



Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath

Lesson 7 John 5:1-24

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. We will study the third miracle of John's Gospel, the healing of the paralytic man at the pool of Bethesda, and understand its implications for our lives.
2. We will gain a greater understanding and appreciation for the three claims to divinity made by Jesus along with their implications.

THE HEALING OF THE PARALYTIC AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA (5:1-16)

A. The setting - 5:1-5

5:1 "After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. **2** Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. **3** In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. **4** For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. **5** And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years."

1. "A feast of the Jews" - 5:1

2. "Jerusalem" - 5:1

3. Near the sheep market - 5:2

a. "Sheep market" means "relating to sheep; a gate through which they were led into Jerusalem"¹

b. The sheep gate is mentioned in Nehemiah 3:1, 12:39

c. Also referred to as St. Stephen's Gate or the Lion's Gate

4. Pool of Bethesda - 5:2

a. "Bethesda" means "house of mercy, or place for receiving and caring for the sick"²

b. "A pool near the sheep-gate of Jerusalem, the waters of which had curative powers"³
- 5:4

c. The pool was "used to clean animals about to be taken to the temple for sacrifice"⁴

d. The pools were the water supply for the priests and their temple work

5. The Crowd at the pool - 5:3-6

a. "A great multitude of":

i. "Impotent" means sick, weak, diseased

ii. "Blind"

iii. "Halt" means lame

iv. "Withered" means "dry; of members of the body deprived of their natural juices, shrunk, wasted, withered."⁵ The same word is used in Hebrews 11:29 to describe dry ground.

¹ James Strong, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Greek Dictionary of the New Testament*, p. 60, ref. 4262.

² Joseph H. Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), p. 100, ref. 964.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 100, ref. 964.

⁴ Elmer Towns, *The Gospel of John: Believe and Live* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 2002), 48.

b. *“Waiting for the moving of the water.”* An angel would come down and trouble the waters. When this took place, the first one into the pool would be cured of his or her disease. - 5:3-4

c. The paralytic man - 5:5

i. He was sick for 38 years

ii. He wants to be healed. That is why he is at the pool.

d. The Savior - 5:6

6. *“Sabbath”* - 5:9

B. The Sign - 5:6-9a

5:6 “When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? **7** The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. **8** Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. **9** And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked:”

1. The omniscience of Jesus - 5:6

a. He saw him lying there

b. He *“knew”* that he had been in this state for a long time

i. *“Knew”* means “to perceive; understand; to have knowledge of”⁶

ii. John uses this word to denote supernatural knowledge. He didn’t simply overhear a conversation as some scholars argue. - 2:24, 13:1

2. The question - 5:6

a. Jesus asks him if he wants to be made whole

b. In light of the surroundings, the answer seems obvious.

3. The man’s answer - 5:7

a. *“I have no man”*

b. *“When the water is troubled”*

c. *“To put me into the pool”*

d. *“While I am coming, another steppeth down before me”*

e. In short, the man’s answer was “Yes, but”

f. When we study the four parts of his answer, we see his:

i. Dependence upon man

ii. Dependence upon circumstances

iii. Dependence upon location

iv. Blaming others

4. The healing - 5:8-9

a. Jesus commands the man to:

i. *“Rise”*

ii. *“Take up thy bed”*

iii. *“And walk”*

⁵ Thayer, p. 432, ref. 3584.

⁶ Strong, p. 20, ref. 1097.

- b. The paralytic was made whole immediately. This is the same as nobleman's son. - 5:9, 4:53
- c. The healing took place because of the spoken word of Jesus. This is similar to the healing of the nobleman's son - 4:50
- d. The paralytic saw the healing before he took up his bed and walked. This is different than the healing of the nobleman's son - 5:9, 4:50

C. The argument over healing on the Sabbath - 5:9b-13

5:9 "...and on the same day was the sabbath. **10** The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. **11** He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. **12** Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? **13** And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place."

1. The Jews accuse the man of breaking the Sabbath law - 5:10

a. Exodus 23:12

"Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed."

b. Jeremiah 17:19-22

17:19 "Thus said the LORD unto me; Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem; **20** And say unto them, Hear ye the word of the LORD, ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates: **21** Thus saith the LORD; Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; **22** Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers."

c. Jesus commanded him to perform this act; Jesus knew the law and did not come to destroy it - Matthew 5:17

d. "The Rabbis made out a system of thirty-nine works, which done rendered the offender subject to death by stoning."⁷

2. The paralytic's answer, "The one who healed me told me to do this" - 5:11

3. The demand of the Jews, "Tell us who told you to do this" - 5:12

4. The paralytic's second answer, "I do not know who healed me" - 5:13

D. The revelation of Christ's identity - 5:14-15

5:14 "Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. **15** The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole."

1. Jesus found him in the Temple - 5:14

2. He tells the man he has been healed - 5:14

⁷ J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), p. 159. (quoting J.W. Shepard, *The Christ of the Gospels*).

3. He teaches the man about his former ailment - 5:14
 - a. The problem: sin
 - b. The solution: sin no more
 - c. The warning: *“lest a worse thing come unto thee”*
 4. The man reveals Christ’s identity to the Jews - 5:15
- E. The enraged Jews - 5:16
- 5:16** “And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.”
- Because of the healing on the Sabbath, the Jews:
1. Persecuted Jesus
 2. Sought to slay Him
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CHRIST’S THREE CLAIMS TO DIVINITY (5:17-27)

- A. Equality with God in nature - 5:17-18
- 5:17** “But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. **18** Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.”
1. Refers to God as *“My Father”* - 5:17
 - a. He was claiming to have a unique relationship with God
 - b. Reference to Old Testament prophecy
 - i. Psalm 2:7
“I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.”
 - ii. Micah 5:2
“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”
 - iii. A claim to be the Son of God was a claim to be God
 - c. The Jews understood this claim as making Himself equal with God - 5:18
 2. Refers to the Father’s, and His, continuous works - 5:17
 - a. *“Worketh”* means “to work”⁸
 - b. *“Hitherto”* means “until this point”⁹
 - c. Sabbath rest was ordained by God for a specific purpose - Exodus 20:8-11
 - i. The Sabbath was holy - Exodus 20:8
 - ii. No work on the Sabbath - Exodus 20:9-10
 - iii. The Sabbath was established because of God’s seventh day of rest, but we have to ask, “From what work did God take his rest?” The answer: from His creative acts, but God doesn’t rest from being God on the Sabbath. - Exodus 20:11
 - iv. God holds all things together - Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3
 - d. His and the Father’s continuous work was their work as God

⁸ Thayer, p. 247, ref. 2038.

⁹ Ibid., p. 75, ref. 737.

B. Equality with God in power - 5:19-21

5:19 “Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. **20** For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. **21** For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.”

1. Claims that He and the Father are inseparable in their acts. “*The Son can do nothing of himself*” - 5:19
2. Claims to only do what He has seen the Father doing - 5:19
3. Claims that the love of the Father for the Son is the basis by which they share in this power - 5:20
 - a. The Father shows the Son all things that He, the Father, is doing
 - b. He will show “*greater works than these,*” which are the curing of the man at the Pool of Bethesda and healing on the Sabbath
4. Claims to have the power, like the Father, to give life - 5:21

C. Equality with God in authority - 5:22-23

5:22 “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: **23** That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.”

1. The Father commits all judgment to the Son - 5:22
2. The Father desires that all men should honor the Son - 5:23
 - a. “*Honour*” means “to prize; to revere; to honor” ¹⁰
 - b. To whom does God give His glory? With whom will God share his honor? None but himself. Therefore, if God desires that all men would honor Jesus, then Jesus is equal with God in authority.

THE TRUE IMPLICATIONS OF THESE CLAIMS (5:24)

5:24 “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life”

- A. Everlasting life is only possible by faith in Jesus Christ
- B. One must hear the words of Christ and “*believeth on Him that sent me.*” This phrase means to believe that God the Father has sent Jesus as the Son.
- C. To believe in the Son is to pass from death to life

LIFE LESSONS

1. It is God who heals. Believe in Him.
2. Jesus Christ is God. Believe in Him.

¹⁰ Strong, p. 72, ref. 5091.