

When God Shows Up: Seven Miracles in John

Lesson 3

John 5:1-30

May 29, 2022

Healing that Revealed Legalism

INTRODUCTION

A typical definition of legalism is something like “trying to earn God’s favor by keeping the rules,” but if we take a deeper look at legalism, we find the real offense: trusting ourselves and our own efforts rather than trusting in God’s power. We have a Father in Heaven that is crazy about us and longs to heal us with His tender power, but when we try to fix ourselves, we insulate ourselves from His grace.

In John 5, we read the account of a man that had been disabled for 38 years, always hoping that he might be able to heal himself. We also read about the Jewish authorities demanding that their interpretation of the law for the Sabbath be kept.

So often, we don’t think that we are smart enough, skinny enough, wealthy enough, good enough, etc., etc. We try so hard to fix ourselves, all the while forgetting that the power that crafted the universe and healed the invalid is also available to us. Jesus loves us dearly and wants to drench us in His grace and heal us in ways that we cannot fathom.

Memory verse: “Then Jesus said to him, ‘Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.’ At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.”—John 5:8-9

Pray, and read John 5:1-30. What questions or observations do you have about this passage?

OBSERVATION: What do the passages say?

1. Who did Jesus have a conversation with in the first part of this passage? (John 5:5-9)
2. How long had the man been disabled? (John 5:5)
3. What did Jesus do for the man? (John 5:8-9)
4. Why did the Jewish authorities not like what Jesus had done? (John 5:10, 16)
5. What promises did Jesus make to believers during His responses to the Jewish authorities? (John 5:20-21, 24-25)

INTERPRETATION: What do the passages mean?

1. The man in this account believed that he would be healed if he was the first person in the pool after the waters were stirred, but someone else was always first. Why do you think he kept trying the same thing over and over again rather than seeking God's healing? (John 5:2-7)

2. With one command, Jesus enabled the man to walk, even though he'd been disabled for 38 years. What does this say about the authority of Jesus? (John 5:8-9)

3. Legalism occurs when we rely on our own efforts rather than in trusting in God's power and grace. Where do we see legalism in the Jewish leaders' response to Jesus? (John 5:18) Where do we see it in the disabled man's efforts to heal himself? (John 5:2-5, 7-10)

2. In Exodus 20:8, God said, “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.” He established rules to make sure that the Sabbath would not be just another “workday.” That said, however, the gospels are filled with examples of how Jesus was very active in His Father’s work on the Sabbath. What does this say about the kinds of work you should or should not be doing on the Sabbath? (Exodus 20:8-11; Mark 2:27; Luke 6:1-11; John 5:5-10)

3. The man at the pool was trusting in his own efforts to heal himself but kept coming up short. Then, with one command, Jesus healed the man of his 38-year disability. The same power that brought healing to that man can bring healing to us. Read through Jesus’ promises in this passage (John 5:20-24), and jot down any thoughts or emotions that come to your mind.