

The Gospel of John

The Gospel of John

Lesson #47

The Journey

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The Gospel of John

John 5:2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. 3 In these lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. 5 One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be healed?” 7 The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me.” 8 Jesus said to him, “Get up, take up your bed, and walk.” 9 And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked. Now that day was the Sabbath.

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- You can't call this a “faith healing” because the man gives no indication he even knew Jesus, let alone believed in him.
- The man did not even seek healing from Jesus – this was an independent decision on Jesus’ part to bless this man.
- Just like Jesus worked at the molecular level to turn water to wine he now quietly commands the cells in the man’s legs to regenerate.....

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How to Recover from Muscle Atrophy

- Begin walking in water.
- Add body-weight strength exercises.
- Supplement with resistance tools.
- Add free weights in the form of dumbbells.
- Adopt a regular walking routine – just 10 mins/day at first.
- Stretch your muscles after each workout for five to 10 minutes.
- Eat a balanced diet to ensure you get all the nutrients you need.
- Be patient with your progress. It could take years to rebuild full strength and range of motion.

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At the command of Jesus his muscles will began to quiver and strengthen – and when Jesus gives the command to “Get up, take up your bed, and walk”, he does. He did something he hadn’t been able to do in 38 years. There is no mention of him struggling to rise, pick up his bed, and walk. There was no rehabilitation, no physical therapy, no anti-inflammatory medicines, no canes, no walkers – nothing! This is the power of God on full display, and it shouts to the masses “this is Jesus, the Son of God”!

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Now that day was the Sabbath.

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The Purpose of the Sabbath

The weekly Sabbath is a symbolic reminder of God’s divine, eternal rest, and the death penalty for working on the Sabbath pointed to the fate of unbelievers who refuse to enter God’s rest through the atoning death of Jesus Christ on the cross.

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The Jews’ Use of the Sabbath

The weekly Sabbath was a time to show what good rule keepers the “Jews” were and to show all the “little people” how they could punish those who fail to keep the rules the way they did. And there were lots of rules, 613 that came from God and many more added by tradition over the years. It was hardly possible to know what was “in” and what was “out” let alone obey them.

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- Luke 6:1 On a Sabbath, while he was going through the grainfields, his disciples plucked and ate some heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands. 2 But some of the Pharisees said, “Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?”
- The “Jews” were playing “gotcha” and claimed Jesus was harvesting the grain, which really was a prohibition in the O.T. Law.

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- We should understand the dilemma of the Israelite because we are Americans.
- According to Townhall.com in 2015 there were at least 5,000 criminal laws and close to 300,000 federal regulations that are subject to criminal prosecution.
- God was the author of OT law, but the “Jews” appointed themselves as regulators of God’s laws. 10

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- You would think that healing a man who had been enslaved to his inability for 38 years would cause even Jesus’ enemies to applaud him.
- But in the mind of the “Jews” doing even a kindness such as this on the Sabbath was a sin – probably more so because he had broken one of their regulations.
- The heart of man craves power over others. 11

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- Eccl 8:9 All this I have seen and applied my heart to every work that is done under the sun: There is a time in which one man rules over another to his own hurt.
- I don’t know why this is so, and it’s not true of everyone, but there is a fair portion of our population that craves power over others.
- Many politicians, Bill Gates, Klaus Schwab, etc.... 12

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- I think it is fair to say that the “Jews” who were going after Jesus fit this “power over you” model.
- But Jesus was not about to play by their rules just because that’s what they wanted – he is not going to go along to get along.
- So, a struggle is setup and begins in earnest right here in John 5 over power, but the “Jews” will frame it as spiritual superiority issue.

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So here it starts – the clash between the Son of God and the religious leaders of his day, the “Jews”. It will continue and escalate until Jesus is murdered by the supposed “spiritual” people of his day. Jesus knew who they were when he said, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore, you will receive greater condemnation.”

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- Christians are not under the Mosaic law – you will not find a NT command to keep the law. (neither are we told to break it)
- The 4th commandment is the only one of the ten not repeated in the New Testament.
- The Sabbath was a sign between God and Israel to mark them as his unique people and they were commanded to keep it religiously.

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- Exodus 31:15 And the Lord said to Moses, 13 “You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, ‘Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you. 14 You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death. Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. 15 Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death. 16

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- Because the “Jews” of Jesus’ day were immature rule keepers, the Sabbath got Jesus in trouble with the Jews more than anything else.
- I want you think of the “Jews” as the legalists of their day – a religious legalist is one who has found a rule they can obey and insist you do likewise.
- Whatever rule they can keep makes them more spiritual than you if do not keep the same one. 17

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- John 5:10 So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed.”
- Rather than marvel at his healing, they immediately point to their rules and what a sin it was he had committed.
- He wasn’t working – he was doing what the man who just healed told him to do. 18

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- John 5:11 But he answered them, “The man who healed me, that man said to me, ‘Take up your bed, and walk.’” 12 They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Take up your bed and walk?’” 13 Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place.
- Please note that Jesus did not make a show of his miracle – “Jesus had withdrawn”. 19

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- A good question at this point would be, “If Jesus withdrew himself from the scene, he clearly wasn’t looking for credit so why heal the man?”
- I think it is quite possible this man was chosen because of what John said in chapter 2 – “He knew what was in man”.
- Jesus knew the exact person at the pool to heal for it was he who would “run” to the Jews and sort of flaunt his Sabbath healing in front of them. 20

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- A confrontation is being setup over a healing on the Sabbath. The Jews would call healing a person work. They would also call what the healed man did, carry his bedding, work.
- But why was the confrontation necessary, even sought, by Jesus?
- Why would the rules of the Jews be seen as such evil that Jesus saw the need to setup a confrontation with the Jews over the issue? 21

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Israel was in an awful spiritual state and a key component of their backsliding was their obsession with keeping rules – not God’s rules, but their own! So, Jesus draws them out to show their sad condition. (He is like that! ☺) They had become experts at keeping traditions instead of God’s commands. They had achieved worldly success doing religious things and he was not going to let them go unchallenged.

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• John 5:14 Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, “See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.”

• This is not the only time Jesus did a post miracle visit to one he healed – both times seem to be a spiritual check-up.

• Both the man here, and the man in John 9 are revisited by Jesus – the man in John 9 affirms faith in him, but not this one in our text today.

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• Jesus says, “Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.” Wow, what a bedside manner Jesus has!

• That is a sobering thought – what could be worse than being incapacitated for 38 years and having to beg and depend on others?

• The answer – lots of things evidenced by Jesus’ own words when he said, “Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.”

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Jesus raises the issue that some sicknesses are the direct result of sin. Not all are, but to be clear some are. When we are ill it is always for one of these reasons – 1) we live in a sinful world where everything deteriorates, 2) we sometimes reap what we sow, 3) we are being chastened by the Lord, or 4) we are suffering for God’s glory.
More on this in 2 weeks.

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Questions?

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