

"The Healing of the Crippled Man"

Part 2

John 5:1-18

Introduction: Last week in our study of John we looked at the healing of the crippled man at the pool of Bethesda. There was a great multitude of impotent people lying by the pool. There was however one man whom Jesus set His focus on. The man had been in his condition for 38 years. He was by the pool of Bethesda with the hope of being the first in the water after the angel stirred the pool. But in his condition, he would need assistance and there was no one to help him.

Notice John 5:1-7

As we considered last week there are some Bible teachers that believe this was nothing but superstition, but that is not the way in which John presents the situation. When Jesus came to the pool he went directly to this man and inquired if he wanted to be healed. The man's words show that his hope was in the pool and not in God. This man is a picture of many today who are living with a false sense of security because their hope is not in Jesus, but it is in some effort that they have come to trust. They trust in their baptism, church membership, good works, confirmation and the list goes on and on. They have heard of Jesus, but their faith is not in Him and so while they are sincere with what they believe, they are sincerely lost because they are not saved.

➤ The Healing

Notice John 5:8-9

Jesus gave a command to the man to rise, take up his bed and walk. The man was healed instantly, and he took Jesus at His Word.

Last week we ended our study by considering the fact that Jesus stepped over others around the pool to get to this man. Did He not care about these other people? Yes, He did. He cared deeply about the others. But He walked past many who were sick to get to this man. In our study we considered how we respond when the same thing happens to us. Sometimes the Lord will seem to walk past us and

rescue the person next to us. In these times we hold on to three characteristics of our God.

✓ **We rest in His purpose.**

Psalm 52:1b

...the goodness of God endureth continually.

✓ **We rest in His grace.**

2 Corinthians 12:8-10

⁸ *For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.*

⁹ *And he said unto me, **My grace is sufficient for thee**: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

¹⁰ *Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*

✓ **We rest in His purpose.**

Romans 8:28-29

²⁸ *And we know that **all things work together for good** to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

²⁹ *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

Notice John 5:9

John does not just tell us the man was healed but he tells us it was on the Sabbath. This will now be a problem for the religious leaders.

➤ **The Religious Leaders and Their Legalism**

Notice John 5:10

Instead of rejoicing that the man was healed their first response was that it was not lawful for the man to carry his bed on the Sabbath. These religious leaders were caught up in legalism. It will be in these verses that we will see some of the dangers of legalism.

The religious leaders were so protective of the Sabbath because of what we considered on Sunday evening. The Babylonian captivity lasted 70 years because the Jews had neglected to keep the Sabbath of the land for 490 years. Every seventh year the land was to rest and that was known as the Sabbath of the land. The Jews neglected this for 70 Sabbaths and therefore God gave the land its rest by sending the Jews into a foreign land for 70 years. The religious leaders of Jesus day were very fearful of another captivity, so they were determined to guard the Sabbath. What started as good intentions soon became a teaching that distorted the Word of God and the true meaning of the Sabbath was lost. Notice what the Law says.

Exodus 20:8-11

⁸ *Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.*

⁹ *Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:*

¹⁰ *But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:*

¹¹ *For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

In the Gospel of Mark, we see why the Sabbath was given.

Mark 2:27-28

²⁷ *And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath:*

²⁸ Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

Notice the words of Charles Swindoll

"The Lord instituted the Sabbath as a gift. He ordered a day of rest to rejuvenate the bodies and minds of His people. More importantly, it was given in order to break the day-in, day-out cycle of routine so that people would not forget that God is the ultimate source of their sustenance; their labors are but a means of His provision. The Sabbath gave people permission to stop work so they would not neglect a vital need: worship. We are created for worship; therefore, worship is good for us. But the Pharisees turned this wonderful gift of God into a burden, an occasion for severe criticism, an excuse to exercise power, and yet another opportunity to remind themselves and everyone else of their superior moral worth."

The religious leaders added their own traditions to the Law, and it eventually became to them as the actual Word of God.

Mark 7:7

⁷ Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Here is a partial list of what the Pharisees said was not allowed on the Sabbath: writing, erasing, and tearing; conducting business transactions; shopping; cooking, baking, or kindling a fire; gardening; doing laundry; carrying anything for more than six feet in a public area; moving anything with your hand, even indirectly (with a broom): a broken bowl, flowers in a vase, candles on a table, raw food, a rock, a button that has fallen off (you could move things with your elbow or your breath, but not with your hand). And this is just a partial list.

I want to take a few minutes and explain what legalism is. It is the belief that by living up to certain rules that you can earn the favor of God. Let me give you a few examples. If I am convicted about mowing my grass on Sunday and I refuse to do so that is fine. But if I believe that not mowing my grass on Sunday contributes to my acceptance by God or if I believe that because you mow your grass on Sunday and I don't that I am in better standing with God than you are that is legalism.

The legalist is a person who says God's love can be earned by what we do and by what we do not do. In the Bible there are many commands given to us and it is not legalism to walk in obedience. We should walk in obedience. But it is legalism when I begin to believe that in my obedience, I am earning the acceptance of God. You see we are accepted by God because of the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:6-7

⁶ *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

⁷ *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;*

Colossians 2:9-10

⁹ *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*

¹⁰ *And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:*

Legalism is the failure to see the greatness of grace.

Getting back to the point; the Sabbath was a day given for the Jews to enjoy their lives and worship God, but the religious leaders had turned it into a day of strict rules and regulations that became a heavy burden for the people. There was now no joy in the Sabbath but only stress as they were fearful they would violate what the religious leaders had dictated.

This is exactly why Jesus healed this man on the Sabbath. This entire legalist system needed to be exposed for what it was. Let us be very careful because inside every human heart there is the danger of adding to the Word of God.

Genesis 3:1-3

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

² And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

³ But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

Conclusion:

We cannot end this without considering the opposite of legalism. The opposite would be **Antinomianism**. The word "anti" means "against", and the word "nomos" means "law". Therefore, antinomianism means to be against the Law. It refers to believers who see themselves as being exempt from all moral responsibilities because they are under Divine grace.

As believers we are not under the Law, but we are to walk in obedience to God's Word and His Word tells us to live upright moral lives. In closing there are some verses that need to be understood by both of these groups.

✓ Legalism.

Romans 3:20-22

²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

✓ Antinomianism.

Romans 6:1-2

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

² God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Titus 2:11-12

¹¹ For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

¹² Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

