



Unit .22

Session .03

Jesus Heals a Man at Bethesda

Scripture



John 5:2-18

2 By the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem there is a pool, called Bethesda in Aramaic, which has five colonnades. **3** Within these lay a large number of the disabled—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 realized he had already been there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to get well?” **7** “Sir,” the disabled man answered, “I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I’m coming, someone goes down ahead of me.” **8** “Get up,” Jesus told him, “pick up your mat and walk.” **9** Instantly the man got well, picked up his mat, and started to walk. Now that day was the Sabbath, **10** and so the Jews said to the man who had been healed, “This is the Sabbath. The law prohibits you from picking up your mat.” **11** He replied, “The

man who made me well told me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’” **12** “Who is this man who told you, ‘Pick up your mat and walk?’” they asked. **13** But the man who was healed did not know who it was, because Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there. **14** After this, Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, “See, you are well. Do not sin anymore, so that something worse doesn’t happen to you.” **15** The man went and reported to the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. **16** Therefore, the Jews began persecuting Jesus because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. **17** Jesus responded to them, “My Father is still working, and I am working also.” **18** This is why the Jews began trying all the more to kill him: Not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal to God.

What are some areas of life in which people may feel both helpless and hopeless?

How do you see loneliness contribute to despair in the world?



99 Essential Doctrines

God is One in Three Persons

While the Bible affirms that God is one (Mark 12:29; 1 Cor. 8:4-6), it also affirms that God exists as three Persons—Father, Son, and Spirit. Each Person of the Trinity is fully divine—the Father is God (John 6:27), the Son is God (Phil. 2), the Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4)—and each Person is distinct from the others (Matt. 11:27; John 10:30; 14:16). This perfect unity within the three Persons of the Trinity is a first-order doctrine; departing from it is to abandon orthodox Christianity.

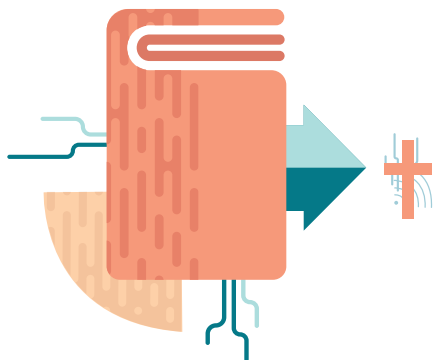


Main Point
Jesus' grace in our life empowers us to obey Him.

Why is it important to emphasize that grace comes before obedience?

What happens to our obedience when we start trying to earn the grace God has already given to us through Jesus?

What does it look like to walk in holiness in this world?



Christ Connection

The man at the pool of Bethesda had been disabled for many years and had lost all hope and given in to despair, but when Jesus told him to pick up his mat and walk, he was healed and he obeyed. In a similar way, our sin has left us hopeless and in despair, but Jesus invites us to trust in Him and follow Him. When we do, our sin is removed and we can follow Jesus in a life of obedience.



Head

What characteristics of the disabled man do we see in ourselves?

How do you need to get up and walk in faith and obedience to Jesus Christ?



Heart

What is our greatest need according to this story?

What are some ways humanity tries to fix our sin problem on our own? How do these attempts ultimately fail?

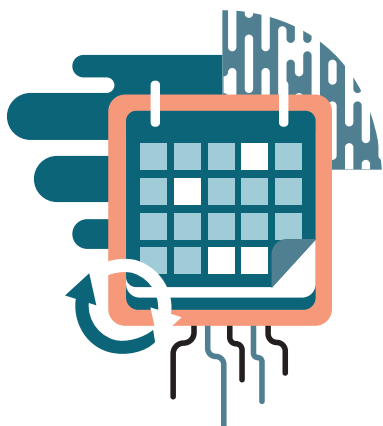


Hands

How could you use this story as a means of explaining to someone that our obedience to God comes as a response to God's grace in our lives?

Why does the formula "grace first, then obedience" glorify God unlike "first obedience, then grace?"

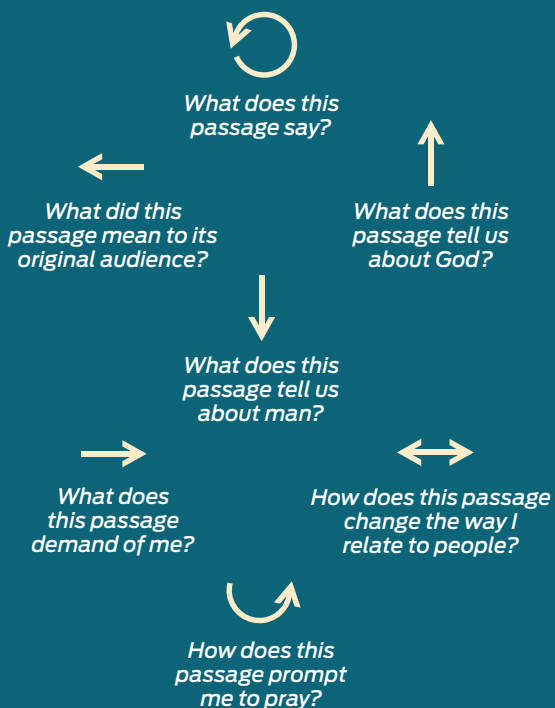
Daily Devotions



Day 1

John 5:1-7

The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



Jesus approached the disabled man and asked a curious question: Do you want to get well? The answer seems obvious—of course, he wanted to get well! Why else would he be laying there at the side of a pool that offered the hope of healing? Why wouldn't the man want to get well? He didn't respond with sarcasm but perhaps with a hint of newfound hope that finally someone—Jesus—had come along, noticed him, and would help him get in the water when it was time. Here he was, gazing longingly at the pool when the One who could make him whole stood right in front of him.

We can fixate on things that promise to bring wholeness to our lives. We may even try to get Jesus—or use Him—to help us achieve those things. Yet Jesus always stands in front of us and asks the same question: Do you want to get well? Well, do you, or do you want to remain where you are, longing for things that won't satisfy?

What are those things in your life that distract you from the Savior and Healer who calls to you even now?

John 5:8-15

By and large, most Jews were sticklers for keeping the Sabbath. It was a key command from the Lord (on par with circumcision) for keeping the Jews separate from the pagan peoples who surrounded them. The Pharisees and teachers of the law through the generations had drawn out a lengthy list of what constituted as “work” so they wouldn’t break God’s law and work on the Sabbath. They were worried that God would become angry with them and punish them, just as He had their ancestors when the people of Israel and Judah were first exiled from the promised land. But their lengthy list mostly included human-invented regulations that exceeded the intent of God’s law in the first place, such as carrying a mat from one place to another.

So when the Jews saw the healed man walking with his mat, they would have been infuriated, and then even more so upon finding out that someone had told him to carry his mat! But they missed the miraculous forest for their human-centered trees. They missed that their promised Savior had come in the flesh in Jesus.

What are some laws or expectations that you are living up to in your own strength instead of obeying Jesus’ commands by faith?

John 5:16-23

“What do you do with Jesus?” It is easy in the world today, maybe even expected to a degree, to believe in God, or a god. Some people are atheists, but most people hold some form of religious belief structure in which God or a higher power reigns prominently. So, when talking to most people about matters of faith, most will probably say they believe in God and that things are good between them.

But what if you asked these same people, “What do you do with Jesus?” You may get any of the following responses: “He was a great man”; “He was a good teacher”; “He was a martyr for His message of love and grace”; “He was a crazy man”; “He was the figment of some people’s imagination”; “He is the Son of God, the Savior of the world.” According to Jesus Himself, what you do with Jesus is what you do with God. In other words, Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through faith in Jesus (John 14:6).

How should Jesus’ words in this passage affect the way you speak with people about God, matters of faith, and Jesus, in particular, as you share the gospel?

John 5:24-30

Did Jesus preach the gospel—salvation by grace—or a salvation by works? If we just take His words in verses 28-29, we easily could come to the conclusion that Jesus determines our future state in eternity based on our good or wicked deeds. But we must remember that these verses must be read in context, which includes the surrounding passage but also the entire Gospel of John.

In the immediate context, verse 24 connects eternal life with hearing the word of Jesus and believing in the God who sent Jesus. Salvation comes by faith, just as the gospel proclaims. In the larger context of John's Gospel, Jesus answers a question posed to Him about how people can do the works of God. His answer: "This is the work of God—that you believe in the one he has sent" (John 6:29). In other words, the work of God that we must do is believe in Jesus. Works are important, but all of Scripture shows that good works flow out of the work of God in a heart of faith (John 3:21).

What role do good works have in your life: Are they efforts to earn God's approval or an overflow of your heart of faith? How will you know the difference?

John 5:31-47

Jesus boldly confronted the people who wanted to kill Him because of His claims about being the Son of God. He minced no words about His identity, His unity with the Father, and His centrality in the work of salvation, eternal life, and resurrection. Yet He didn't berate His accusers. Instead, He let the Scriptures speak and confront them for their unbelief.

The Scriptures Jesus spoke of were not the New Testament but the Old Testament. He declared without hesitation that the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings testified about His person and His work (v. 39). Eternal life is not found in the Scriptures apart from their testimony to the Giver of eternal life—Jesus. Furthermore, Moses was the most influential figure of the Hebrew Scriptures; he was God's prophet to deliver the Israelites from the Egyptians and the mediator of the law of God to the people. But for all his greatness, he too pointed to one greater than himself (v. 46; Deut. 18:15-19).

How does Jesus' words challenge your understanding and perspective regarding the Old Testament?