

The Word Made Flesh

Jesus, Traditions, and Healings on the Sabbath

John 5:1–16

Introduction

- Continuing our year-long series in the Gospel of John, learning about Jesus through the eyes of His closest earthly friend, John the Beloved.
- John 5 introduces a dramatic healing and a direct confrontation between Jesus and the religious leaders, revealing the heart of God versus the heart of religion.

II. Prayer & Structure

- Prayer
- Overview: Make observations from the text and apply them to our lives today.

III. Observations from John 5:1–16

A. Jesus Participated in Religious Tradition

1. Jesus goes to Jerusalem for a Jewish feast, demonstrating His participation in the rhythms and traditions of Israel.
2. This does *not* contradict His critiques of empty religion; it shows that tradition itself is good when rooted in truth.
3. Tradition becomes powerful when it reinforces truth, shapes values, and forms family identity.
4. Danger: American, Protestant, and Postmodern culture naturally pushes against tradition.
5. Healthy traditions (like communion, Sabbath rest, thanksgiving practices, or family rhythms) can reinforce spiritual truths and shape our homes.
6. Encouragement: Seek the Lord about establishing godly traditions in your family that build lasting legacy.

B. Jesus Goes Where No One Else Will

1. The pool of Bethesda was crowded with the sick, disabled, and forgotten; it was a difficult, unclean, uncomfortable place.
2. Jesus intentionally walks toward the broken, not away from them.
3. No level of filth, shame, addiction, or spiritual paralysis pushes Jesus away.
4. Jesus still asks each of us the same question: “**Do you want to be healed?**”



The Enemy of Honor

C. No One Would Help the Man

1. The man's response reveals abandonment, helplessness, and isolation:
“Sir, I have no one to put me in the pool.”
2. He's surrounded by desperate people who refuse compassion and fight for their own miracle.
3. The scene reveals what happens when people are consumed by self-preservation.
4. Followers of Jesus must be the opposite—quick to help, quick to serve, quick to yield, quick to love.
5. Application: We imitate Jesus by moving toward people in weakness, not stepping over them.

D. Jesus Violates Religious Tradition

1. Jesus heals on the Sabbath and commands the man to carry his bed—directly confronting the religious leaders' man-made rules.
2. The Pharisees added human traditions (“oral law”) onto Scripture, making the Sabbath a burden instead of a gift.
3. Jesus teaches:
 - **Man was not made for the Sabbath; the Sabbath was made for man.**
 - God's commands liberate; man's additions enslave.
4. Legalism always blinds us to God's goodness—these leaders saw the broken rule, not the healed man.
5. Warning: Religious cultures often elevate their preferences and traditions to the level of Scripture.
6. Scripture warns that some leaders in the last days will either restrict or water down the gospel—both are dangerous distortions.

The Enemy of Honor

E. Jesus Calls Him to Holiness

1. Jesus finds the man again and warns:
“Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.”
2. The healing was an act of mercy, but mercy calls us into repentance.
3. Sin destroys. The man’s suffering may have been tied to sinful choices.
4. Application:
 - Jesus rescues us from sin, but we must turn from it or we will end up right back in bondage.
 - “Play stupid games, win stupid prizes.”

IV. Communion Application

- Repent of sinful patterns that lead back to bondage.
- Repent of legalistic attitudes that prioritize rules over people.
- Repent of despising godly traditions instead of letting them shape your soul.
- Remember the mercy of Jesus, whose broken body and shed blood made your healing possible.