



Lesson 15 – Bethesda and the Sanhedrin

Based on John 5

1) What information does our lesson start off with today?

John 5:1-2 After this there was a _____ of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue _____, having five porches.

2) What was there?

John 5:3-4 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the _____ of the water. 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 _____ of whatsoever disease he had.

At certain seasons the waters of this pool were agitated, and it was commonly believed that this was the result of supernatural power, and that whoever first after the troubling of the pool stepped into the waters, would be healed of whatever disease he had. Hundreds of sufferers visited the place; but so great was the crowd when the water was troubled that they rushed forward, trampling underfoot men, women, and children, weaker than themselves.

Jesus was again at Jerusalem. Walking alone, in apparent meditation and prayer, He came to the pool. He saw the wretched sufferers watching for that which they supposed to be their only chance of cure. He longed to exercise His healing power, and make every sufferer whole. But it was the Sabbath day. Multitudes were going to the temple for worship, and He knew that such an act of healing would so excite the prejudice of the Jews as to cut short His work.

3) What did Jesus do?

John 5:5-6 And a certain man was there, which had an _____ thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, _____ thou be made whole?

Alone and friendless, feeling that he was shut out from God's mercy, the sufferer had passed long years of misery. At the time when it was expected that the waters would be troubled, those who pitied his helplessness would bear him to the porches. But at the favored moment he had no one to help him in. He had seen the rippling of the water, but had never been able to get farther than the edge of the pool.

4) What did the helpless man reply?

John 5:7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the _____: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

Hope came to his heart. He felt that in some way he was to have help. But the glow of encouragement soon faded. He remembered how often he had tried to reach the pool, and now he had little prospect of living till it should again be troubled. He turned away wearily.

5) What did Jesus Reply?

John 5:8 Jesus saith unto him, _____, take up thy bed, and walk.



Jesus does not ask this sufferer to exercise faith in Him. He simply says, **“Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.”** But the man's faith takes hold upon that word. Every nerve and muscle thrills with new life, and healthful action comes to his crippled limbs. Without question he sets his will to obey the command of Christ, and all his muscles respond to his will. Springing to his feet, he finds himself an active man.

- 6) What did the Apostle Paul cry out to God?

Romans 7:24 O wretched man that I am! who shall _____ me from the body of this death?

Of ourselves we are no more capable of living a holy life than was the impotent man capable of walking. There are many who realize their helplessness, and who long for that spiritual life which will bring them into harmony with God; they are vainly striving to obtain it.

Let these desponding, struggling ones look up. The Saviour is bending over the purchase of His blood, saying with inexpressible tenderness and pity, **“Wilt thou be made whole?”** He bids you arise in health and peace. Do not wait to feel that you are made whole. Believe His word, and it will be fulfilled. Put your will on the side of Christ.

- 7) What did Paul remind the Ephesian believers?

Ephesians 2:1 And you hath he _____, who were dead in trespasses and sins.

- 8) What did the healed man do?

John 5:9 And immediately the man was made whole, and _____ his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

As he hurried on his way with firm, free step, praising God and rejoicing in his new-found strength, he met several of the Pharisees, and immediately told them of his cure. He was surprised at the coldness with which they listened to his story.

- 9) Did the religious folks rejoice with the healed man?

John 5:10 The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not _____ for thee to carry thy bed.

These rulers knew well that only One had shown Himself able to perform this miracle; but they wished for direct proof that it was Jesus, that they might condemn Him as a Sabbath-breaker. In their judgment He had not only broken the law in healing the sick man on the Sabbath, but had committed sacrilege in bidding him bear away his bed.

- 10) Did the man healed, know who healed him?

John 5:13 And he that was healed _____ not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place.

- 11) What commission did Jesus give to this man?

John 5:14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: _____ no more, lest a _____ thing come unto thee.

The healed man was overjoyed at meeting his Deliverer. Ignorant of the enmity toward Jesus, he told the Pharisees who had questioned him, that this was He who had performed the cure.



12) How did the Jews react to all this?

John 5:16-18 And therefore did the Jews _____ Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the _____, but said also that God was his Father, making himself _____ with God.

Notwithstanding the Jews efforts to counteract His work, Christ was gaining, even in Jerusalem, an influence over the people greater than their own. Multitudes who were not interested in the harangues of the rabbis were attracted by His teaching. They could understand His words, and their hearts were warmed and comforted. He spoke of God, not as an avenging judge, but as a tender father, and He revealed the image of God as mirrored in Himself.

13) What prophecy was given about Christ in Genesis?

Genesis 49:10 The _____ shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

The people were gathering to Christ. The sympathetic hearts of the multitude accepted lessons of love and benevolence in preference to the rigid ceremonies required by the priests.

14) What did Isaiah say about Messiah?

Isaiah 42:21 The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will _____ the law, and make it honourable.

Isaiah 42:4 He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his _____.

He had come to free the Sabbath from those burdensome requirements that had made it a curse instead of a blessing. For this reason He had chosen the Sabbath upon which to perform the act of healing at Bethesda. He could have healed the sick man as well on any other day of the week; or He might simply have cured him, without bidding him bear away his bed. But this would not have given Him the opportunity He desired. A wise purpose underlay every act of Christ's life on earth.

15) How did Jesus reply about healing on the Sabbath?

John 5:17 But Jesus answered them, My Father _____ hitherto, and I work.

All days are God's, in which to carry out His plans for the human race. If the Jews' interpretation of the law was correct, then Jehovah was at fault, whose work has quickened and upheld every living thing since first He laid the foundations of the earth; then He who pronounced His work good, and instituted the Sabbath to commemorate its completion, must put a period to His labor, and stop the never-ending routine of the universe.

Should God forbid the sun to perform its office upon the Sabbath, cut off its genial rays from warming the earth and nourishing vegetation? Must the system of worlds stand still through that holy day? Should He command the brooks to stay from watering the fields and forests, and bid the waves of the sea still their ceaseless ebbing and flowing? Must the wheat and corn stop growing, and the ripening cluster defer its purple bloom? Must the trees and flowers put forth no bud nor blossom on the Sabbath?



God could not for a moment stay His hand, or man would faint and die. And man also has a work to perform on this day. The necessities of life must be attended to, the sick must be cared for, the wants of the needy must be supplied. He will not be held guiltless who neglects to relieve suffering on the Sabbath. God's holy rest day was made for man, and acts of mercy are in perfect harmony with its intent. God does not desire His creatures to suffer an hour's pain that may be relieved upon the Sabbath or any other day.

16) What was the reaction of the Jews to Jesus?

John 5:18 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 _____ with God.

17) Jesus replied:

John 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 _____.

The priests and rabbis were taking the Son of God to task for the very work He had been sent into the world to do. By their sins they had separated themselves from God, and in their pride were moving independently of Him. They felt sufficient in themselves for all things, and realized no need of a higher wisdom to direct their acts. But the Son of God was surrendered to the Father's will, and dependent upon His power. So utterly was Christ emptied of self that He made no plans for Himself.

18) What Psalm did Jesus take to heart?

Psalm 40:8 I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy _____ is within my heart.

19) How can we do right things?

Ephesians 2:22 In whom ye also are builded together for an _____ of God through the Spirit.

20) What did Jesus do for us?

1 Peter 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should _____ his steps:

The words of Christ teach that we should regard ourselves as inseparably bound to our Father in heaven. Whatever our position, we are dependent upon God, who holds all destinies in His hands. He has appointed us our work, and has endowed us with faculties and means for that work. So long as we surrender the will to God, and trust in His strength and wisdom, we shall be guided in safe paths, to fulfill our appointed part in His great plan.

21) What was Christ's purpose in coming in the flesh?

John 3:17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be _____.

Can you see that God is in control?

Are you interested in knowing His plan for you?

When is the time to step out in faith?