

**Life in His Name – Part 11**  
**The Works of God – John 5:1-18**  
Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023

**Intro:**

- This morning we are continuing to follow Jesus’s ministry as recorded in the Gospel of John. John highlights and drives home the message of who Jesus is in order to convince the hearers to place their faith and lives in Jesus.
- Last week we read about Jesus’s interaction with a man who came to Him out of desperation for his son, who was at death’s door. Jesus moved this man from seeking Him, to trusting in His word, to putting his faith in Him for salvation. We also learned about ourselves, our culture, and the difference between welcoming Jesus and honoring Jesus.
- Now this morning we will learn more about Jesus, how and why He works, who He is, and why that matters for our understanding of Him, ourselves, and the world around us.
- The first thing we will see in this passage is Jesus strategically working.

**Jesus strategically works**

**John 5:1-9 ESV**

**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 disabled people—blind, lame, and paralyzed. 5 One man was there who had been disabled 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.**

- Okay, to understand what is happening here, we have to make some observations and ask some questions. So, Jesus was north in the region of Galilee, and sometime later, He went back to Jerusalem for a feast, which assured that many people would be in the city.
- Why did Jesus do this miracle, at this time, in this place, to this man? Jesus could have done this miracle up in Galilee or any place in between. He intentionally chose to do this work in the area which was the center of Jewish worship and religious piety and power. He was strategic in this decision.
- Jesus did not go to the temple where He was during His last visit. He went to a different place where people would not recognize Him, but one that was close enough to the temple that there would be religious rabbis and rulers close by.
- Jesus did not heal everybody; He had a multitude of people to pick from, but only healed one. Why did He specifically choose this man and not someone else? He wanted a person who He knew would not recognize Him, someone who was immobile or blind. And He needed someone who had something to pick up and move, someone who had to do some “work,” because Jesus

wanted to make a bigger point than demonstrating His power and authority. Jesus strategically chose to do this work on a Sabbath day (He could have chosen any day to do this miracle).

- Jesus was also looking for someone who wanted to be healed, for not everyone does. Sometimes a person's disability or infirmity becomes his identity, and Jesus works within our will.
- Jesus found His man, and He told him to "get up," and not just to get up, but also specifically to pick up his mat and walk. Why these instructions? Because the text tells us it was the Sabbath (the day of rest), and Jesus wanted this man to "work" and be seen doing so by those who took their religion very, very seriously.
- The works of God are intentional, strategic, and bigger than they originally seem. Miracles and works of God always have a greater purpose than the work itself. They are given and done to reveal who God is and who we are, and the greater need and good. Miracles and healing are a means to an end, not an end in themselves.
- Jesus strategically does this work, in this place (the house of mercy—near the temple), on this day (the Sabbath), to this man (lame, with a bed), with specific instructions (pick up your mat and walk) anonymously. He then slips back into the crowd to prove some bigger points. The first is to reveal our hearts.

### Jesus reveals our hearts

#### John 5:10-13 ESV

**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.**

- I hope the response of the Jews to this work of God made you mad. How could they be more concerned about their religious rules than they were about the work of God in a life that desperately needed it? How could they be like that? And then we have to stop and ask ourselves the same question, am I that way? Am I more concerned about how the preacher dresses than what the preacher says? Am I more concerned about the seating than I am about the person in the seat? Am I more concerned about their flaws than I am about their faith? Am I more concerned about their tattoos than I am about if they are teachable? Am I more concerned about their skin color than I am about their sin-condition? Am I more concerned about what they are drinking or what they are thinking? The Jews' religion blinded them from seeing the works of God. Our man-made religious rules still do the same today.
- Our response to the works of God reveals our hearts, and what we focus on reveals how we truly see. Jesus is after way more than healing our bodies, or fixing our finances, or easing our pain. He wants our hearts. He is looking to see if we love Him more than anything or anyone. Do we want Him more than anything that He can give to us? Will we move beyond welcoming Him, to honoring Him, to trusting Him, to giving our lives to Him? Jesus is the great revealer of our hearts, who we truly are. He is the one who sees what is true, because He is the truth, and the way, and the life.
- Jesus is not content to fix what we think is our greatest need; He looks to identify our greatest need.

## Jesus identifies our greatest need

### John 5:14-15 ESV

**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.**

- Jesus then goes to the temple to find this guy. Why the temple? Because that is where the priests and religious leaders would be, and also, this guy had to go to a priest to be examined and declared that he was healed. This is why Jesus found this man at the temple and said, “See, you are well!”
- But Jesus does not just leave it at that. He cuts to this man’s heart and tells him to “sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.” So what is He addressing? Is Jesus talking about something worse that would happen to him physically? But what would be worse than not being able to walk for 38 years? Jesus is not talking about the “something worse” that could happen in this life, but what could happen to him in the next life. What happens next is of far greater importance than anything that happens in this life, either good or bad. What happens there will be far greater or far worse than anything in this life.
- If someone is healed, then goes to hell, the temporary issue may be fixed, but the eternal issue remains. Jesus identifies our greatest need, which is not healing in our body but healing of our hearts. He is more concerned about our sin issue than our surface issue. This is our greatest need, and this is the greatest need that Jesus will heal if we turn to Him.
- Now we see what Jesus was really doing, and John shows us what also was being revealed.

## Jesus is equal to the Father

### John 5:16-18 ESV

**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.**

- The Jews were persecuting Jesus and also prosecuting Jesus (as we will see next week) because He was breaking the Sabbath. “How dare Jesus go against my religious rules!” Jesus’s defense for His working on the Sabbath was to claim the exemption for working that the Jews gave God the Father. (The Jews agreed that God continues to work on the Sabbath because if He ceased to work, then everything would fall apart. So God was “exempt” from working on the Sabbath; it was fine for Him to work). So when Jesus said, “My Father is working until now and I am working” Jesus was saying that the same exemption the Father gets, He got as well, because He is equal to the Father. He was saying that He is God (equal in value, different in role—the persons of the Trinity have different roles and there is no distinction in equality).
- Jesus is equal to God. Jesus is God. He is the Christ, the Son of God. By believing that, you may have life in His name (John 20:30). Don’t let your religious beliefs blind you from seeing the truth about God and seeing God. We must pay attention to this Man, what He says, what He says about Himself, and what is said about Him.

## **Conclusion**

- My hope is that something spoke to you today. Hold onto it, and let that truth sink into your heart and make a difference. Know that Jesus strategically works and is working. Know that what He does is bigger than you may initially see. Make sure your religion does not keep you from seeing and rejoicing in the works of God. Examine your heart for this. Ask God to examine your heart. And if you have not taken Jesus seriously, nor have you taken His words seriously, do so. Look at them, examine them, deal with them, think about them, and live them. If you have not put your trust in Him to be forgiven of your sin and made new by His Spirit, do so today.