

John 5:10-18

So the Jewish leaders objected. They said to the man who was cured, “You can’t work on the Sabbath! The law doesn’t allow you to carry that sleeping mat!”

¹¹ But he replied, “The man who healed me told me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’”

¹² “Who said such a thing as that?” they demanded.

¹³ The man didn’t know, for Jesus had disappeared into the crowd. ¹⁴ But afterward Jesus found him in the Temple and told him, “Now you are well; so stop sinning, or something even worse may happen to you.” ¹⁵ Then the man went and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had healed him.

¹⁶ So the Jewish leaders began harassing Jesus for breaking the Sabbath rules. ¹⁷ But Jesus replied, “My Father is always working, and so am I.” ¹⁸ So the Jewish leaders tried all the harder to find a way to kill him. For he not only broke the Sabbath, he called God his Father, thereby making himself equal with God.

Background

The Jewish leaders should have been amazed and glorifying God after witnessing Jesus heal a man paralyzed for 38 years. Instead, they criticized both Jesus and the healed man because the miracle happened on the Sabbath, violating their man-made rules. God’s Law didn’t forbid carrying a simple bedroll on the Sabbath, but over time, Jewish leaders had added extra regulations. The healed man rightly obeyed Jesus, recognizing His authority.

Jesus seemed to heal on the Sabbath deliberately, challenging legalistic interpretations and highlighting that acts of mercy were not against God’s intent. Some believe the healed man betrayed Jesus by naming Him to the authorities, but more likely, he was simply acknowledging Jesus’ power.

Teaching Points

1. There *is* something worse than physical problems.

After healing the man, Jesus found him in the temple (likely there to thank God). He warned him, “*Stop sinning, or something even worse may happen to you*” (v14). This suggests the man’s paralysis may have been caused by past sin. While the Bible makes clear not all illness is due to sin (John 9), it also teaches that physical afflictions can be disciplinary (1 Corinthians 11:30). Jesus’ warning implied that something worse than 38 years of paralysis, like eternity in hell,

could result from continued sin. The real tragedy would be this man's physical healing without spiritual salvation.

2. God's work of preservation does not stop on the Sabbath.

When accused of breaking the Sabbath, Jesus replied, *"My Father is always working, and so am I"* (v17). Here he made two key points: He was claiming equality with God, and He was affirming that God's work does not stop on the Sabbath—specifically, God's work of sustaining and preserving creation. God's natural laws of gravity and healing, for example, don't stop on the Sabbath. God rested from creation on the seventh day, and that rest was never broken, as Hebrews 4 affirms. However, His work of preservation and redemption continues, even on the Sabbath. Colossians 1:17 shows that in Christ, all things are held together. So while creation is complete, God's sustaining work never stops.

Application

1. Don't forget to follow up new believers.

In verse 14, Jesus sought out the healed man for a follow-up, setting an example for us to guide and care for new believers. We should make it a priority to support and disciple those who are new in their faith. Don't forget to follow up with new Christians!

2. Do you live by man-made rules or God-made rules?

The Jewish leaders judged Jesus and the healed man by their own man-made rules rather than God's. We must ask ourselves if we do the same. Do we judge others' spirituality based on personal preferences like Bible translations, clothing, worship music styles, or even social media habits? Let's be careful not to confuse our preferences with God's standards. Let's examine whether we live by man-made rules or God-made rules.