

The Year of Discipleship in 3-D

(Further Developing Devoted Followers of Christ)



Welcome! Growing into more fully-devoted followers of Christ, may this time help all: **Grow Upward** into a more mature personal relationship and commitment to Christ Jesus faithful to God's Word!

Grow Outward to neighbor and world around, learning how to love well and to lead in what matters to God - guided by God's Word, by Jesus Himself, and by the Holy Spirit!

And, **Grow Inward** to discover a more contemplative faith, enhanced by both silence and prayer!

The Scripture for Sunday, February 6, 2022

[STUDY LESSON 22]

THE GOOD NEWS READING:

John 4:46-54; 5:1-18

Then he came again to Cana in Galilee where he had changed the water into wine. Now there was a royal official whose son lay ill in Capernaum. {47} When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and begged him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. {48} Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe." {49} The official said to him, "Sir, come down before my little boy dies." {50} Jesus said to him, "Go; your son will live." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started on his way. {51} As he was going down, his slaves met him and told him that his child was alive. {52} So he asked them the hour when he began to recover, and they said to him, "Yesterday at one in the afternoon the fever left him." {53} The father realized that this was the hour when Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." So he himself believed, along with his whole household. {54} Now this was the second sign that Jesus did after coming from Judea to Galilee.

{5:1} After this there was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. {2} Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. {3} In these lay many invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. {5} One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. {6} When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" {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 making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me." {8} Jesus said to him, "Stand up, take your mat and walk." {9} At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.

Now that day was a sabbath. {10} So the Jews said to the man who had been cured, "It is the sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your mat." {11} But he answered them, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Take up your mat and walk.'" {12} They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take it up and walk?'" {13} Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had disappeared in the crowd that was there. {14} Later Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you have been made well! Do not sin any more, so that nothing worse happens to you." {15} The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. {16} Therefore the Jews started persecuting Jesus, because he was doing such things on the sabbath. {17} But Jesus answered them, "My Father is still working, and I also am working." {18} For this reason the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because he was not only breaking the sabbath, but was also calling God his own Father, thereby making himself equal to God.

DISCUSSION GUIDANCE AND QUESTIONS:

1. Open *(or have someone in the group open)* with a prayer inviting the work of the Holy Spirit to open up the hearts and lives of any and all to shape believers into more fully devoted following of Christ.
2. Read *(or have one or more persons read)* the passage printed above *(or from a bible)*.
3. What words or phrases caught your attention as you heard this passage read? Put another way, were you to choose to memorize a verse and cherish it from this text, what verse might that be and why? Take note within yourself, what sort of feelings arise in that word, phrase, or verse?

4. BACKGROUND NOTES: This Cana to Cana “loop” (*John 2:1 to John 4:46*) draws to a close and the reader encounters two miraculous healing signs back-to-back at the close of John 4 and beginning of John 5. Both unfold with little drama: “Go: your son will live” and “Stand up, take your mat and walk.” (*John 4:50 and 5:8*) The first impacts the relationship of a father (royal official possibly a gentile) and a son. The second, a man, due to a lengthy illness, severed from participation in the Jewish religious life. One arises from something of a directive by the father, similar to Jesus’ mother at the wedding (see John 4:49). The other comes as a result of Jesus inquiring (the obvious), if the sick man wants to be made well (see *John 5:6*). His lengthy illness could easily be described as a lifetime in duration. The settings for each take us once more from Cana back to Jerusalem for another festival of the Jews.
5. Try to come in touch with the emotional state of each of the men involved in these signs. What range of feelings might be you be able to identify?
6. Notice how the royal official takes Jesus at His word before any clear evidence of Jesus doing anything yet. While we appreciate and value “evidence,” how much of believing has, for you, to do with first taking Jesus at His word?
7. Harkening back to John 1, in the prologue we learn of Jesus being full of “grace and truth” (see *John 1:14, 18*). Jesus will also declare in the He “The way, the truth and the life.” (See *John 14:6*) These signs seem to have more to do with the Jesus words as truth, or trustworthy. How is your trusting Jesus’ words these days?
8. How ironic is it, for the name sick for thirty-eight years and excluded from the religious and community of the Jews, is, after having been cured, suffers still at the hands of the Jews for having violated Jewish Sabbath laws?
9. At the Sheep Gate pool, the man is told succinctly to “stand up, take up your mat and walk.” What might be some implications or significance in him doing exactly that? For the present moment? For his future? As indicative of something more profound happening to him?
10. What significance might there be that Jesus finds the man in the temple (*John 5:14*) after being cured, a place he was prohibited from entering previously due to his illness?
11. The Father/Son relationship of Jesus and intimate connection are highlighted in the Jews taking offense and beginning to persecute Jesus. See “calling God his own Father, thereby making himself equal to God.” (*John 5:18*)
12. Following (or discipleship) obviously implies taking Jesus at his word, a word of truth. What are some words of Jesus that you are “all in” on in trusting?
13. Spend some time talking or reflecting upon scripture memory as an aspect of discipleship. If willing, share (*or personally identify within yourself*) various things Jesus has said which aid you walk of faith.
14. What is your main discipleship “takeaway” from this text?
15. Can you identify any particular ways your Christian faith and following might be inspired to change in light of these two signs of Jesus from the Bible (and any discussion and/or reflection that may have taken place)?
16. (*Optional*) Read the passage once more. Then, take some time to close (or have someone close) with a prayer.