



January 12, 2025  
*Jesus at the Festivals*



## AN UNKNOWN FEAST AND THE GOSPEL

John 5:1-18

1. **Opening Discussion Questions:** (in a group setting you may not want to use all of these)
  - a. You've probably heard the expression, "No good deed goes unpunished." Do you have an example from your life or that of someone you know that tends to validate that saying? Share some details.
  - b. When have you encountered a rule or regulation that prevented you from doing something good and necessary? What did you do about it?
  - c. Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. are both known for using civil disobedience to accomplish goals for the greater good of their countries. In what circumstances do you believe a Christian can/should adopt such a policy? How do you think participating in civil disobedience would affect your witness to the lost?
2. **Sermon Outline/Key Points**
  - a. Jesus Healed a Long-Disabled Man on a Sabbath
    - i. A second festival and a third sign
    - ii. Religious leaders confronted the man who had been healed
    - iii. Jesus makes His greater point when they confronted Him
  - b. Jesus Illustrated the Gospel with this Healing
    - i. Like the man, when it comes to sin, we're unable to help ourselves
    - ii. Like the man, Jesus sees, knows, and invites us to be healed though we don't deserve it
    - iii. Like the man, our healing is instantaneous, total, and complete
  - c. Jesus Revealed He Is God's Son with this Healing
    - i. Jesus had a reason for performing this unsolicited sign - to spark controversy and reveal Himself
    - ii. Have you fully reckoned with Jesus as God's Son?
3. **Study/Discussion Points:**
  - a. **Sunday Afternoon** – As soon as possible after listening to the sermon set aside some time to ponder these questions prayerfully:
    - i. What one thing most stood out to you in this sermon?
    - ii. What new truth did you learn or of what truth were you reminded?
    - iii. After listening to the sermon, is there a Scripture passage you feel led to meditate on or commit to memory this week?
    - iv. What is one thing you feel God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
    - v. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?
  - b. **Monday:**
    - i. Begin this week by carefully reading the sermon focal passage, John 5:1-18, several times (from different translations if they are available).
      1. Make a list of the specific details John provides about this event. What does John not tell us that might have been expected?

2. Before studying more, how would you describe the purpose and objective Jesus had for performing this miracle?
  3. If you were to pick out one central truth as the takeaway from this passage, what would it be?
- ii. John does not attempt to relate all of the signs (miracles) Jesus performs but instead relates just a few to support the theological points he is making in his Gospel. Review the first two signs (John 2:1-11 and 4:46-54). In what ways did the healing at the Pools of Bethesda differ from the first two signs?
  - iii. Verse 1 sets the stage for what is to come but pointedly leaves out two key details. What are they? Why do you think we are not told how much time went by or which feast it was?
  - iv. What significance do you see in the fact that this took place near the Sheep Gate? If you have access to a map of Jerusalem in New Testament times locate the Sheep Gate and the Pools of Bethesda (sometimes called the Sheep's Pool).
    1. Why do you think this particular gate got its name? What does it suggest about the main activity occurring in this part of Jerusalem?
    2. What does the fact that there were five colonnades suggest about the importance of these pools?

c. **Tuesday:**

- i. Read and meditate on John 5:3-9a.
  1. What mental picture do you get after reading verse 3? Is this a place you would want to go to or one you would want to avoid if possible?
  2. If you are reading the ESV, NIV, CSB, or many other translations what is missing from this section?
  3. The last few words of verse 3 and all of verse 4 read: *“waiting for the moving of the water; <sup>4</sup>for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and stirred the water: whoever stepped in first after the stirring of the water was healed of whatever disease he had.”*
    - a. While these words are not found in many of the earliest copies of John (so are generally not considered part of the original Gospel of John and are left out of modern translations) what do they add to the account?
    - b. Even if there is no truth to these words why would such a myth have been necessary?
- ii. Verse 5 introduces the man who will be healed.
  1. How long had he been an invalid? How long had he laid by the pool?
  2. How does the question Jesus asked the invalid strike you? In today's society would you ask a handicapped person, particularly one you don't know personally such a question? If you did ask, what capability would the invalid expect you to possess?
  3. How does the invalid respond? Does he ever answer Jesus' question? Based on this limited exchange how would you describe the invalid's attitude? Do you see any indication of faith at work?

- iii. How did Jesus heal the man? What tone of voice do you think Jesus used when He told the invalid to “Get up”? How does the way Jesus performs this healing compare to the raising of Lazarus (John 11:43)?
- iv. At other times in His ministry Jesus healed a great many people (see Matthew 4:23, 9:35, Luke 6:19, 9:6 & 11). What does it say to you that when Jesus came to this “multitude” of blind, lame, and paralyzed He singled out just one for healing? How does Exodus 33:19 apply? What lesson can we learn that applies to us today?

*d. Wednesday:*

- i. Read and meditate on John 5:9-15.
  - 1. After Jesus’ command in verse 8 do you think it would have been possible for this invalid to have not got up and walked (consider Mark 4:39-41)?
  - 2. What new information do we learn in verse 9 that becomes critical to the rest of this passage?
  - 3. When the Jewish leaders saw the man carrying his bed how did they respond? To your knowledge does the Old Testament forbid anyone from carrying their bed?
- ii. How does the now-healed invalid respond to the Jewish leaders?
  - 1. What similarities do you see to the responses Adam and Eve gave to God in Genesis 3:12-13?
  - 2. What does his response suggest about his faith and how he felt about Jesus? Does his attitude seem to be one of thankfulness and appreciation or of self-interest only?
  - 3. Verses 12 and 13 seem to provide some justification for the man’s response by pointing out that he didn’t know Jesus but then what do you think of his actions after Jesus talks to him in the temple? If Jesus healed you of a life-long disability would you be inclined to want to leave Jesus?
  - 4. Compare this healing with that of the lame man Peter heals in Acts 3:1-10. How are the responses of the two men different? Recognizing that we are not able to judge what is in anyone's heart, which would you think most likely had true faith in Jesus?
- iii. Jesus told the former invalid to “Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.” What worse could happen to him than had already happened? He had experienced a miracle but what greater miracle did he still need?

*e. Thursday:*

- i. Read and meditate on John 5:15-18.
  - 1. What are the immediate consequences for Jesus of performing this miracle? How does verse 16 let us know that the leader’s reaction was not just to this one event?
  - 2. Many commentators see John 5 as being written like a trial with the prosecution's case, violating the Sabbath, being presented in the first 16 verses and Jesus’ defense in the verses that follow.
    - a. Viewing the passage that way, what is surprising about the defense Jesus gives to having violated the Sabbath? Read Exodus 20:8-11 to see exactly what God commanded. How does Jesus’ response square with the command in Exodus?

- b. Often in the Gospels the confrontation between Jesus and the Jewish leaders focuses on their extensive set of rules for the Sabbath (see for example Mark 2:23-27). Is that what Jesus is doing here? How does He go way beyond that argument?
    - c. The Jewish leaders recognized as part of their theology that when God “rested” from creation (Genesis 2:2-3) He began the “work” of sustaining His creation. How did that understanding influence their interpretation of Jesus’ pronouncement in verse 17?
  - ii. Often in our society the tendency is to call Jesus a good man and a great teacher but to deny that He is Divine. Spend time meditating on these verses and, if in a group setting, discussing how John 5:16-18 makes such a view an impossible fallacy.
- f. **Friday:**
  - i. Read John 5:19-47
  - ii. In the verses following the focal passage (John 5:1-18) Jesus expands on his defense making three significant claims.
    - 1. What does Jesus claim in verses 19-23?
    - 2. What authority does Jesus claim in verses 24-29?
    - 3. In verses 30-47 what does He tell us to validate His earlier claims? How does Jesus turn the table in these final verses? Who ends up on trial?
- g. **Saturday:**
  - i. Read the entire chapter – John 5 – meditating on what God is teaching you through this scripture about His Son.

#### 4. Application:

- a. It is imperative that we reject the world’s attempt to make Jesus over as a “great teacher”. C.S. Lewis made the point crystal clear in *Mere Christianity*:  
*“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.”*
- b. Jesus went out of His way to heal the invalid, which led to His persecution. What does John 5 teach us about the risks we should take to help those truly in need? How much are we willing to suffer in order to reduce or eliminate suffering by the “multitude of invalids – blind, lame and paralyzed” whether it is physical or spiritual?

#### 5. Prayer Points:

- a. Adoration – Psalms 8:1 and 29:1-2
- b. Confession – Proverbs 28:13 and 1 John 1:8-10
- c. Thanksgiving – Psalms 95:1-2 and 100:4-5
- d. Supplications – Matthew 21:22 and John 16:19