His history book called the Bible."

The Jewish religious authorities accused Jesus of doing work on the Sabbath. He responded that He and His Father have *always* worked on the Sabbath.

Joh 5:15 The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

In the previous verses, "the man" was among a multitude hoping to be healed at the Pool of Bethesda.

The sick, blind, lame, and paralyzed believed that when the water in the pool stirred, the first one in would be healed.

Jesus singled out this man, infirm for thirty-eight years. He commanded him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." Believing, *he did precisely that*.

Joh 5:16 For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath.

The religious authorities ignored the inexpressible joy of the healing and were upset because carrying your bedding was prohibited work on the Sabbath. Mind you, it wasn't prohibited in the Scriptures. It was an interpretation added to the Scriptures.

Christians ought to be joyous.

The apostle Peter said that you ought to experience and express "joy unspeakable and full of glory" (First Peter 1:8). Each will express it differently, but believers have that joy down in their hearts. (If we did Bible study like a musical, we'd sing now).

Joh 5:17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."

"Answered" means that they confronted Jesus. He was answering their accusation about green-lighting work on the Sabbath.

The Message Version reads, "My Father is working straight through, even on the Sabbath. So am I."

I've never thought about God working on the Sabbath. If He doesn't, "Why does the world keep on spinning? Why does the sea rush to shore?"

Seriously. Who relieves Him to hold the universe together? The rabbis say that it isn't work for God to sustain what He created. It seems like it would be more worth, if you ask me. Genesis clearly states God "rested from His work" (2:2-3).

Philo of Alexandria writes, "Moses does not give the name of 'rest' to mere inactivity. [God] never ceases to work all that is best and most beautiful. **God's 'rest' is a working with absolute ease**, without toil and without suffering."

Joh 5:18 Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

They were already seeking ways to kill Jesus, and now they doubled down.

The essential confession of faith for Israelites is found in the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy. It begins, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, **the LORD is one!**" (v4). They repeated it morning and evening.

You might expect the religious authorities to be confused that God is One but more than One. Don Stewart writes, "The Doctrine of the Trinity is not plainly revealed in the Old Testament. Without the teaching of the New Testament we would not be aware of this truth."

Have you ever heard the word "Godhead?" Theologians sometimes use that term to refer to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit as three divine Persons in one God.

In its simplest form, "We believe that the one God eternally exists in three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and that these three are one God, co-equal and co-eternal, having precisely the same nature and attributes, and worthy of precisely the same worship, confidence, and obedience."

We believe it because the Bible teaches it.

Many false teachings arise at just this point. It was proposed in the second and third century AD that God was one Person instead of three Persons. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were different 'modes' of the same divine Person. God can switch among the three different modes. This heresy continues today in Oneness Pentecostalism and other groups that deny the Trinity.

Maybe you've tried to explain the Godhead by using the three forms of water. Water can be liquid, steam, or ice, but it is still water. It is an excellent example... **of modalism.**

We can only wonder how many Sabbaths Adam and Eve enjoyed in the Garden of Eden before they disobeyed God. Their sin was met with God's promise to redeem and restore both them and His Creation.

The Father and Jesus constantly worked to keep that promise. It began at once with the revelation that God would come to Earth as the Seed of a woman. He would add humanity to His deity and walk among us. Their work is chronicled progressively in the Bible. Verse-by-verse, chapter-by-chapter, book-by-book, the promised redemption and restoration is providentially furthered by Jesus working with His Father.

#2 - Jesus Takes You Ahead To He & His Father At The Consummation (v19-29)

Starlord told the other Guardians of the Galaxy he had 12% of a plan. The only good thing that could be said was, "I am Groot," meaning that it was better than 11% of a plan.

The way things are going, nonbelievers might doubt God has even 12% of a plan.

We know He has 100% of a plan.

The remaining verses look ahead, into the future, past our own time, to "all who are in the graves [hearing Jesus'] voice" (v28).

Joh 5:19 Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.

Jesus is equal with God the Father. How did that play out during His incarnation?

In His first coming as the God-man, Jesus *never once acted independently of His Father*. He determined to "do nothing of Himself."

The apostle Paul writes, "though He was in the form of God, [Jesus] did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped" (Philippians 2:6 ESV). He didn't hang on to His equality but trusted His Father.

When Jesus said, "the Son can do nothing of Himself," it was not to say He was less than God, but that He voluntarily subordinated Himself to His Father for the sake of their plan. He "made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant" (Philippians 2:7).

Joh 5:20 For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.

Warren Wiersbe writes, "We usually think of the Father's love for the lost world, as in John 3:16; but we must also remember the Father's love for His dear Son." If you are ever in doubt about God's love for you or plans for you, think about the Father's love for His Son. He spared not His Son *for you*. *He gave Jesus for you*.

More wondrous works than the healing of an infirm man were coming. Jesus seemed genuinely excited that His Father was going to "show Him greater works." We ought to be excited to discover things in our daily walk with the Lord.

Is geocaching still a thing? It is a GPS treasure hunt in which participants hide and find hidden caches.

There are caches for us to discover every day walking with the Lord.

"That you may marvel." It can mean *astonished* or *amazed*. One paraphrase says, "*You haven't seen the half of it!*"

These guys accusing Jesus had forgotten how to "marvel" at God and His works.

We're talking about healing a man infirm for thirty-eight years, but it's in the little things that we can most marvel. For example: I marvel at our fellowship.

Joh 5:21 For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to *them*, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.

Jesus was letting them know that He was going to raise people from the dead. Not only that, He was going to give life by raising people from the dead never to die again. We will see that in just a minute.

Joh 5:22 For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son,

Joh 5:23 that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

Why mention judgment? Jesus is looking ahead, to the end of the ages. His accusers don't have the big picture.

We need a big-picture worldview. We're playing the long game and are enabled to endure.

Nonbelievers think God the Father is a wrathful, short-fused, judgmental deity who can't wait to "rain fire" upon Earth. They understand Jesus to be a kinder, gentler version, who went around saying, "Judge not."

Check Him out in the Revelation. The Father gives Jesus the seven sealed scroll. Jesus is the Person who opens it one seal at a time to pour out the wrath of God upon Earth.

Joh 5:24 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

We looked back to Creation and noted the fall of man. The Godhead's 100% plan to redeem and restore was for God to come in human flesh. God must become flesh and die in order to pay the penalty of sin for mankind.

Whosoever “believes” will receive everlasting life. Believing is the one thing we can do that isn’t work.

Joh 5:25 Most assuredly, 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.

This is getting to be quite the prophecy talk. “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,” sounds to us like the resurrection and rapture of the church. “For the Lord Himself will descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord” (First Thessalonians 4:16-17).

Talking about the resurrections is like giving CPR: *You can’t quit once you’ve begun.*

You noticed I said “resurrections,” plural. The first thing to grasp it that there is not one, general resurrection of believers and non-believers at the end of the ages.

There are a series of resurrections.

The Bible describes two categories of resurrections, called the First Resurrection and the Second Resurrection:

1. The First Resurrection is the permanent raising from the dead for believers in Jesus Christ. You could also call it the Resurrection of the Righteous.
2. The Second Resurrection is the permanent raising from the dead for all nonbelievers. You could also call it the Resurrection of the Wicked.

Here is what throws people: *The First Resurrection doesn't occur all at once*. It started with Jesus, and it will conclude just before the new heavens and new Earth are created.

1. Of course it started with Jesus. He was the first person to be raised never to die again. There would be no resurrections if He did not raise from the dead. Jesus is called the "firstfruits of those who have [died]" (First Corinthians 15:20). Others would follow as the harvest continued.
2. There are resurrections in the Gospel of Matthew that are sometimes overlooked. "Graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many" (27:52-53). These were the *first* "firstfruits."
3. The next resurrection of believers is the resurrection and rapture of the church. It hasn't happened. It is imminent.
4. Old Testament saints are in Heaven but have not received their resurrection bodies. Their resurrection happens at the end of the Great Tribulation (Daniel 12).
5. The Tribulation saints are the next to be resurrected. They are raised as the One Thousand Year Kingdom of God on Earth begins.
6. There will be believers alive at the end of the thousand years who will need resurrection bodies for their stay in eternity.

Those six events are the First Resurrection, the Resurrection of the Righteous.

For all nonbelievers from all of time, to be absent from their body at death is to be present *in Hades*. Their resurrection is the Second Resurrection. The Resurrection of the Wicked *does* occur all at once and is described in chapter twenty of the Revelation.

They rejected Jesus and are thrown into the Lake of Fire, where their resurrection bodies can and will endure eternal conscious torment.

Joh 5:26 For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself,

Joh 5:27 and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.

Jesus is referred to as the "Son of Man" eighty-eight times in the New Testament. It is the primary title Jesus used when referring to Himself.

Daniel saw glory, worship, and an everlasting kingdom given to the Messiah, whom he called the "Son of Man." Jesus took the name for Himself. There was no doubt He was claiming to be the Messiah.

Joh 5:28 Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice

Joh 5:29 and come forth - those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

Not one general resurrection, but the two we described.

Verse twenty-nine has confused some over what appears to be the significant role of works. Later on in the Gospel of John, Jesus will be asked what must be done to do the works God requires. He will answer, "This is the **work** of God: to **believe** in the one who sent Me" (6:29).

- Believers go on to discover the good works that Jesus has for them. We don't do them to maintain salvation but to delight our Heavenly Father.
- Nonbelievers continue to do "evil." The word "evil" translates to *worthless things*.

I have had the privilege of officiating at many gravesites and memorial services. (It's another marvel). It is so sad when every indication is that the deceased did not receive Jesus Christ. Well-wishers who give eulogies struggle to find the things that would be considered worthwhile.

One memorial in particular I can't shake. A neighbor mentioned that the deceased always maintained the best yard on their block. Person after person touted his meticulous landscaping.

I can't joke about it. It was so, so sad. "Worthless."

This passage reads like a Father-Son outing. The Father loves His Son, and the Son is bursting with joy and excitement on what they will accomplish together.

Jesus was the unique Son of God. When you are born again, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that **we** should be called **children of God!**" (First John 3:1).

You are on a long outing with God. Your 'God-cache' will have blessings and buffetings. Either way, you can be bursting with joy and excitement for what Jesus will accomplish in you and through you as you await the rapture.

The Lord has 100% of a plan *for you*.