

LIFE GROUP LESSON

John the Life-Giving Gospel • Week of May 10

Introduction

Last week we saw Jesus in Samaria to meet a certain woman by a well in the village of Sychar. Jesus goes back through Galilee and en route is approached by a certain official who begs Jesus to heal his son. Jesus merely speaks the word, and the son is healed. Scripture says the official “and his entire household believed in Jesus” (John 4:53). Today’s text speaks to Jesus returning to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish holy days, and inside the city near the Sheep Gate, Jesus goes to the pool of Bethesda because he knows there is a man there who has been sick a long time.

Background

Each encounter thus far in our message series, *John the Life-Giving Gospel*, reveals how Jesus is purposeful in everything he does. He is on mission, and it is as though he knows time is ticking. Every moment counts for this One who is *the true light coming into the world* (John 1:9). Some believe, others do not. Yet, Jesus remains focused. Remember what he told his disciples: “My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work” (John 4:34). In chapter five he says, “My Father is always working, and so am I” (John 5:17). In other words, though ridiculed for healing a man on the Sabbath, he is unwavering in his Father’s work. Read what led to the discourse of John 5:19-47.

Read John 5:1-18

It seems Jesus *has to go by* the pool of Bethesda, for his divine appointment this time is with a man who had been sick for thirty-eight years. An on-going attitude of defeat, despair and helplessness, had led this man to live into a narrative that not only kept his physical body bedridden, but his soul bemoaned. Sadly, as with this man, often the bleak circumstances and negative voices get our attention over the voice of God. Friend, beware: Maintaining allegiance to negativity, lies, and intrusive thoughts, can keep us from God and understanding our worth in the Lord. In fact, bowing to lies, is a precursor to idolatry. You are valuable in the eyes of God. Be wary of thinking: *Why even try... I have nothing to offer ... I'm not worthy to be made well and set free.* This mindset has a seed of pride in it.

Discussion:

- What does Jesus ask the man in v 6? How does the man respond in v7?

Notice Scripture never says the man is paralyzed. Yet, he is unwell and never makes it into the pool first. He thinks he needs stagnant water stirred by an angel; but what he really needs is to plunge into a personal love relationship with the One who *is* our Healing.

- Sometimes, we too bow to infirmity over the living God, when ultimate healing is found in the Lord Jesus Christ! Thus, Jesus’ question may be for us today: *“Would you like to get well?”* How would you answer this question?
- Jesus knows lies and defeat have weakened this man, so he tells him, “Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!” – in other words, *you can do something about this if you trust me.* Scripture says when the man obeys, he is instantly healed! (v9). Yet, there is still something not quite right in his heart. How do we know this?
- ‘Learned helplessness’ does not have to be permanent. Think of a time Jesus’ voice overpowered your despair. What did ‘Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!’ look like for you?
- This is the day to hear the voice of Jesus, instead of the voice of lies. What does Genesis 3:1-7 say about sin?
- Choosing to listen to the serpent over God is sin. Why must we choose to listen to the Lord’s command to *STAND*?

“Instantly, the man was healed! He rolled up his sleeping mat and began walking! But his miracle happened on the Sabbath” (John 5:9).

- In the message it is mentioned that the religious leaders loved the law more than the God of the law. They could not rejoice in the work of God, i.e. the lame man's healing. How do you see tithing as rooted in our love and trust of God?

Further Consideration:

Obedience is aligning with truth. Notice in John 5:9b Scripture says, but this healing happens on the Sabbath and the Jewish leaders are angry. When we obey the Lord, there will be nay-sayers surface who, whether they realize it or

not, attempt to derail our healing. Often there are those more concerned about keeping the institution and preserving the status quo than celebrating a person set free.

- Perhaps there has been a time when you experienced nay-sayers regarding the work of Christ in you. Why must we guard our hearts and remain grounded in the truth of God's Word?
- We must also be careful so as not to repay evil for evil or harbor resentment. Why must we pray for discernment and ask for a heart to *celebrate* what God is doing?
- Jesus finds the man and tells him: "Now you are well; so stop sinning, or something even worse may happen to you" (v14). Why does Jesus say this to him?
- Read Jesus' words in John 3:18-20 in light of his warning to the man in John 5:14. What warning do you hear in these verses?

Jesus goes out of his way to reach each of us. And when he finds us, he warns us to stop sinning because sin separates us from God. How are we restored? Obedience restores (unifies) us with the Lord. Thus, each of us has a choice. Will we choose to respond to truth and stand up and live into Jesus' call, or will we remain in our sin ... to the point that 'something even worse may happen to us'. What is Jesus speaking to you today?

Close by Reading Jesus' Discourse in John 5:19-30, 31-47

Share at least one take-away from these verses.

One Year Bible Reading

May 10: 1 Samuel 8:1-9:27, John 6:22-42, Psalm 106:32-48, Proverbs 14:34-35

May 11: 1 Samuel 10:1-11:15, John 6:43-71, Psalm 107:1-43, Proverbs 15:1-3

May 12: 1 Samuel 12:1-13:23, John 7:1-30, Psalm 108:1-13, Proverbs 15:4

May 13: 1 Samuel 14:1-52, John 7:31-53, Psalm 109:1-31, Proverbs 15:5-7

May 14: 1 Samuel 15:1-16:23, John 8:1-20, Psalm 110:1-7, Proverbs 15:8-10

May 15: 1 Samuel 17:1-18:4, John 8:21-30, Psalm 111:1-10, Proverbs 15:11

May 16: 1 Samuel 18:5-19:24, John 8:31-59, Psalm 112:1-10, Proverbs 15:12-14



Text: John 5

1. What we believe about _____ influences how we experience _____ and how we _____.
2. Jesus wants to _____ what you believe about _____, your life, your _____.
3. Jesus _____ the man because sin _____ us from God while obedience _____ us.

PLAIN TRUTH:

By focusing on _____ instead of what _____ we'll miss the _____ of Salvation.

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