

Theme: Jesus healed the lame man with His powerful word on the Sabbath to show that He is Lord of the Sabbath because He is One with God the Father and does the works of the Father.

I. Intro - Plot Twist

- A. The Star Wars franchise - huge when I was a teen
- B. Evil Darth Vader had killed Luke's father - big plot twist "No I am your father"
- C. Parents today love filming their kids reaction to this twist
- D. John does a plot twist in the sign of healing the paralytic
- E. What is this sign? What is the reality to which it points?

II. The Sign: Healing the Paralytic

- A. Jesus returns to Jerusalem for an unspecified festival
Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. ² Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. ³ Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. John 5:1–3
 - 1. Jesus returns to Jerusalem where the Temple cleansing had provoked opposition (plot thickens)
 - 2. He is there for an unnamed festival - only time in John the festival is not specified (part of twist)
 - 3. He goes to a pool not far from the Temple
 - a. John gives details - five covered colonnades
 - b. They have uncovered this site under St. Annes Monastery in Jerusalem
 - c. Two pools surrounded by colonnades with one in the middle of them

- d. An aside - shows the historical accuracy of John!
- 4. The colonnades are full of the sick lying around
 - a. Probably hoping for alms or help
 - b. But there was a belief of healing in the waters (v7)
 - c. Older translations have a verse 4 that says why they thought this happened - After Hours will discuss
- B. Jesus talks with a man who had been lame for 38 years

One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. ⁶ When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?" ⁷ "Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me." John 5:5–7

- 1. 38 years - a lifetime back then! This is hopeless!
- 2. Jesus' question - "Do you want to get well?" - Would you like your whole life changed starting today?
- 3. Unlike turning the water to wine or healing the royal official's son, Jesus takes the initiative here. The man does not ask, Jesus initiates.
- 4. This is like the other sign in Jerusalem. In cleansing the Temple and healing this man, Jesus takes the initiative and acts directly.
- 5. The man's response shows his hopelessness. He has no one to help him, and he thinks he will never be healed.
- 6. The man's response shows no knowledge of Who Jesus is or faith that Jesus can heal him. He is not like the royal official, full of faith. He is only thinking of practicalities (who can help him get in the water).

C. The sign: the lame man gets up, takes bed, and walks!

Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk."⁹ At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. John 5:8–9

1. Once again, Jesus simply speaks His powerful word and the lame man can walk!
2. The water had not healed, nor had anything else - for 38 years! But with one word Jesus heals!
3. This was a sign of Messiah and the Messianic age

When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples³ to ask him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"⁴ Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see:⁵ The blind receive sight, **the lame walk**, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. Matthew 11:2–5

- a. The sign of Messiah - all kinds of healings
 - b. This included the lame walking - as here!
 - c. Based on texts like Isaiah 35:6
4. Jesus' healing of the man who had been unable to walk for 38 years was a powerful sign that He was the Messiah.

D. The plot twist: healing on the Sabbath

At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. **The day on which this took place was a Sabbath**,¹⁰ and so the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat."¹¹ But he replied, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'¹² So they asked him, "Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?"¹³ The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there. Jo 5:9–13

1. The whole story turns at this point!
2. The point is not just that Jesus healed, but that he healed the man on the Sabbath and told him to carry his bed!
3. The objection: it is against the Sabbath laws!
 - a. The OT verses forbidding carrying things (none!)
 - b. The Jews had created a list of 39 things that constituted "work" forbidden on the Sabbath
 - c. This clearly violated the prohibition against carrying things from one place to another on the Sabbath
 - d. Jesus had specifically done this healing to provoke a conversation and conflict to show His identity
 1. He could have healed the man any day - it had been 38 years!
 2. He did not have to say "Take your bed"
 3. Jesus did not have to find the man later

The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.¹⁴ Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you."¹⁵ The man went away and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him well. John 5:13–15
4. Jesus is clearly wanting to provoke the leaders into a discussion to reveal something about Who He is

III. The Reality: The Lord of the Sabbath

A. The first issue: the Sabbath

So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him...¹⁸ For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. John 5:16, 18

1. The leaders began a settled opposition to Jesus that ultimately led to them conspiring to kill Him
2. “doing” and “persecuting” imperfect tense - ongoing series of actions - a real turning point in the story
3. All four Gospels indicate Jesus actions on the Sabbath as being a critical part of why the Pharisees and others opposed Him and ultimately wanted Him put to death.
4. The word for “breaking” in v18 is very strong, having the idea of ultimately undermining and destroying the Sabbath.
5. This is the first time we hear they want to kill Him, but it will not be the last.
6. Jesus’ defense: God works on the Sabbath
In his defense Jesus said to them, “**My Father is always at his work to this very day**, and I too am working.” John 5:17
 - a. Note Jesus is making a “defense” against their accusations that He had no right to do what He did on the Sabbath.
 - b. Note Jesus does not argue about whether the 39 definitions of work are right or not - He has a deeper issue He wants to get to.
 - c. He does not argue about the purpose of the Sabbath as He does on other occasions (Mark 2:27-28)
 - d. Jesus says the Father always works - even on the Sabbath
 - e. Jewish thought actually agreed since the universe could not exist on the Sabbath unless God sustained it.

- f. God’s “rest” on the Sabbath meant He had finished His work of creation, but His work of sustaining it continued even on the Sabbath.
- g. But how does that explain what Jesus did?

B. The core issue: Jesus’ identity

In his defense Jesus said to them, “**My Father** is always at his work to this very day, **and I too am working.**”
¹⁸For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but **he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.** John 5:17–18

1. Jesus called God “My Father” - extremely unusual in Judaism, and usually very suspect.
2. Jesus linked His work with the work of God. Since the Father works on the Sabbath, Jesus works on the Sabbath.
3. Together, these constitute a clear claim to Deity - which the Jewish leaders do not miss!
4. This is what really cements their sustained desire to oppose and ultimately kill Jesus - He is claiming to be God.

C. The reality: Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath

1. This is the real issue Jesus wants the leaders to confront!
2. Jesus is not just a human and therefore under Sabbath laws, He is the Lord of the Sabbath, the Eternal Creator Who gave the Sabbath to man!
3. This reinforces the opening words of John

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. John 1:1–3

- a. The doctrine of the Trinity - with God, was God; He and the Father are described as working together throughout chapter 5
- b. Jesus is the Creator Who made all things
- c. Jesus is the One Who created the Sabbath and gave it to us as a gift, and Who by His work every Sabbath maintains the entire universe.
- d. Jesus could not break the Sabbath because as the Eternal Son of God He is the Lord of the Sabbath!

IV. Applying the Word

A. Do I understand Who Jesus claimed to be?

1. Many try to get around this - then and now
2. Great teacher; good man; wise sage; prophet
3. He removes all chances of this!

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you

can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. ... Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God.

4. The Jewish leaders recognize the claim - do I?

B. Worshipping the Lord of the Sabbath in faith

1. Remember the point of the signs - to provoke faith!
Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. John 20:30–31
2. We have these reliable historical records so that we might exercise faith in Jesus as Son of God
3. If you have not - look to Him in faith today!
4. If you have, don't let others doubt dissuade you
5. If you have, don't let others opposition dissuade you
6. He is Creator! Redeemer! Sustainer! Coming King!
7. Look to Him with faith and worship - He is worthy!

C. Closing prayer of faith and worship

The Lord of the Sabbath

John 5:1-18

March 31, 2019

Prayer

2 John 1:3

Teaching keywords: Christology; Deity of Christ; Lent; miraculous gifts and signs; Sabbath and rest

May grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, be with you in truth and love. 2 John 1:3

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