

Calvary Chapel Viewpoint

Care Group

Study in John

John 5:1–23 (ESV)

¹ After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

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.

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.”

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¹³ Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place.

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.”

¹⁵ The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him.

¹⁶ And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.

¹⁷ But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.”

¹⁸ This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

¹⁹ So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.

²⁰ For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel.

²¹ For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will.

²² For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son,

²³ that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.

Jesus, Lord of the Sabbath

The first two miracles that John recorded were done privately, but this next one is public—and on the Sabbath day—which draws the attention and opposition of the Pharisees. Reaction to Jesus among the Jews moves from reservation to hostility.

What are the sick people doing at the pool of Bethesda? What was the popular belief about the pool?

John's reference to the length of this man's illness is perhaps to document its seriousness and his hopeless condition without Jesus.

Verse 6 Why did Jesus ask the obvious question "Do you want to get well?"

And why does the man not give a simple "Yes" in response?

This miracle was an example of what attribute of God? Grace—unmerited favor, undeserved goodness. This man has done nothing to deserve God's favor. He is the recipient of God's grace, not because of who he is or what he has done, but because of the kindness of our Lord alone. Men are always unworthy of the grace that God sovereignly bestows upon them.

Application: Where do you see evidence of God's grace in your life?

Instead of choosing one person, why didn't Jesus heal all the blind, lame, and paralyzed around the pool?

Verses 8 & 9: Jesus tells the man to "Get up!" and he does. There is some level of faith—or at least response—but no gratitude.

What was the Jews' response to the healing?

Application: Do we make up our own rules? There's a little bit of Pharisee in all of us. We define the rules based on our preferences.

Why were the Jewish religious leaders so upset?

What does the fourth commandment (Exodus 20:8-11) actually say about honoring the Sabbath?

Application: How does the fourth commandment apply to us today? Or does it?

Verses 13--15 Why do you think Jesus slipped away at this point?

Verses 13--15 When did Jesus run into the man again?

Verses 13--15 Was this a chance meeting?

Verses 13--15 What was the purpose?

As a result of this encounter, what was the response of the man?

The focus quickly changes from the paralytic to Jesus. What was the Jews' plan in regard to Jesus?

Knowing the plan, how did Jesus respond to the Jews' persecution? Jesus defends His actions by pointing out that He is merely imitating His Father by working on the Sabbath. Jesus does not say, "Our Father is always at work...and I, too, am working." He says, "My Father..." Jesus is claiming that God is His Father. He is claiming to be God!

Did the Jews understand what Jesus was claiming?

We cannot help but notice that those who are most in the wrong here are those who are sure they are right—the religious people. Wanting to be right, and thinking you are right are not the same as being right. Consider the sincerity of the cults.

Application: Just as Jesus did the right thing in healing the invalid, what can we expect from doing the right thing? Doing what is right is always the right thing to do. And doing what is right may very well produce a favorable response. But if our Lord's good deed resulted in betrayal by the recipient of a supernatural healing, and persecution by the Jewish religious leaders, let us expect that our good deeds may also produce some very unpleasant responses.

The controversy results in Jesus making the most thorough statement of His unity with the Father recorded in the Gospels.

Verses 19-23 describe the relationship of Father and Son. What are some of the distinctive's of that relationship?

Application: What does it mean in your life that Jesus is the only Son of God?