



## TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

### John 5:10-18: The Jews' Reaction the Healing of the Paralyzed Man

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*The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed."*

*11 He answered them, "He who made me well said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk.'"*

*12 Then they asked him, "Who is the Man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" 13 But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place. 14 Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."*

*15 The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.*

*16 For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him,<sup>[a]</sup> because He had done these things on the Sabbath. 17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."*

*18 Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.*

#### Background Notes

Wouldn't you think that the Jewish leaders would have been amazed and would have glorified God for the great miracle that they just witnessed --the healing of a man who had been paralyzed for thirty-eight years? This handicapped man was a "well-known fixture," lying at the Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem -- but suddenly he was completely healed! Well, what was the reaction? The self-righteous Jewish leaders didn't give glory to God. Instead, they found fault because the healing was done on a Sabbath day. As far as they were concerned, their man-made Sabbath laws had been broken -- this was wrong, and the Lord was at fault.

Notice that they found fault with both the Lord Jesus and the man who was healed. *"The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed" (v10).* Now **God's** law didn't say that you couldn't carry a bedroll on the Sabbath. **God's** law said that the Sabbath was set aside for rest and worship of God, and therefore you were not to work on the Sabbath as you work on the other days of the week. But over the years the Jews had re-interpreted God's law for the Sabbath, and they had added their own mandates, laws and traditions. By the time of Christ, they were saying that carrying a bedroll was equivalent to carrying furniture, and therefore it was "work"!

The healed man rose above such man-made legalistic trivia and said to the Jewish leaders: *"He who made me well said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk" (v11).* In other words, if Jesus has the power to heal him after thirty-eight years of paralysis, then Jesus ought to be obeyed. His thinking was right on!

The Jews also found fault with the Lord Jesus because he had healed on the Sabbath: *"For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath"* (v16). It seems that the Lord purposely healed this man on the Sabbath to force the ridiculous man-made Sabbath rules out into the open. We know that the Lord did this on other occasions as well.

Here again, the Jews had added to the law of God. The law prohibited menial work on the Sabbath, but not acts of necessity, or acts of mercy. In Luke 14:5 the Lord said to the Pharisees, *"Which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?"* The Pharisees could not answer Him regarding these things; they knew that the law didn't prohibit acts of mercy on the Sabbath.

One more background note: some commentators find fault with the healed man because he went and told the Jews that it was Jesus who made him well (v15). These commentators believe that the man was "squealing" on the Lord! I don't see it that way at all. I believe the man was giving credit where credit was due – a witness to the power of the Lord Jesus.

## **Doctrinal / Teaching Points**

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

The Lord found the healed man in the Temple area. Most likely he was there because he is giving praise to God for his healing. *"Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you"* (v14). Now what did the Lord mean by that statement? There's a good possibility that this man's disability had been the result of some particular sin in his life as a young man.

Now before we go further, let's be **very** clear that the Bible does **not** teach that every time a person has a physical problem or disability it is because of a sin they committed. In fact, in John 9 the disciples raised that very question in reference to the man who was born blind. In John 9:3 we read, *"Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him."*

However, the Bible **does** teach that there can be "disciplinary sickness." Some physical problems are the direct result of sin. In 1 Corinthians 11:30, *"For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep."* Some Corinthian believers had actually been taken home to heaven -- they died as a result of sin. There is disciplinary sickness. So in view of what the Lord said to this man in verse 14, it may be that his paralysis was the result of sin.

Notice that the Lord said, *"Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."* What could be worse than thirty-eight years of paralysis? Well, certainly eternity in hell would be worse, and that may be indeed what the Lord was referring to here. In other words, the Lord said to him "Sin no more!" That is, live your life now as a godly, obedient, and faithful believer; then you will be assured of heaven when you die, and not hell.

What a horrible thing if this man were to be healed physically, but then live a life of sin, never become a true believer and end up in Hell. There **is** something worse than physical problems. Most people today think that the worst things in life are physical handicaps, suffering, pain, and physical problems. Not so! An eternal destiny in hell is **far** worse. There is something worse than physical problems!

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

When the Jewish leaders accused the Lord of working on the Sabbath, He answered them, "*My Father has been working until now, and I have been working*" (v17). Notice that the Lord was making two points with that statement.

First of all, He was claiming to be God, a claim that the Jews didn't miss as we see in verse 18: "*Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.*" The other point the Lord made was that **God** worked on the Sabbath, and certainly God would not be guilty of breaking His own laws!

In other words, **God's work of preservation** does not stop on the Sabbath. God's natural laws (such as gravity and healing) do not stop working on the Sabbath. Think of such a scenario! Suppose the Universal Law of Gravitation stopped on the Sabbath? The world would be up for grabs! Suppose that you cut yourself on a Saturday (Sabbath)? You would bleed to death before healing began the next day. Aren't you glad that God's work of preservation doesn't stop on the Sabbath?

That's exactly the point that the Lord was making in verse 17: "*My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.*" That was His reply when they said, "You broke the Sabbath!" Basically, the Lord was saying that God's work of preservation doesn't stop on the Sabbath. Therefore it was not wrong for the Lord to heal on the Sabbath, because God's work doesn't stop on the Sabbath. God's work of preservation doesn't stop on the Sabbath.

**God's work of creation** came to an end when He rested on the seventh day of Creation Week. We know from Hebrews 4 that God's "rest" was not broken. But God's work of preservation continues to operate. In Colossians 1:17 we read that in Christ "*all things consist [hold together].*" That's God's work of conservation, or preservation. God's work of preservation does not stop on the Sabbath.

Let me extend this doctrinal point a little bit further, because some commentaries say something like, "Well, God rested from His work of creation, but then it was broken because of sin." I don't think that is the way we should look at it. God's work of creation was complete, and on the seventh day He rested. That rest was never broken! I think Hebrews 4 makes it very clear that God's rest continues, and we can enter that rest. But His work of preservation, as well as His work of redemption, and other aspects of God's work continues. Praise the Lord, it continues! God's work of preservation does not stop on the Sabbath.

## **Practical applications**

### **1. Don't forget to follow up new believers!**

In verse 14 we see that the Lord went and found the man He had healed. This was going to be a "follow-up" session. We need to follow the Lord's example here. Don't forget to follow up new believers!

Tomorrow we're starting a new semester at Emmaus Bible College. I especially enjoy teaching students who are new believers. For them, every class is like a follow-up session and it's a joy to see them grow and mature in the faith. As we were driving back from this summer's camp ministry, I told Margie, "I can't wait to get back in the classroom again!" I love to see the students coming in, particularly new believers. It's just a thrill to teach the Scriptures to them!

Do you know any new Christians? Don't forget to follow up new believers!

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

**I**n this account we see that the Jewish leaders judged both the Lord and the healed man by their own man-made rules, not by God-made rules. Is it possible that we do the same thing -- maybe without even realizing it?

How do we analyze the spirituality of our fellow-believers? Do we look down on them because of the translation of the Bible they read? By the kind of clothes they wear? By what kind of musical instruments they play? By the kind of Christian music they enjoy for worship? Are we judging them by our **own set of personal preferences**, which we have turned into man-made **rules**?

Let's be careful. Let's not make the mistake of confusing man-made rules with God-made rules. Each one of us should ask ourselves that question: Do I live by man-made rules or God-made rules?